



City of Cortland Comprehensive Plan

Goals and Implementation Measures DRAFT

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I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1: Retain/expand existing businesses in the City

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Encourage the retainage/expansion of businesses that provide neighborhood goods and services.
- B) Encourage the expansion of businesses that serve visitors to the City.
- C) Use the City of Cortland Community Development Loan fund to assist in retaining/expanding job opportunities in the City.
- D) Secure additional capital for the City of Cortland Community Development Loan fund.
- E) Reduce the cost of doing business in the City by controlling the cost of water, sewer, property taxes, and City services.
- F) Work with the Cortland County BDC to implement an ongoing communication program with contributory businesses in the City to assist in problem solving.

GOAL 2: Increase the number of businesses in the City

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Work with the Cortland County BDC to provide technical assistance for start up businesses including programs to train employees.
- B) Work with the Cortland County BDC to recruit businesses to the City that will provide well paying job opportunities.
- C) Make Noss Park an asset by using the information generated from Build Now NY to promote industrial/commercial expansion and secure funds to complete the environmental remediation of the City-owned five-acre site in Noss Park.
- D) Fund a City-wide Microenterprise Program using CDBG funds to assist both new and existing businesses with funding and training.
- E) Inventory vacant land/space suitable for business expansion to assure brownfield buildings and property and other vacant buildings are used prior to development of greenfields if possible. Develop existing commercial property as commercial prior to converting residential or open space.
- F) Attract new business opportunities that match the skill sets of existing employees.

- G) Diversity and strengthen the local economy by attracting “green” businesses, those ties to regional colleges and universities, and other emerging business sectors.

GOAL 3: Make the City more worker friendly.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Assure that housing choices in the City meet the needs of existing and future workers.
- B) Work with the BDC, local colleges, Department of Labor, Career Works Center, and local schools to provide training opportunities for employees of City businesses.
- C) Increase public transportation that meets the needs of the work force.

II. HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL AREAS

Exit 11

GOAL 4: Improve the appearance of the I-81 exit 11 gateway to create a sense of place suitable for the City of Cortland.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Revise the City sign ordinance for high-rise signs for businesses within 600 feet of a highway exit to no than less than 45' and reduce the maximum size of the sign. Allow additional heights for businesses that share high-rise sign posts. An amortization schedule should be adopted to ensure all signs are consistent with the ordinance within 10 years.
- B) Revise the City sign ordinance to limit primary site signage (not including directional signs or high-rise signs) to monument style signs at the roadway and require that such signs incorporate brick or stone, be landscaped around the base, and be externally lit. Signs should be no more than 8' tall. Animated signage on buildings should be prohibited, as should the number and size of building and site signs. Businesses with shared entrances should share signs.
- C) Revise site plan requirements for highway commercial areas by infusing more landscaping and greenspace into developments to create a better sense of place. Recommended changes include limiting the amount of unbroken paved areas, including parking lots; requiring curbed and landscaped medians along the edge of the roadway that are of consistent design (similar widths, plantings, and trees) along the roadway; limiting paved areas to the minimum needed; requiring landscaped medians for every four or five rows of parking; protection of mature trees; planting of new trees at both the roadway edge and in parking lots, requiring the largest trees that the site can accommodate; and requiring landscaped planting areas around the edges of buildings. Furthermore, all site plans/developments with water frontage should be required to embrace their waterfront locations and to incorporate water access into their site plans.
- D) Seek State and federal funding to undertake streetscape improvements at the exit 11 area. These improvements should be consistent with one another, and should create a unified appearance along the roadway including new trees, landscaped medians, and attractive lighting in order to create a welcoming gateway to the community and assist in way finding.
- E) Develop minimum design guidelines for new buildings and major renovations to existing buildings. The guidelines should require, for instance, pitched/gabled roofs on smaller buildings, stone, brick, or clapboard sidings, and architectural detailing in order to provide a consistent and attractive character to the area.

- F) Acquire and demolish the abandoned gas station at the corner of Clinton Avenue and River Streets. Any redevelopment should limit direct access from the street and provide greenspace along the roadway to improve the gateway into the City.
- G) Institute improvements at the Clinton, River, and Pomeroy Street intersection to create a gateway into the City. This could include a stone or brick structure/walls(s) with signage incorporated, landscaping, lighting, or perhaps a water feature.
- H) Adopt a vacant building ordinance that imposes graduated and increasing fees or other disincentives on buildings vacant for more than 12 months.

GOAL 5: Ensure pedestrian and bike access and safety.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) All new developments should incorporate sidewalks and trails, connected to municipal sidewalks, in order to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access, and should accommodate the proposed Tioughnioga River Trail.
- B) Sidewalks/crosswalks crossing business entranceways should be of a contrasting color and material, such as brick, stone, or stamped concrete. Such crosswalks should be consistent throughout the area.
- C) Require bicycle racks and similar non-motorized amenities as part of site plan review requirements.

Route 11

GOAL 6: Visually improve the appearance of the Route 11/Homer Avenue gateway corridor to provide a sense of place in keeping the City's character.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Revise the City sign ordinance to limit primary site signage (not including directional signs or high-rise signs) to monument style signs at the roadway and require that such signs incorporate brick or stone, be landscaped around the base, and be externally lit. Signs should be no more than 8' tall. Animated signage on buildings should be prohibited, as should the number and size of building and site signs. Businesses with shared entrances should share signs.
- B) Revise site plan requirements to limit the amount of unbroken paved areas and require additional landscaping and greenspace. This should include, but not necessarily be limited to, curbed and landscaped medians along the edge of the roadway that are of consistent design (similar widths, plantings and

trees) along the roadway; limiting paved areas to the minimum needed; protection of mature trees; planting of new trees at both the roadway edge and in the lot, requiring large trees wherever they can be accommodated; and landscaped planting areas around the edges of buildings.

