



Agriculture, Planning & Environmental Committee

60 Central Ave.

Cortland, NY 13045

Committee Meeting

<https://www.cortlandcountyny.gov>

~ Minutes ~

Thursday, December 5, 2024

10:00 AM

Room 302

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 AM by Committee Chair Beau Harbin

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
Reed Cleland	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Mitchel Eccleston	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Excused	
Paul Heider	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
William McGovern	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Sandra Price	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Kris Valentine Behnke	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Beau Harbin	Cortland County, NY	Committee Chair	Present	
Savannah Hempstead	Cortland County, NY	Clerk of the Legislature	Present	
Christopher Newell	Cortland County, NY	Board Member	Present	
David Rutherford	Cortland County, NY	Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension	Present	
Melissa Potter	Cortland County, NY	Mobility Manager	Present	
Trisha Hiemstra	Cortland County, NY	Planning Director	Present	
Brandy Colebrook	NYALT	Executive Director	Present	
Kim Cameron	Cortland County	Resident	Present	
Melanie Vilardi	Cortland County, NY	Deputy County Administrator	Present	
Andrea Herzog	Cortland County, NY	Director of Finance	Present	
Hank Day	Cortland County, NY	Land Use Planner	Present	
Amanda Barber	Soil and Water	Executive Director	Late	10:11 AM
Cathy Bischoff	Cortland County, NY	Board Member	Late	10:22 AM
Ronald J. Van Dee	Cortland County, NY	Board Member	Late	10:27 AM
Rob Corpora	Cortland County, NY	County Administrator	Late	10:08 AM

Kevin Fitch	Cortland County, NY	Chair of the Legislature	Late	10:08 AM
Ashley Millard	Cortland County, NY	Deputy Clerk of the Legislature	Remote	
Angela White	MRB Group		Remote	
Tracy Verrier	MRB Group		Remote	
Nicole Compton	Cortland County, NY	Paralegal	Remote	
Jason DeRaiche	Cortland County, NY	Safety Director	Remote	
Jessica Leet	Cortland County, NY	Executive Assistant	Remote	
Doug Schneider	Cortland Standard	Reporter	Remote	

MINUTES

1. Ag/Planning/Environmental - Committee Meeting - Nov 7, 2024 10:00 AM

RESULT: APPROVED

RESOLUTIONS

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – Approval of Amended Bylaws - Cortland County Planning Board - Planning Department

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
	Next: 12/19/2024 6:00 PM
MOVER:	Sandra Price, Committee Member
SECONDER:	Reed Cleland, Committee Member
AYES:	Cleland, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin
EXCUSED:	Mitchel Eccleston

ON MOTION OF HARBIN

RESOLUTION NO.

Approval of Amended Bylaws - Cortland County Planning Board - Planning Department

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Planning Board operates under bylaws that guide its structure, roles, and procedures; AND

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Planning Board has reviewed and recommended amendments to its bylaws, as outlined in the attached document; AND

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Legislature's Agriculture, Planning, and Environmental Committee has reviewed and supports these proposed changes; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Cortland County Legislature hereby approves the amended bylaws of the Cortland County Planning Board as attached; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that all previously adopted bylaws of the Cortland County Planning Board are hereby replaced in their entirety by the bylaws adopted through this resolution; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that copies of all previously adopted bylaws, as well as the newly adopted bylaws, shall be maintained on file with the Clerk of the Legislature for record-keeping and reference purposes; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the amended bylaws shall take effect immediately upon adoption of this resolution.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – Authorize State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Determination of Environmental Significance for Cortland County Strategic Development Plan

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
	Next: 12/19/2024 6:00 PM
MOVER:	Reed Cleland, Committee Member
SECONDER:	Kris Valentine Behnke, Committee Member
AYES:	Cleland, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin
EXCUSED:	Mitchel Eccleston

ON MOTION OF HARBIN

RESOLUTION NO.

Authorize State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Determination of Environmental Significance for Cortland County Strategic Development Plan

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Legislature (hereinafter referred to as the Legislature) has determined the above referenced Action to be a Type 1 Action pursuant to Part 617 of the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Regulations; AND

WHEREAS, the Legislature has reviewed and accepted the completed Full Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1, 2, and 3 on the Action prepared by the MRB Group; AND

WHEREAS, the Legislature has completed the coordinated review and public comment period provided for under the SEQR Regulations; AND

WHEREAS, the Legislature has designated itself as lead agency under the SEQR Regulations for making the determination of significance upon said action; AND

WHEREAS, the Legislature has given consideration to the criteria for determining significance as set forth in Section 617.7(c) (1) of the SEQR Regulations and the information contained in Full Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1, 2, and 3; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that said Action WILL NOT result in any significant adverse environmental impacts based on the review of the Full Environmental Assessment Form; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the Legislature does hereby make a Determination of Non-Significance on said Action, and the County Administrator is hereby directed to issue the Negative Declaration as evidence of the Legislature's determination of environmental non-significance.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 – Adopt the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
	Next: 12/19/2024 6:00 PM
MOVER:	Reed Cleland, Committee Member
SECONDER:	Kris Valentine Behnke, Committee Member
AYES:	Cleland, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin
EXCUSED:	Mitchel Eccleston

ON MOTION OF HARBIN

RESOLUTION NO.

Adopt the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Legislature, through Resolution No. 174-22, authorized the hiring of consultants to develop a strategic plan, with funding provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and Empire State Development (ESD) in the amount of \$190,000 with a \$10,000 County match; AND

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 137-23, authorized contracting with MRB Group, D.P.C., and in Resolution No. 19-24 Establish Cortland County Strategic Development Plan Steering Committee (“SDPSC”) who in collaboration with the county departments, municipalities, community organizations, and residents, developed the Elevate Cortland County Strategic Development Plan to serve as a guide for the County’s future growth and development; AND

WHEREAS, from September 2023 through November 2024, the SDPSC engaged in extensive community outreach and data collection, including public workshops, focus groups with subject matter experts, a community summit, and a public hearing, ensuring that the planning process reflected the diverse perspectives and needs of Cortland County residents; AND

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan outlines a fiscally responsible, practical, and forward-thinking framework for addressing critical areas such as economic development and workforce, housing, sustainability and open space, and connectivity and infrastructure; AND

WHEREAS, a public hearing on the adoption of the Strategic Plan and compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) was held on November 21, 2024, in accordance with proper notice requirements; AND

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan was finalized after widely distributing drafts of the Plan, and revised in response to comments by agencies and the public; AND

WHEREAS, the Legislature has carefully and thoroughly reviewed the Strategic Development Plan as revised and are satisfied that it meets the needs of the County and complies with applicable laws; AND

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds the Strategic Development Plan to be an essential planning tool that reflects the County’s shared vision for the future; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually, with an update every five years, to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with the County’s goals; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the Cortland County Legislature hereby adopts the *Cortland County Strategic Development Plan* dated December 19, 2024 (Final Version), as an important planning tool that identifies a wide range of issues, initiatives, studies, projects, and programs to be undertaken by various entities.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 – Transfer of Conservation Easements to the New York Agricultural Land Trust (NYALT) for Long-Term Stewardship

RESULT: **APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**

Next: 12/19/2024 6:00 PM

MOVER: Reed Cleland, Committee Member

SECONDER: Sandra Price, Committee Member

AYES: Cleland, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin

EXCUSED: Mitchel Eccleston

ON MOTION OF HARBIN

RESOLUTION NO.

Transfer of Conservation Easements to the New York Agricultural Land Trust (NYALT) for Long-Term Stewardship

WHEREAS, Cortland County, through the New York State Farmland Protection Implementation Grant program, was awarded five (5) conservation easements, referred to by the following titles at the time of award of the conservation easements:

Conservation Easement	Location	Tax Map No.	Total Acreage
Chace Farm	Cortlandville	65.00-07-03.000	395.12
Henderson Farm	Homer	37.00-02-09.111	137.10
Sears Farm	Homer Homer	37.00-02-03.000 37.00-02-09.112	174.50
Slade Peaceful Valley Farm	Scott Homer Homer Homer Homer Homer Homer	36.00-03-05.100 56.00-01-04.000 56.0001-13.000 56.00-01-14.000 46.00-01-21.000 46.00-01-35.00 46.00-01-38.000	829.97
Underwood Farm	Tully	7.00-08-04.000	131

; AND

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of Cortland County to transfer the long-term stewardship responsibilities for these conservation easements to a qualified entity with expertise in farmland protection and stewardship, thereby formally ending Cortland County's role as the responsible party for these conservation easements; AND

WHEREAS, the New York Agricultural Land Trust (NYALT) has agreed to accept and manage these conservation easements in perpetuity, ensuring compliance with all terms and conditions of the easements, which formally ; AND

WHEREAS, NYALT requires a transfer fee not to exceed \$186,342.00 for the long-term stewardship of these conservation easements; AND

WHEREAS, the Farmland Protection Reserve Account (A386300.FARM), currently has \$50,604.59 in available funds, said funds intended to provide stewardship fees in succeeding years; AND