- C) The City should seek State and federal funding to undertake streetscape improvements at the Route 11 corridor. These improvements should be consistent with one another, and should create a unified appearance along the roadway including new trees, landscaped medians, and attractive lighting in order to create a welcoming gateway to the community. Special attention should be provided to the P&C Plaza which is devoid of landscaping.
- D) Develop minimum design guidelines for new buildings and major renovations. The guidelines should require pitched roofs, stone, brick, or clapboard sidings, and architectural features in order to provide a consistent character to the area. The maximum size of buildings should be limited to match the size and scale of nearby buildings.

Port Watson Street

GOAL 7: Visually improve the appearance of the Port Watson Street gateway corridor to provide a sense of place in keeping the City's character.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Revise the City sign ordinance to limit primary site signage (not including directional signs or high-rise signs) to monument style signs at the roadway and require that such signs incorporate brick or stone, be landscaped around the base, and be externally lit. Signs should be no more than 8' tall. Animated signage on buildings should be prohibited, as should the number and size of building and site signs. Businesses with shared entrances should share signs.
- B) Revise site plan requirements to limit the amount of unbroken paved areas and require additional landscaping and greenspace. This should include, but not necessarily be limited to, curbed and landscaped medians along the edge of the roadway that are of consistent design (similar widths, plantings and trees) along the roadway; limiting paved areas to the minimum needed; protection of mature trees; planting of new trees at both the roadway edge and in the lot, requiring large trees wherever they can be accommodated; and landscaped planting areas around the edges of buildings.
- C) Seek State and federal funding to undertake streetscape improvements at the Port Watson Street corridor, particularly between the Tioughnioga River and Pendleton Street. These improvements should create a consistent streetscape and unified appearance along the roadway including new trees, landscaped medians, and attractive lighting in order to create a welcoming gateway to the community. Special attention should be provided to the

BOCES plaza, which is largely devoid of landscaping, and corner lots with no medians or greenspace.

D) Develop minimum design guidelines for new buildings and major renovations. The guidelines should require pitched roofs, stone, brick, or clapboard sidings, and architectural features in order to provide a consistent character to the area. The maximum size of buildings should be limited to match the size and scale of nearby buildings.

III. DOWNTOWN

GOAL 8: Manage the Downtown effectively to promote a strong downtown economy.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Implement the Main Street Approach through an effective and successful Cortland Downtown Partnership.
- B) Develop a Business Improvement District to financial support downtown development and the Cortland Downtown Partnership.

GOAL 9: Establish the downtown as a center of arts, culture, and entertainment in the City and County.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Seek funding and partner with downtown property owners to develop artist live/work spaces, studios, and galleries.
- B) Continue partnership with the Cortland Downtown Partnership to promote the arts in the downtown.

GOAL 10: Create a diverse and robust downtown economy

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Entice development of a high quality full service hotel in the Central Business District.
- B) Support retail development as a vital part of the downtown and leverage the presence of SUNY Cortland to attract and retain retail businesses.
- C) Promote the development of small to medium sized high-tech businesses on upper floors of downtown structures in an effort to create a “digital downtown”.

GOAL 11: Support the preservation of historic buildings as an integral part of the economic success of the downtown.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Expand the Historic District to include all areas of the Central Business District.

- B) Leverage public funds and forge partnerships with private developers to redevelop historic properties in the downtown.
- C) Ensure adequate code enforcement resources are available to regularly inspect properties, particularly vacant properties and vacant areas of buildings.
- D) Consider adoption of a strict building maintenance code for the Central Business District.
- E) Establish local laws to guard against “demolition by neglect” and other significant decay of downtown buildings.
- F) Develop incentives to encourage property owners to utilize “green” building techniques or to seek LEED certification to improve energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the City’s built environment.

GOAL 12: Create a diverse and dense housing mix in the downtown, particularly market rate rental housing.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Work with private developers to leverage funding for market rate housing, such as historic preservation tax credits or other grant funding.
- B) Remain cognizant of emerging housing needs and trends, such as housing for college staff, young professionals, or aging empty nesters.

GOAL 13: Provide sufficient parking opportunities and actively manage parking to accommodate the downtown’s changing parking needs.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Develop structured parking to alleviate long-term parking concerns and stimulate future development.
- B) Establish agreements with owners of underutilized parking areas to allow for public parking.
- C) Proactively manage available parking in the downtown through permit systems, long vs. short-term parking, overnight parking, restricted parking, and other strategies and tactics to maximize the availability and convenience of downtown parking.
- D) Prohibit the demolition of structures to accommodate new surface parking except under rare circumstances and where such demolition will not interrupt the rhythm of the streetscape or create open parking areas more than 75’ in

length along Main Street. Prohibit the creation of parking lots at corners/intersections under all circumstances.

- E) Require all parking areas on major streets to be landscaped and screened in a manner similar to existing public parking areas wherever possible.

GOAL 14: Provide a high level of maintenance for downtown infrastructure including roads, sidewalks, medians, curbing, trees, street furniture, landscaping, and parking lots.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) In cooperation with the Cortland Downtown Partnership, establish a database of all public physical assets in the downtown with noted deficiencies and dates of construction, major improvements, and/or installation.
- B) In cooperation with the Cortland Downtown Partnership, conduct an annual survey of downtown's infrastructure to identify areas of concern and note emerging problems.
- C) Establish a long-range capital plan to address infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

IV. HOUSING

GOAL 15: Ensure all dwelling units are safe, habitable, affordable, and available to all income, age, and disability segments of the population.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Seek financing sources to renovate existing housing through rehabilitation programs and incorporate facilities for the physically challenged as is feasible.
- B) Continue to develop housing rehabilitation programs that benefit both financially struggling owner-occupants and housing tenanted by lower income tenants. Income property rehabilitation programs, where the majority of tenants are lower income, should be conditioned on rent subsidy programs or affordable rents.
- C) Support comprehensive housing code enforcement efforts in the City to maintain owner-occupied and income property units in conformance with the NYS Property Maintenance Code. Stricter local maintenance codes should be adopted as needed.
- D) Work with local, State, and federal housing agencies and organizations regarding the housing needs of special needs populations, including but not limited to, those with mobility impairments; the frail elderly; those with mental impairments; the homeless; victims of violence and disasters; marital/family disruption; and recovering substance abusers. Provide handicap access where required, promote visitability of housing units, and assist with advocacy efforts when needed.
- E) Partner with Cortland County and other agencies devoted to addressing housing safety and environmental issues such as lead based paint, radon, asbestos, smoke and carbon monoxide detection, and child, occupant, and elderly safety issues. The City will be a part of the referral and advocacy network.

GOAL 16: Increase the percentage of owner occupied housing units in the City.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Increase home ownership through programs that provide assistance to first time homebuyers. Partner with lending institutions in this endeavor.
- B) Increase home ownership through programs that target professionals, including but not limited to, nurses, police officers, teachers, and college professors.

- C) Do not grant variances to convert single-family homes to multifamily, particularly in R-1 zoning districts.
- D) Continue to limit the number of unrelated persons residing in single-family homes, particularly in R1 and R2 Districts.
- E) Limit the encroachment of commercial development into traditional residential neighborhoods, e.g., the hospital's expansion into the single-family neighborhoods surrounding the hospital campus and commercial development expansion around the I81 Exit 11 interchange.
- F) When seizing properties for back taxes, develop guidelines for prioritizing the development/redevelopment of single-family homes.

GOAL 17: Create more housing choices in the City.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Work with qualified developers who share a common vision with the City in developing new living units to meet growing needs that are in keeping with the character of the City.
- B) Partner with financing sources to provide financing for developers to create market rate housing and/or more housing options. This housing will be created via new construction or the rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, or mixed commercial/residential structures.
- C) Develop a proactive approach to the development of new rental units for all income, age, and disability segments of the population as demand and developable properties are identified. Avoid overpopulating certain geographic areas of the City with lower income housing developments.

GOAL 18: Promote energy efficiency for new or existing housing units such as green build standards, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, alternative energy sources, and/or new energy saving technologies. Energy saving or alternative energy appliances, technology, materials, or other apparatus shall be of such a nature that it will not interfere with any neighboring properties and/or will not negatively impact the City environment, quality of life, and/or aesthetics.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Encourage development of housing that conserves energy, including such measures as green build components or higher density development that reduces the need for significant investment in infrastructure. Such development, and its benefits, will be detailed in new zoning regulations.
- B) Remain cognizant of emerging housing and energy conservation trends. While the City will promote energy conservation measures, it may be necessary to

prohibit structures, appliances, and/or equipment that are harmful to adjacent properties, to the City environment or aesthetics, or are determined to be unsafe.

- C) Provide land-use incentives to developers that incorporate green build standards in housing construction/development.

GOAL 19: Provide high quality student housing while preserving City neighborhoods.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Create vibrant, higher density neighborhoods that are geared toward students and are located within walking distance of both the campus and the downtown. Such areas may include, but not be limited to, eastern Groton Avenue, Pleasant Street, Orchard Street, and Monroe Heights. Each individual neighborhood should have its own unique character based on its location.
- B) Establish design guidelines for Groton Avenue housing development that call for attached, multi-story masonry apartment buildings that may or may not have first floor commercial space. *(draft site plan sketch attached)*
- C) Allow for more than three unrelated persons per living unit in designated higher density housing areas.
- D) Work with developers to provide amenities that are attractive to students such as basketball courts, gathering areas, workout areas, and cafes.
- E) Seek funding for programs to help preserve single-family housing and neighborhood green spaces and landscapes.
- F) Partner with SUNY Cortland to entice faculty and staff to live in the College Hill Neighborhood.
- G) Strictly adhere to lot coverage restrictions in residential neighborhoods, particularly in R1 and R2 districts, with specific emphasis on parking expansions.

GOAL 20: Institutionalize the town/gown relationship with respect to housing and College Hill neighborhood issues.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Create a town/gown committee consisting of representatives of SUNY Cortland, Tompkins Cortland Community College, student landlords, City and Campus Police, Code Enforcement, students, neighborhood residents, and the judicial system to make recommendations to the City and local colleges on quality of life issues that are unique to the college population, including but not limited to, mutually co-existing in traditional City neighborhoods,

personal safety issues, social activities, student/landlord relationships and responsibilities, property maintenance and City housing code enforcement.

- B) Develop an off campus housing strategy that includes, among other things, mapping the location of student housing, developing parking strategies, enforcement of a Rental Permit Program, maintaining student housing in or within walking distance of the downtown, creating new student housing, and increasing the density of student housing in some neighborhoods/zoning districts while reducing it in others.

GOAL 21: Link new housing development via interconnected sidewalks, roadways, and/or trails.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Require sidewalks, trails or multimodal connections in residential areas so that the City is a walkable community. Such infrastructure will be accessible by all.