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 226-18 created a Debt Reduction Account (A120300.DRFD, which since has changed to account no. A.386300.DEBT) for the reduction of County debt; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, the Cortland County Legislature be and hereby allocates the balance of \$86,811.33 to A80205.54055 for purposes of this transfer; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the Cortland County Legislature hereby closes the Debt Reduction Account (A.386300.DEBT), formerly A120300.DRFD, and; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, the Cortland County Legislature be and hereby allocates the balance of \$50,604.59 to A80205.54055 for purposes of this transfer; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the Cortland County Legislature hereby closes the Farmland Protection Reserve (A.386300.FARM) and; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the Cortland County Legislature hereby amends the 2024 Budget as follows:

INCREASE:

A80205.54055	Professional Services	\$186,342.00
A351100	Appropriated Reserves	\$137,415.92

DECREASE:

A80205.51005	Personal Services	\$48,926.08
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; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that the County Administrator, upon review and approval by the County Attorney, is hereby authorized to execute all necessary agreements, documents, and instruments to effectuate the transfer of said conservation easements to NYALT, thereby formally ending Cortland County's role as the responsible party for these conservation easements.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 – Adopt Revisions to the Cortland County Consolidated Agricultural District - Planning Department

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
	Next: 12/19/2024 6:00 PM
MOVER:	Reed Cleland, Committee Member
SECONDER:	Sandra Price, Committee Member
AYES:	Cleland, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin
EXCUSED:	Mitchel Eccleston

ON MOTION OF HARBIN

RESOLUTION NO.

Adopt Revisions to the Cortland County Consolidated Agricultural District - Planning Department

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Legislature adopted Resolution No. 31-05, which reestablished the Cortland County Agricultural District; AND

WHEREAS, Article 25-AA, Section 303 (a) of the Agriculture and Markets Law, states that the County Legislature shall review any district created eight (8) years after the date of the creation and every eight (8) years thereafter; AND

WHEREAS, the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board has established a policy whereby any landowners of a parcel of land of less than seven (7) acres must provide justification to the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board as to the capacity of such property to be a viable agricultural land in order for a property of less than 7 acres to be considered for inclusion in the Cortland County Consolidated Agricultural District; AND

WHEREAS, the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and the Legislature's Agriculture, Planning, & Environment Committee have completed all necessary steps and procedures required for reestablishment of the Agricultural District; AND

WHEREAS, the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board recommends to the County Legislature for adoption, the reestablishment of the Cortland County Consolidated Agricultural District; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that revisions to the list of land parcels for inclusion in the reestablished Agricultural District, which include additions to and deletions from the district, be made to the Cortland County Consolidated Agricultural District as follows:

Addition/Deletion	Town	Tax Map No.	Applicant Name	Acreage
Addition	Preble	27.00-01-63.21	Griswold Family Realty, LLC	270
Addition	Preble	27.00-03-19.00	Griswold Family Realty, LLC	44
Addition	Preble	27.00-01-63.220	Preble Hill Farms, LLC	15.5
Addition	Preble	16.00-02-20.000	Preble Hill Farms, LLC	15.5
Addition	Preble	7.00-08-08.200	G&E Land Co, LLC	71
Addition	Cincinnati	123.00-04-23.000	Jacob Christy	49
Addition	Cincinnati	123.00-04-30.000	Jacob Christy	81
Addition	Cincinnati	123.00-04-22.000	David Christy	25
Addition	Cincinnati	123.00-04-21.000	David Christy	3
Addition	Cincinnati	111.00-01-07.20	David Christy	43
Addition	Cincinnati	112.00-02-04.120	David Christy	47
Addition	Cincinnati	133.00-01-05.000	Jeremy Adams	2
Addition	Cincinnati	100.00-01-10.111	Corey Thomas	17

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 – Amend the 2024 Budget to Fund Agreement with First Transit, Inc. dba TransDev

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
	Next: 12/19/2024 6:00 PM
MOVER:	Paul Heider, Committee Member
SECONDER:	Reed Cleland, Committee Member
AYES:	Cleland, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin
EXCUSED:	Mitchel Eccleston

ON MOTION OF HARBIN

RESOLUTION NO.

Amend the 2024 Budget to Fund Agreement with First Transit, Inc. dba TransDev

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Legislature adopted Resolution No. 148-24, which authorized the Chairman of the Legislature to enter into agreements with First Transit, Inc., dba TransDev, to provide public transportation services during the County's transition to Centro; AND

WHEREAS, additional funding is required to support these services and ensure uninterrupted public transportation during this transition period; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the 2024 County Budget be and hereby is amended as follows:

Increase Revenue:

A563042.41289	DEPARTMENTAL FEES	\$248,000.00
A563044.44590	OPERATING ASSISTANCE	\$48,371.00
A359900	APPROPRIATED FUND BALANCE	\$746,682.54

Increase Expenditure:

A56305.54815	CONTRACTED SERVICES	\$1,043,053.54
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MONTHLY REPORTS

1. Planning Department Monthly Report

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Recommendation of Adoption of the Strategic Development Plan from the Cortland County Planning Board

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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2. CNYNET Broadband Commitment Letter

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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3. Cooperative Extension Report

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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4. Soil & Water Monthly Report

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was closed at 11:04 AM



Culture, Planning & Environmental Committee

60 Central Ave.
Cortland, NY 13045
<https://www.cortlandcountyny.gov>

Committee Meeting

~ Minutes ~

Thursday, November 7, 2024

10:00 AM

Room 302

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Committee Chair Beau Harbin

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
Reed Cleland	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Mitchel Eccleston	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Paul Heider	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
William McGovern	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Sandra Price	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Kris Valentine Behnke	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Beau Harbin	Cortland County, NY	Committee Chair	Present	
Kevin Fitch	Cortland County, NY	Chair of the Legislature	Present	
Savannah Hempstead	Cortland County, NY	Clerk of the Legislature	Present	
Rob Corpora	Cortland County, NY	County Administrator	Present	
Melissa Potter	Cortland County, NY	Mobility Manager	Present	
Trisha Hiemstra	Cortland County, NY	Planning Director	Present	
David Rutherford	Cortland County, NY	Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension	Present	
Mark Meyerhofer	ECC Technologies	Director of Broadband	Present	
David Botar	CNYRPDB	Executive Director	Present	
Ashley Millard	Cortland County, NY	Deputy Clerk of the Legislature	Remote	
Jason DeRaiche	Cortland County, NY	Safety Director	Remote	
Carlita Withers	Cortland County, NY	Deputy Director of Finance	Remote	
Chris Jankus	Cortland County, NY	GIS Planner	Remote	
Jessica Leet	Cortland County, NY	Executive Assistant	Remote	
Amanda Barber	Soil & Water Conservation	District Manager	Remote	
Victoria J. Monty	Cortland County, NY	County Attorney	Remote	
Andrea Herzog	Cortland County, NY	Director of Finance	Present	
Melanie Vilardi	Cortland County, NY	Deputy County Administrator	Present	
Morgan Spaulding	Cortland County, NY	Grants Administrator	Present	
Christopher Newell	Cortland County, NY	Board Member	Present	
Cathy Bischoff	Cortland County, NY	Board Member	Present	
Doug Schneider	Cortland Standard	Reporter	Present	
Keith VanGorder	Cortland County, NY	Board Member	Remote	
Eugene Waldbauer	Cortland County, NY	Board Member	Present	

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 7, 2024 10:00 AM (MINUTES)

MINUTES

1. Ag/Planning/Environmental - Committee Meeting - Oct 10, 2024 10:00 AM

RESULT:	APPROVED
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PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation by CNYRPDB Regarding Updates on Proposed CNYNET Broadband Network Project

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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RESOLUTIONS

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Commitment Letter to the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board for the CNYNET Broadband Network Project

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
	Next: 11/12/2024 9:00 AM
MOVER:	Reed Cleland, Committee Member
SECONDER:	Paul Heider, Committee Member
AYES:	Cleland, Eccleston, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin

ON MOTION OF HARBIN**RESOLUTION NO.**

Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Commitment Letter to the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board for the CNYNET Broadband Network Project

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Legislature recognizes the importance of accessible and reliable broadband service to support economic growth, educational advancement, and community development throughout Cortland County and Central New York; AND

WHEREAS, the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB) has submitted an application to the New York State (NYS) ConnectAll Office under the Municipal Infrastructure Program - Phase 3 to support the development of broadband infrastructure, referred to as the CNYNET Broadband Network project; AND

WHEREAS, the proposed CNYNET Broadband Network project aims to construct a 325-mile open access network that will deliver essential broadband services to unserved and underserved rural communities in Cortland and Cayuga Counties; AND

WHEREAS, CNYRPDB has requested a grant of \$26.1 million to support the development of this project; AND

WHEREAS, Cortland County has been requested to provide a commitment of \$3 million to support its proportional allocation of financing and reserve requirements for the project; AND

WHEREAS, this \$3 million commitment by Cortland County will be structured as interim construction financing and will be repaid to the County from grant funds awarded to the CNYRPDB by the NYS ConnectAll Office upon successful approval and disbursement of funds, contingent upon the review of final project plans, the State's grant award, and the formal appropriation of funds by the Cortland County Legislature; AND