GOAL 22: Encourage the development of home businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Update the City's zoning and land use regulations to allow for home businesses. This will include, but not be limited to, a definition of a home business and requirements that businesses in residential zoning districts be compatible with, and not disturb, the character of residential neighborhoods.

GOAL 23: Periodically update land use regulations, particularly with respect to housing.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Update the City's land use regulations, especially those related to housing, so that they are reflective of the goals and vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

V. CORTLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

GOAL 24: Create housing units in the City that are attractive to and desired by college and school district faculty and staff.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Work with the school on developing/identifying housing programs that encourage teachers and school staff to reside and seek homeownership in the City of Cortland.
- B) When the City acquires property for back taxes, develop a program to facilitate purchase of said properties by owner occupants, particularly young professionals such as teachers.

GOAL 25: Consider the impact of new housing development on individual City elementary schools.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) The creation of new housing, particularly dense developments of affordable housing, should consider the impact on local elementary schools. Include the school district as part of the planning/development process.
- B) Incompatible uses within sight of local elementary schools should be visually buffered, e.g., the student housing complex located next to the athletic fields at Barry Elementary School.

GOAL 26: Provide students with job/volunteering opportunities in the local community.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Partner with the school district so that students can work for pay or meet community service requirements in City businesses, government, or not-for-profit organizations.
- B) Partner with the school district, job training program providers, and area employers to develop programs so that job training in the schools match the skill sets needed by area businesses.

GOAL 27: Continue to improve the main gateways to the high school so that they are attractive to prospective/existing students, and faculty and staff.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue work on South Main Street and the greater South End Neighborhood to improve the gateway to the middle/high school.
- B) Work with the School to improve the safety and appearance of Valley View Drive.

GOAL 28: Improve the City's transportation network to benefit students and faculty/staff.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Work with the school and the County to explore the possibility of using the public bus transportation system for school uses.
- B) Continue to work with the school district on identifying and improving the City's sidewalk, trail, and road network to encourage more children and staff to walk or ride their bicycles to school.
- C) Expand the City's school crossing guard program to areas that have been identified as needing more supervision for children walking and biking to school. Improve crosswalks and signage where needed.
- D) Continue working with the County and school on safety and health programs, including but not limited to, use of bicycle helmets and walking/biking City trails and sidewalks to take advantage of their health benefits.

GOAL 29: Expand the City's safety resources to protect and benefit the school district.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Based on the success of the existing Cops in Schools Program, the City's Police Department should continue a police presence in the schools. This should include not only police personnel but expanded training opportunities and acquiring up-to-date equipment and technology as well.
- B) Work with neighborhoods to expand the Neighborhood Watch Program, with a particular emphasis on getting children to and from school safely.
- C) Continue to monitor/control traffic in and around the district school buildings, particularly at arrival/dismissal times.
- D) Continue work with the school district on making the Armory and Smith School a designated emergency shelter and responder site.

GOAL 30: Consolidate City and school district services and facilities as a cost savings measure.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue the relationship with the school district and Cortland Youth Bureau regarding the use of athletic field space, programs, and facilities and the development of new venues.
- B) Identify/implement other cost savings measures that would be mutually beneficial for the school district and the City, including but not limited to, partnering on grant opportunities, bulk purchases, use of school facilities for community events, and recycling and energy conservation efforts.

VI. HISTORIC RESOURCES

GOAL 31: Preserve and protect the City's historic architecture and character.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Expand the Tompkins/Main Street Historic District to include portions of the College Hill neighborhood following a historic resources survey.
- B) Expand the Tompkins/Main Street Historic District to include the entire Central Business District and the east side of Church Street adjacent to the Central Business District, following a historic resources survey.
- C) Seek funding or support other entities in leveraging funding sources to preserve, restore, and/or rehabilitate historic properties.
- D) Preserve and enhance the architectural character of homes or commercial properties renovated through City programs.

GOAL 32: Develop the capacity of the government to properly manage, protect, and promote the City's historic resources.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Seek Certified Local Government (CLG) status with the assistance of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.
- B) Require high professional standards and qualifications for members of the Architectural Review Commission and provide ongoing training to ensure that members are knowledgeable in architecture and historic preservation standards.
- C) Provide the Architectural Review Commission with the services of a qualified professional to provide assistance with design review.
- D) Develop and adopt clear written and illustrative design guidelines specific to Cortland to ensure that decisions of the Architectural Review Commission are consistent and to provide property owners with guidance while developing projects. Such guidelines should follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and deal with issues such as size, scale, proportion, rhythm, massing, building materials, roof slope, architectural style, and relationship and compatibility to neighboring buildings and surrounding neighborhood.

GOAL 32: Recognize and promote City history and the role and value of cultural resources within the City.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Partner with City and County Historians and other entities to educate the public on the importance of historic architecture, to increase support and appreciation for historic preservation, and celebrate local architecture.
- B) Maintain existing and foster new partnerships with the school district and local preservation organizations to develop elementary, junior high, and high school curriculum programs designed to educate students on the City's history, historic architecture, and the connections between the built environment and social development of the community.
- C) Encourage community groups and school officials to provide quality educational and volunteer opportunities aimed at preserving and enhancing City cultural resources.
- D) Partner with community groups, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, the City and County Historians and other interested entities to continue to advance quality cultural events, and educational opportunities which benefit the citizens of the Cortland community.
- E) Create and historic brochure or podcast tour of the City's historic district/resources.