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Legislature is fully supportive of this collaborative initiative to expand broadband access and foster connectivity throughout rural areas in the County; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Chairman of the Cortland County Legislature, upon review by the County Attorney or designee, is hereby authorized and directed to execute a commitment letter to the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board to confirm Cortland County's support of the CNYNET Broadband Network project and provide a financial commitment in the amount of \$3 million, as outlined in the letter; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that this commitment of financing is expressly subject to the review and approval of final project development plans, the NYS ConnectAll Office's Municipal Infrastructure Program (MIP) grant award and disbursement agreement, and a formal appropriation of funds by the Cortland County Legislature.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – Appoint Members to the Transportation Advisory Committee

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
	Next: 11/21/2024 6:00 PM
MOVER:	Sandra Price, Committee Member
SECONDER:	William McGovern, Committee Member
AYES:	Cleland, Eccleston, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin

ON MOTION OF HARBIN

RESOLUTION NO.

Appoint Members to the Transportation Advisory Committee

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 289-19 authorized the formalization of the Transportation Advisory Committee as a Citizen's Advisory Committee; AND

WHEREAS, the Transportation Advisory Committee, as a formal subcommittee of the Agriculture, Planning, and Environmental Committee, will consist of a membership from a wide variety of community service agencies and government agencies; AND

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Legislature approved changes to the Bylaws of the Transportation Advisory Committee, which include staggering terms of members; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Cortland County Legislature be and hereby appoints the following community service and government agency representatives, or their designee, to the Transportation Advisory Committee for a term beginning January 1, 2025 as follows:

NAME	AGENCY/CAPACITY	TERM ENDING
Jackie Leaf	Seven Valley Health Coalition	12/31/2027
Brian Moore	Cortland County Department of Social Services	12/31/2027
Jennifer Hillman	Cortland County Health Department	12/31/2027
Christopher Maroney	SUNY Cortland	12/31/2027

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 – Renew Joint Municipal Agreement for Public Transportation with Cortland and Tompkins Counties

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 7, 2024 10:00 AM (MINUTES)

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
	Next: 11/21/2024 6:00 PM
MOVER:	Reed Cleland, Committee Member
SECONDER:	Sandra Price, Committee Member
AYES:	Cleland, Eccleston, Heider, McGovern, Price, Behnke, Harbin

ON MOTION OF HARBIN**RESOLUTION NO.**

Renew Joint Municipal Agreement for Public Transportation with Cortland and Tompkins Counties

WHEREAS, there are a large number of residents of Cortland County who are employed in Tompkins County and therefore commute to Tompkins County on a daily basis; AND

WHEREAS, Resolution Nos. 116-07, 94-12, 57-15, and 294-19 authorized an agreement between Cortland County and Tompkins County in order to provide a commuter bus service to Cornell University and associated services related to existing routes 6,7,10, and 11 which are located in Tompkins County; AND

WHEREAS, Cortland County proposes to continue providing service to Tompkins County and extend the agreement with Tompkins County to provide service to Tompkins County for a period of 7 months, beginning October 1, 2024 ending May 1, 2025; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Chairman of the Cortland County Legislator, upon review by the County Attorney or designee, be and hereby authorized to enter into an agreement between Cortland County and Tompkins County to provide a commuter bus service to Tompkins County.

MONTHLY REPORTS

1. SWCD Monthly Report

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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2. Planning Department Activity Report

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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3. Cooperative Extension Monthly Report

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Agricultural District Inclusion Period

RESULT:	COMPLETED
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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was closed at 11:23 AM

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 7, 2024 10:00 AM (MINUTES)

CORTLAND COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

BYLAWS

Bylaws of the
Cortland County Planning Board

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Bylaws of the Cortland County Planning Board

ARTICLE I ESTABLISHMENT, PURPOSE AND DUTIES

- Section 1. Establishment
The Cortland County Planning Board, originally created May 8, 1968, pursuant to Section 239b of the General Municipal Law of the State of New York and continued by Local Law 6 of 2019 adopted by the Cortland County Legislature on June 27, 2019.
- Section 2. Purpose
The Board shall advise the Legislature on any matter concerning regional, county, or municipal planning which may come to its attention by its own initiative or on referral from the Director.
- Section 3. Duties
The Board shall perform the duties as outlined in Section 7. of Local Law 6 of 2019 adopted by the Cortland County Legislature on June 27, 2019.

ARTICLE II DEFINITIONS

Terms used in these Bylaws shall be:

- A. "Board" shall mean the Cortland County Planning Board;
- B. "Committee" shall mean the Agriculture/Planning/Environmental Committee (or successor committee) of the Cortland County Legislature;
- C. "Department" shall mean the Cortland County Department of Planning;
- D. "Director" shall mean the Director of Planning of the County of Cortland;
- E. "Legislature" shall mean the Cortland County Legislature.

ARTICLE III MEMBERS AND TERMS OF OFFICE

- Section 1. Number
- A. The Board shall consist of eleven (11) voting members appointed by the Legislature upon recommendation of its Chairperson.
 - B. No more than five (5) members of the Board shall reside in the City of Cortland; no more than three (3) members of the Board shall reside in the Town of Cortlandville (excluding the Village of McGraw); and no more

than two (2) members of the Board shall come from any other single Village or Town.

Section 2. Ex-Officio Members

The Chairperson of the Legislature shall be an ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board.

Section 3. Terms of Office

A. Each voting member shall be appointed by the Legislature for a term of four (4) years.

B. A member who has served more than half a term in office shall be considered to have served a full term.

Section 4. Vacancies

A. Vacancies in membership on the Board shall be filled by appointment by the Legislature in accordance with Section 1 of Article III of these Bylaws.

Section 5. Attendance

A. Board members will contact the County Planning Department at least 24 hours in advance of any regular or special meeting, if un able to attend the meeting.

B. Board members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings and may not have more than three (3) unexcused absences within a one-year period.

C. Absences will be excused for acceptable reasons, such as illness, family emergencies, or unavoidable work conflicts as determined by the Chair of the Planning Board.

D. Repeated unexcused absences will result in a written warning, and continued non-compliance may lead to removal from the Board.

Section 6. Removal from Membership

A. A member of the Board may be removed by a majority vote of the Legislature with or without cause.

B. A member of the Board shall be automatically removed by **Legislative Resolution** for any reason that makes him/her ineligible to serve.

ARTICLE IV MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

Section 1. Regular

A. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held monthly in accordance with the schedule established by the Board at the annual meeting;

B. Each member shall receive a schedule of the meetings for the calendar year;

C. Public notice shall be provided in accordance with Public Officers Law Article 7, Section 104.

Section 2. Special

Special meetings of the Board shall be held:

- A. At the call of the Director or the Chairperson of the Legislature;
- B. At the call of the Chair of the Planning Board;
- C. Upon written request of at least six (6) members of the Planning Board;
- D. Notice to the members and to the public shall be provided in accordance with Public Officers Law Article 7, Section 104.

Section 3. Annual

- A. Annual meetings of the Planning Board shall be held in January of each year.
- B. Notice to the members and to the public shall be provided in accordance with Public Officers Law Article 7, Section 104.

Section 4. Quorum

A majority of the voting members must be present in person to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS, NOMINATION, ELECTION, DUTIES AND VACANCIES

Section 1: Composition

The officers of the Board shall consist of a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary. The Director of Planning shall serve as an ex-officio officer without vote.

Section 2. Nominations

- A. In November, the Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three members;
- B. The Nominating Committee shall present its slate of officers at the December meeting;
- C. No member shall be eligible for nomination to office unless he/she has served at least one (1) year as a member of the Planning Board.

Section 3. Election

- A. The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting and shall serve for a one-year term or until their successors are elected and assume office.
- B. Terms of office shall commence at the conclusion of the annual meeting at which they are elected.
- C. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.
- D. A majority vote shall be required for election to office.

Section 4. Duties

A. Chair.

The Chair shall:

1. preside at all meetings of the Board;
- ii. upon approval of the Board, appoint the chairs and members of all standing and special (ad hoc) committees;
111. perform such other duties as directed by the Planning Board or the Cortland County Legislature.

B. Vice Chair.

The Vice Chair shall:

- i. in the absence of or at the request of the Chair, present at the Board meetings;
- ii. perform other duties as directed by the Planning Board or the Cortland County Legislature.

C. Secretary.

The Secretary shall:

1. record and sign the minutes of all meetings of the Board;
- ii. sign any correspondence or other documents at the direction of the Board;
111. perform other duties as directed by the Planning Board or the Cortland County Legislature.

D. Director.

The Director shall:

- i. perform the duties as outlined in Section 5 of Local Law 6 of 2019 adopted by the Cortland County Legislature on June 27, 2019;
- ii. perform such other duties as directed by the Cortland County Legislature.

Section 5. Vacancies

A. Chair. In the event of a permanent vacancy in the office of Chair of the Planning Board, the Vice Chair shall assume the office for the remainder of the unexpired term.

B. Other Offices. In the event of a permanent vacancy in any office other than Chair of the Planning Board, the vacancy shall be filled, for the remainder of the term, by nominations from the floor at the next regular meeting of the Board.