VII. NATURAL RESOURCES and ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

GOAL 33: Future development and redevelopment within the City will not cause degradation of water resources.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Work with the Town of Cortlandville and other entities to ensure that adequate stormwater runoff/retention ponds are in place for all new developments.
- B) Encourage use of alternative and emerging technologies for existing and new developments, allowing the use of paving stones or other green technologies that minimize, redirect, or treat runoff from parking lots and driveways.
- C) Seek assistance from the County Soil and Water Conservation District to comprehensively review and revise all local regulations dealing with stormwater runoff and retention to maximize protection of surface and underground water resources.
- D) Adopt local law requiring an aquifer protection permit for new commercial or industrial development or redevelopment.
- E) Require SEQRA Long Form Environmental Assessment for all development proposals adjacent to, or with the potential to impact, wetlands to allow for more intense scrutiny so as to minimize impacts on wetlands.
- F) Implement the actions and recommendations contained in the Tioughnioga Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

GOAL 34: Identify, remediate, and redevelop brownfield sites throughout the City.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Request proposals from qualified firms to provide planning services associated with the development of a Step 1 Pre-Nomination Study for a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program application for former industrial locations throughout the City that have not already been remediated or otherwise addressed.
- B) If BOA participation is not pursued, create inventory of all potential brownfield sites within the City, to enable landowners to apply for clean up funding, and to redevelopment these sites for various types of infill development.
- C) Continue to pursue funding for clean up, development, and reuse of the Noss Industrial Park.

GOAL 35: Minimize flood risk and impacts of flooding

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Seek funding to identify strategies and implement projects to mitigate or alleviate regular flooding of the Tioughnioga River, Dry Creek and Otter Creek.
- B) In the event of a major flood severely damaging properties in the floodway, assemble parcels to create a park or other open space/recreation areas on parcels that are no longer developable.
- C) Encourage the use of alternative technologies and methods, including permeable paving surfaces for parking lots, to reduce runoff contributing to flooding in flood hazard areas.
- D) Require new developments to manage stormwater runoff on-site and encourage the capture and reuse of rainwater.
- E) Amend land use regulations to limit or strictly control new development in the 100-year flood zone.

GOAL 36: Become a regional leader in the use of sustainable technology and building practices.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Encourage energy conservation and efficiencies and promote the use of alternative/clean energy sources.
- B) Promote energy efficiency, including LEED certification, for new or existing structures such as green build standards, alternative energy sources, and/or new energy saving technologies. Energy saving or alternative energy appliances, technology, materials, or other apparatus shall be of such a nature that it will not interfere with any neighboring properties and/or will not negatively impact the City's environment and quality of life.
- C) Promote the development and the use of alternative energy sources such as geothermal and solar in all City-building projects.
- D) Seek grant funds to assist private property owners to make properties more energy efficient.

GOAL 37: Assure that future development and redevelopment within the City complements and enhances the natural environment.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas including air, water, and land by encouraging conscientious development.
- B) Review and amend land use regulations to protect and enhance natural resources of the community.
- C) Strictly comply with SEQRA for projects that require such review to ensure protection of natural resources.
- D) Seek grant funding and/or establish programs to increase and improve the urban forest to enhancing community character, and reducing the heat island effect. This includes planting of large trees where possible and smaller trees where above and below ground infrastructure is present.
- E) Seek grant funding to establish community gardens.
- F) Seek grant funding to establish voluntary gardening program for high school students and adult volunteers to beautify commercial properties, large parking lots, fencelines, and paved areas with plantings and trees as appropriate.

VIII. PARKS AND RECREATION

GOAL 38: Identify underutilized spaces and facilities that have potential to create additional and/or improved recreational opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Develop and maintain a current inventory and database all facilities, open spaces, and programs.
- B) Review and assess inventories on an annual basis to insure full coverage of all interests and ages.
- C) Regularly assess needs and match with City, School District, College or other municipal facilities that could be utilized.
- D) Add walking path loops within the existing parks.
- E) Exhibit sculpture and other art forms in public spaces, particularly in the downtown
- F) Increased usage, understanding and learning about the Tioughnioga River.

GOAL 39: Provide facilities that are always safe, clean and well-maintained.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) A) Identify all safety, cleanliness, and general maintenance concerns. Issues should include playground equipment types, dangerous or failing structures, un- mowed areas, deteriorating swimming pools, handicapped accessibility, poor lighting conducive to misbehavior, litter, etc.
- B) Review responsibilities and budget constraints to address these issues.
- C) For specialized issues (playground safety, accessible surfacing and slopes, etc.), obtain appropriate information and training.
- D) Seek grant funding for park renovations and upgrades where appropriate.

GOAL 40: Increase the amount of parkland in the City.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Consider all land types for additional recreation facilities, such as brownfields, tax foreclosure, floodplain areas, and estate donations, to develop small open space or recreation facilities in close proximity to neighborhoods.

- B) Consider land contiguous to existing parks to expand such parks.
- C) Develop a multi-use greenway/linear park stretching from Beaudry Park in the South End to Dexter Park in the East End and continuing to the Tioughnioga River via old railroad right-of-ways and other available land.
- D) Develop partnerships with other municipalities, the J.M. McDonald Center, local school districts, and the College to utilize recreational facilities.

GOAL 41: Remain current with meeting the needs of the public and provide facilities and programs to meet those needs.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue to conduct periodic needs assessments with the assistance of SUNY Recreation Department.
- B) Evaluate programs and participation to anticipate and meet changing trends.