C. A majority vote shall be required for election to office.

ARTICLE VI COMMITTEES

Section 1: Standing Committees

The Planning Board may establish Standing Committees, consisting of three members of the Planning Board.

A. Standing Committees are established to work on long-term, on-going issues.

Section 2. Special Committees

A. The Planning Board may establish Special Committees, consisting of three members of the Planning Board.

B. Special Committees are established to work on short-term, special issues.

C. Special Committees may also be called Task Forces.

Section 3. Quorum

A majority of a committee must be present in person to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE VII PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be the parliamentary authority for the Cortland County Planning Board.

ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Planning Board or Planning Director Recommendations

A. The Planning Board or Planning Director may recommend to the Cortland County Legislature proposed amendments to these Bylaws.

B. The Planning Board, through the Director of Planning, or the Director on his/her own behalf, shall present the proposed amendments to the Agriculture/Planning/Environmental [APE] Committee (or successor committee) of the Legislature.

C. Upon a majority vote of the APE Committee, the proposed amendment(s) will be presented to the Legislature by placement on the Legislative Session agenda.

Section 2. Amendments Required By Statute

A. Any amendments to these Bylaws which are required to be made by statute shall require only notice to the Legislature and shall be automatically incorporated into and made a part of these Bylaws.

Full Environmental Assessment Form
Part 2 - Identification of Potential Project Impacts

Agency Use Only	2.2.a
Project :	Cortland County Strategic Development Plan
Date :	December 19 2024

Part 2 is to be completed by the lead agency. Part 2 is designed to help the lead agency inventory all potential resources that could be affected by a proposed project or action. We recognize that the lead agency's reviewer(s) will not necessarily be environmental professionals. So, the questions are designed to walk a reviewer through the assessment process by providing a series of questions that can be answered using the information found in Part 1. To further assist the lead agency in completing Part 2, the form identifies the most relevant questions in Part 1 that will provide the information needed to answer the Part 2 question. When Part 2 is completed, the lead agency will have identified the relevant environmental areas that may be impacted by the proposed activity.

If the lead agency is a state agency **and** the action is in any Coastal Area, complete the Coastal Assessment Form before proceeding with this assessment.

Tips for completing Part 2:

- Review all of the information provided in Part 1.
- Review any application, maps, supporting materials and the Full EAF Workbook.
- Answer each of the 18 questions in Part 2.
- If you answer “**Yes**” to a numbered question, please complete all the questions that follow in that section.
- If you answer “**No**” to a numbered question, move on to the next numbered question.
- Check appropriate column to indicate the anticipated size of the impact.
- Proposed projects that would exceed a numeric threshold contained in a question should result in the reviewing agency checking the box “Moderate to large impact may occur.”
- The reviewer is not expected to be an expert in environmental analysis.
- If you are not sure or undecided about the size of an impact, it may help to review the sub-questions for the general question and consult the workbook.
- When answering a question consider all components of the proposed activity, that is, the “whole action”.
- Consider the possibility for long-term and cumulative impacts as well as direct impacts.
- Answer the question in a reasonable manner considering the scale and context of the project.

1. Impact on Land Proposed action may involve construction on, or physical alteration of, the land surface of the proposed site. (See Part 1. D.1) <i>If “Yes”, answer questions a - j. If “No”, move on to Section 2.</i>				☒ NO	☐ YES
	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur		
a. The proposed action may involve construction on land where depth to water table is less than 3 feet.	E2d	☐	☐		
b. The proposed action may involve construction on slopes of 15% or greater.	E2f	☐	☐		
c. The proposed action may involve construction on land where bedrock is exposed, or generally within 5 feet of existing ground surface.	E2a	☐	☐		
d. The proposed action may involve the excavation and removal of more than 1,000 tons of natural material.	D2a	☐	☐		
e. The proposed action may involve construction that continues for more than one year or in multiple phases.	D1e	☐	☐		
f. The proposed action may result in increased erosion, whether from physical disturbance or vegetation removal (including from treatment by herbicides).	D2e, D2q	☐	☐		
g. The proposed action is, or may be, located within a Coastal Erosion hazard area.	B1i	☐	☐		
h. Other impacts: _____		☐	☐		

2. Impact on Geological Features

The proposed action may result in the modification or destruction of, or inhibit access to, any unique or unusual land forms on the site (e.g., cliffs, dunes, minerals, fossils, caves). (See Part 1. E.2.g)

☒ NO☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - c. If "No", move on to Section 3.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. Identify the specific land form(s) attached: _____ _____	E2g	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may affect or is adjacent to a geological feature listed as a registered National Natural Landmark. Specific feature: _____	E3c	☐	☐
c. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	☐