GOAL 42: Support and promote the development of school and/or community gardens, which will not only educate but also reduce the community's reliance on imported goods.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Investigate all legal and/or Ag & Markets issues related to community gardens to understand the possibilities and limits.
- B) Promote the development of community gardens and provide locations facilities where possibly, such as within each City park.
- C) Provide input and assistance for locating sites for community gardens including City properties that are underutilized.
- D) Coordinate with the schools to insure continuity during the summer months when school is out.
- E) Seek grant funding to establish community gardens.

IX. INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

GOAL 43: Insist that adequate fire protection is available and that additional proactive measures are taken to insure that the downtown area will not be subject to a destructive fire.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Conduct a comprehensive “worst case scenario” evaluation of the downtown fire protection system (location and number of hydrants, fire flows, pipe sizes, etc.).
- B) Conduct a risk assessment of the existing buildings based on their sprinkler systems, alarms, construction materials and their present uses to determine the fire risk.
- C) Pursue, promote, and assist in the installation of sprinkler systems, firewalls, and alarms in the buildings where needed.

GOAL 44: Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing water system.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue to pursue all measures of identifying leaks so as to reduce the “lost water” volume associated with the present water system.
- B) Pursue available funding to supplement cost of a leak detection system.
- C) Develop a phased capital project improvement plan to identify and replace all undersized or deteriorated water mains.

GOAL 45: Insure the long term safety and reliability of the public water system.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue to evaluate the “upgradient” risks and coordinate with the Town of Cortlandville on an Aquifer Protection District.
- B) Update the status of a back-up well source location.
- C) Continue to work with the Town of Cortlandville in identifying areas where City water service could be extended to serve Town residents.
- D) Recognize, promote and educate about the value of the water supply and the Sole Source Aquifer designation.

GOAL 46: Continue to repair and replace sewer mains and investigate “unauthorized” discharges so as to reduce inflow and infiltration.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Regularly review most recent “inflow and infiltration” data and developed phased approach to reduce.
- B) Continue to TV sewer mains and prepare a phased plan to repair priority locations.

GOAL 47: Upgrade Wastewater Treatment Facility as required and consider alternative ownership/management due to service area and future demands.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Complete mandated upgrades as per Chesapeake Bay Initiative.
- B) Plan additional upgrades and seek funding as needed.
- C) Examine value of alternative operational approaches and cost sharing.

GOAL 48: Seek creative alternative uses for storm water runoff that can benefit the community.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Investigate and develop information concerning re-use of storm water collected at residential properties such as rain gardens, re-directed downspout flows, rainwater irrigation system.
- B) Allow utilization of green infrastructure such as vegetated swales, porous pavement, and natural stormwater management to reduce flooding risk and improve water quality.
- C) Develop educational brochure for public distribution to educate the public and urge the use of green infrastructure.

GOAL 49: Seek alternative power sources to generate electricity and develop a phased program to initially serve small facilities (Public Works, City Hall, etc.)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Investigate the upcoming legislation associated with the new law increasing the “Net Metering” for businesses and municipalities who utilize renewable energy sources.

- B) Become informed on all forms of renewable energy sources that could benefit and be applicable to the City.

GOAL 50: Relocate overhead power lines to underground locations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Develop regulations to require installation of underground power lines for new development and major redevelopment projects, including burying of service lines from mail lines to buildings.
- B) Pursue funding source to bury/relocate overhead power lines within the City or when opportunities arise.
- C) Pursue a funding program whereby penalties paid by power companies for outages are dedicated to a fund which provides grants to communities who want to bury overhead lines so as to reduce the likelihood of recurring outages.

GOAL 51: Insure the most efficient delivery of high tech, internet and wireless communication systems to residents.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Identify a knowledgeable staff member to periodically monitor the latest developments, statewide and nationally, on the technical and legal/jurisdictional issues concerning provision of Wi-Fi (wireless Internet) on a community wide basis.
- B) Identify a knowledgeable staff member who will attend periodic seminars/workshops which focus on the issue communitywide wireless internet service.

X. TRANSPORTATION

GOAL 52: Enhance and encourage pedestrian and bicycle routes, which promote connectivity and good health while reducing our reliance on vehicles.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Identify gaps within the City's existing sidewalk, trail, and bikeway system that could serve as key links to destinations in and around the City (parks, schools, shopping, downtown, jobs, etc.) and develop and expand such system to close gaps.
- B) Promote and support the completion of the proposed River Trail to link Cortland and Homer.
- C) Include requirements, as part of the Site Plan Review, for all new projects to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle routes and facilities as part of the new development, as may be appropriate.
- D) Pursue capital improvements program that increases opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle usage and safety thereof.
- E) Develop informational brochure for public distribution that details the health and environmental benefits of using non-motorized forms of transportation.

GOAL 53: Improve and promote the use of public transportation.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Improve and expand service and provide incentives to increase the use of existing public transportation system.
- B) Examine consolidation/coordination of Cortland Transit and SUNY bus system.
- C) Examine consolidation of public transit systems of Cortland and Tompkins Counties to provide greater connectivity between the two communities
- D) Consider an express bus route between Cortland and Ithaca specifically for working public.
- E) Seek grant funding for installation of bus shelters within the City.
- F) Support development of commuter rail service linking Syracuse, Cortland and Binghamton.

GOAL 54: As part of overall capital improvements program, continue to target existing streets in need of repair.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Pursue capital improvements that remedy storm water flooding; and address infrastructure repair and replacement as part of the project.
- B) Identify streets and locations where improvements/maintenance are most needed.
- C) Evaluate flooding at streets and railroad crossings.
- D) When applicable, coordinate designs with other agencies that are involved (DOT) that meet the needs of the City.
- E) Seek outside financial assistance to funding needed capital improvements.

XI. EMERGENCY SERVICES

GOAL 55: Provide/contract for emergency services for its citizens so that they can live peaceably, healthfully, and safely in the community.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Assist emergency services entities in searching and applying for grant funds when opportunities become available.
- B) City Planning and Zoning Boards will consider the impact of any new development on emergency services and the potential need to expand fire and police.

GOAL 56: Provide emergency services in a cost effective manner while ensuring adequate and timely coverage.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue to fund police and fire services while incorporating cost savings measures such as sharing services/consolidation with nearby municipalities.
- A) B) Equip fire and police personnel with the equipment and technology to effectively do their do their job and to protect paid and volunteer personnel as the need arises and its budget allows.
- B) House its emergency services in adequate facilities and continue to seek funding for a new municipal building to address its space needs.
- C) Continue to investigate consolidation and/or reorganization of its police and fire departments in order to ensure the highest level of services are delivered in the most cost effective manner.

GOAL 57: Ensure that all municipal buildings have the proper security equipment and procedures, to ensure that employees, and elected and appointed personnel are adequately protected.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue to install better security equipment in municipal buildings as needed and as affordable.

GOAL 58: Ensure adequate ambulance services for City residents.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Facilitate public outreach so that the citizens and property owners of the City are aware of ambulance services.

XII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

GOAL 59: Work with surrounding and nearby municipalities, the City School District, and County government to minimize costs and maximize services.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue policies and efforts to share equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and services to maximize the benefit to Cortland City taxpayers.
- B) Consolidate services/departments, share equipment purchases, and share facilities where it makes sense, saves costs, and/or enhances services.

XIII. CODE ENFORCEMENT

Goal 60: All properties in the City of Cortland shall be in compliance with all City regulations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Increase the financial resources for Code Enforcement, as necessary, to provide proactive Code Enforcement.
- B) Include a comprehensive citizen educational component as part of the Code Enforcement effort.

Goal 61: Adopt Code Enforcement policies that complement and enhance its Code Enforcement Program.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Develop and adopt a Nuisance Property Law that establishes a point system for Code violations and police calls with subsequent municipal enforcement action ranging from fines to revocation of certificate of occupancies for properties reaching a certain number of points over a specified period of time.
- B) Periodically conduct a comprehensive review of its Code Enforcement policies.
- C) Stricter enforcement of all codes will be the centerpiece of policy changes.
- D) Develop to ensure a consistent prosecution of violations.
- E) Study the establishment of a Housing Court and implement with other local governments, if determined feasible.

GOAL 62: Review and update City building code/local laws/policies, including monetary and other penalties for non-compliance, and make changes as needed.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Amend or adopt stricter/improved local codes, where necessary.
- B) Periodically review and update its penalties for violators of building codes/local laws.
- C) Periodically review its building code fee/permit schedules.

GOAL 63: Expand the technological and informational resources of the Code Enforcement Office.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Periodically review and update, when necessary and financially feasible, property maintenance and other software, and hardware to provide greater department efficiency and effectiveness.
- B) Provide the resources necessary for Code Officers and staff to continue their education regarding code enforcement issues and technology.
- C) Expand the Zoning Officer position to provide comprehensive review of projects with respect to zoning, site plan review, and overall conformance with the planning goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- D) Work with the City on completing a City-wide Geographic Information System (GIS) Needs Assessment and subsequently implementing a City-wide GIS as recommended in the Needs Assessment.

XIV. PLANNING AND ZONING

GOAL 64: Enhance and preserve the visual and aesthetic integrity of the major gateways into the City including Exit 11, Route 11 near Homer, and the Port Watson Bridge.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Develop a Gateway Overlay zoning district. The intention of such a district is to create aesthetically pleasing and inviting visual entrances into the City.
- B) Define the appropriate boundaries for gateways to the City.
- C) Adopt Gateway Overlay zoning district.

GOAL 65. Adopt city-wide design standards and architectural guidelines for all commercial and multi-family development and major renovations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Design guidelines should require desired architectural features that are consistent with the character of the city on a neighborhood basis.
- B) Design guidelines should require that new development or redevelopment match the scale and size of existing buildings.
- C) Non conforming properties should be brought into conformance upon a major renovation.

GOAL 66. Eliminate visual and structural blight in the City.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Adopt vacant buildings law that provides financial disincentives for property owners to allow vacant structures to fall into state of disrepair, harbor overgrown lawns, and leave structures in an abandoned state.
- B) Ensure that all properties meet the standards of the NYS Property Maintenance Code. Amend local provisions as required.
- C) Prospectively use Code Enforcement to address structural blight on exteriors of commercial and residential buildings.
- D) Seek funding to renovate commercial and residential properties.

GOAL 67: Increase opportunities for growth and development of retail and commercial establishments within the City.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Amend zoning code and map to allow mixed-density, mixed-use, and infill development at appropriate locations throughout the City enhancing the opportunity for neighborhood retail and commercial establishments.
- B) Amend zoning code to expand opportunities for home businesses provided the uses are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
- C) Amend zoning code to relax provisions that restrict establishment and operation of home businesses such as signage and dimensional requirements, revise definition of home business.

GOAL 68: Strengthen enforcement and administration of land use regulations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Ensure that local staff and officials who administer local planning initiatives are highly trained.
- B) Require and fund educational opportunities for new Planning and Zoning Board members that meets or exceeds New York State's training standards for Planning and Zoning Board members. The City should specify the minimum training required locally.
- C) Ensure consistency in determinations on area variance requests. Require that each statutory factor be specifically and thoroughly addressed in any official recommendation, maintain records in user-friendly format to ensure consistency. Qualified, professional staff should review and prepare staff report and recommendations on all variance requests.
- D) Administer planning within City so that use of the variance is for exceptional circumstances only and so that no variance granted shall increase a non-conformity or to benefit a parcel other than the subject parcel to the variance application.
- E) Conduct GIS needs assessment for the City and implement a GIS as determined by the assessment.
- F) Create inventory and map of all non-conforming parcels within the City.

GOAL 69: Beautify the City and promote a sustainable built environment.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Adopt a landscape code that addresses plantings in and around parking lots, commercial properties, rental properties.
- B) Within landscape code require buffers between commercial use and residential uses and where there is more than 75 feet of unbroken pavement.
- C) Include provision for amortization of grandfathered properties and standards for compliance upon a change in use, ownership, or occupancy, or upon major renovations.
- D) Include provision that requires consideration during site plan review before vegetative cover and alteration of tree canopy.
- E) Enact stricter regulations governing lot coverage and impervious surfaces.

GOAL 70: Preserve residential neighborhoods from encroachment by multiple unit dwelling and commercial development.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Amend zoning code to allow for development of medium to high-density cluster-style developments that increase housing opportunities and options for different segments of the population while preserving existing single and two family neighborhoods.
- B) Amend zoning regulations to expand definition and use of accessory apartments.
- C) Disallow use of variance procedure to allow conversion of single-family homes into multi-family dwelling, particularly in R-1 zoning district.
- D) Work with Cortland Regional Medical Center officials to direct growth toward non-residential properties, particularly along Homer Avenue, and to minimize impact of expansions, facilities, amenities, parking, and site activities, on residential properties adjacent to and surrounding the hospital facilities.
- E) Restrict the development of parking lots in R1 and R2 Districts.
- F) Limit the encroachment of commercial development into traditional residential neighborhoods by strictly enforcing zoning regulations and minimizing use of variances in these districts.
- G) Use innovative land use planning techniques, such as Graduated Density and zoning overlay districts to allow for a higher density student-centric neighborhood along and near eastern Groton Avenue.

- H) Enact more stringent standards for rezones in R-1 and R-2 neighborhoods.

GOAL 71: Undertake a comprehensive review and revision of the City zoning code and other land use regulations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Appoint a twelve-member Advisory Committee to initiate review and revision of the zoning code, zoning map, and other land use regulations and to review land use regulations for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- B) As part of the zoning code review and revision, evaluate allowable uses in each zoning district and modify as appropriate to the current development and demographic needs of the community.
- C) As part of the zoning code review and revision, develop new zoning districts that accommodate infill, mixed-density and/or mixed-use developments, and cluster housing.
- D) As part of zoning code review and revision, amend the code to specify a periodic review of all land use regulations at a minimum of every five years to assess consistency with the comprehensive plan, compliance with state law, and to ensure that said regulations meet the needs of the community.
- E) As part of zoning code review and revision, review all land use regulations to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- F) Revise the zoning code and zoning map within twelve months of Comprehensive Plan adoption.
- G) Revise all other land use regulations (not contained in zoning code) within 18 months of Comprehensive Plan adoption.
- H) Develop any new land use regulations required or recommended by Comprehensive Plan within 24 months of Comprehensive Plan adoption.

XV. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

GOAL 72: Strengthen the effectiveness of the zoning code by utilizing enhanced site plan review procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) As part of enhanced site plan review, the impact of any new development on emergency services should be considered.
- B) As part of enhanced site plan review, the impact of any new development on natural resources, such as wetlands, flooding, and the sole source aquifer, should be considered
- C) Require site plan review when development proposals involve change to physical attributes of a parcel; when vehicular or pedestrian traffic, or site ingress or egress is changed; or when a variance is requested/required prior to development.
- D) Encourage buried power lines on new projects, where possible.

GOAL 73: Establish clear development management procedures for efficient, thorough, and timely review and approval of development proposals.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- A) Establish a single point of contact, most likely the City Zoning Officer, for all development projects.
- B) Create clear graphical and written flow charts outlining the City's approval process. Provide such charts to applicants consistent with the approval requirements of their project along with application packages and forms needed for all parts of the review process.
- C) The Zoning Officer, or other designated point of contact, should assess each development application and create a written review report summarizing the development review needs, requirements, and issue. Such report should include the zoning district of project and relevant requirements thereof; consistency or inconsistency of the project with established zoning and regulations; required approvals, such as architectural review, or ZBA; potential variances that may be required; SEQRA requirements; other City ordinances and regulations that may apply, such as landscaping ordinances or design guidelines, and other relevant issues involving the review process. Reports should be maintained in the project file and provided to the applicant, code enforcement official, and other involved entities such as the Planning or Architectural Review Board.

- D) Establish a coordinated review process among all affected agencies and departments for large scale or complicated development projects
- E) Require pre-application meeting with sketch plans prior to review of large-scale development or redevelopment applications.
- F) Review all development management policies and revise as necessary to create a clear, defined, and streamlined permitting process.
- G) Provide for professional staffing to assist the Architectural Review Commission, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals with professional review of projects. Such staffing can be provided via a qualified City employee or outside consultant(s).
- H) Provide the Zoning/Code Enforcement Office with adequate staffing to ensure the proper and timely review of projects.
- I) Provide the Zoning/Code Enforcement Office with adequate technology to efficiently manage development and the permitting process.
- J) Upon completion and approval of the Architectural Review Commission, the board should issue a "Certificate of Appropriateness". All conditions mandated by the Architectural Review Board should be clearly delineated in the project file and final Certificate of Occupancy should be contingent upon meeting all such conditions and requirements.