3. Impacts on Surface Water

The proposed action may affect one or more wetlands or other surface water bodies (e.g., streams, rivers, ponds or lakes). (See Part 1. D.2, E.2.h)

☒ NO☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - l. If "No", move on to Section 4.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may create a new water body.	D2b, D1h	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may result in an increase or decrease of over 10% or more than a 10 acre increase or decrease in the surface area of any body of water.	D2b	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may involve dredging more than 100 cubic yards of material from a wetland or water body.	D2a	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may involve construction within or adjoining a freshwater or tidal wetland, or in the bed or banks of any other water body.	E2h	☐	☐
e. The proposed action may create turbidity in a waterbody, either from upland erosion, runoff or by disturbing bottom sediments.	D2a, D2h	☐	☐
f. The proposed action may include construction of one or more intake(s) for withdrawal of water from surface water.	D2c	☐	☐
g. The proposed action may include construction of one or more outfall(s) for discharge of wastewater to surface water(s).	D2d	☐	☐
h. The proposed action may cause soil erosion, or otherwise create a source of stormwater discharge that may lead to siltation or other degradation of receiving water bodies.	D2e	☐	☐
i. The proposed action may affect the water quality of any water bodies within or downstream of the site of the proposed action.	E2h	☐	☐
j. The proposed action may involve the application of pesticides or herbicides in or around any water body.	D2q, E2h	☐	☐
k. The proposed action may require the construction of new, or expansion of existing, wastewater treatment facilities.	D1a, D2d	☐	☐

l. Other impacts: _____

☐

4. Impact on groundwater

The proposed action may result in new or additional use of ground water, or may have the potential to introduce contaminants to ground water or an aquifer.
(See Part 1. D.2.a, D.2.c, D.2.d, D.2.p, D.2.q, D.2.t)

☒ NO

☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - h. If "No", move on to Section 5.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may require new water supply wells, or create additional demand on supplies from existing water supply wells.	D2c	☐	☐
b. Water supply demand from the proposed action may exceed safe and sustainable withdrawal capacity rate of the local supply or aquifer. Cite Source: _____	D2c	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may allow or result in residential uses in areas without water and sewer services.	D1a, D2c	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may include or require wastewater discharged to groundwater.	D2d, E2l	☐	☐
e. The proposed action may result in the construction of water supply wells in locations where groundwater is, or is suspected to be, contaminated.	D2c, E1f, E1g, E1h	☐	☐
f. The proposed action may require the bulk storage of petroleum or chemical products over ground water or an aquifer.	D2p, E2l	☐	☐
g. The proposed action may involve the commercial application of pesticides within 100 feet of potable drinking water or irrigation sources.	E2h, D2q, E2l, D2c	☐	☐
h. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	☐

5. Impact on Flooding

The proposed action may result in development on lands subject to flooding.
(See Part 1. E.2)

☒ NO

☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - g. If "No", move on to Section 6.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may result in development in a designated floodway.	E2i	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may result in development within a 100 year floodplain.	E2j	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may result in development within a 500 year floodplain.	E2k	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may result in, or require, modification of existing drainage patterns.	D2b, D2e	☐	☐
e. The proposed action may change flood water flows that contribute to flooding.	D2b, E2i, E2j, E2k	☐	☐
f. If there is a dam located on the site of the proposed action, is the dam in need of repair, or upgrade?	E1e	☐	☐

g. Other impacts: _____

☐

2.2.a

6. Impacts on Air

The proposed action may include a state regulated air emission source.

(See Part 1. D.2.f., D.2.h, D.2.g)

If "Yes", answer questions a - f. If "No", move on to Section 7.

☒ NO

☐ YES

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. If the proposed action requires federal or state air emission permits, the action may also emit one or more greenhouse gases at or above the following levels: i. More than 1000 tons/year of carbon dioxide (CO ₂) ii. More than 3.5 tons/year of nitrous oxide (N ₂ O) iii. More than 1000 tons/year of carbon equivalent of perfluorocarbons (PFCs) iv. More than .045 tons/year of sulfur hexafluoride (SF ₆) v. More than 1000 tons/year of carbon dioxide equivalent of hydrochloroflourocarbons (HFCs) emissions vi. 43 tons/year or more of methane	D2g D2g D2g D2g D2g D2h	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
b. The proposed action may generate 10 tons/year or more of any one designated hazardous air pollutant, or 25 tons/year or more of any combination of such hazardous air pollutants.	D2g	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may require a state air registration, or may produce an emissions rate of total contaminants that may exceed 5 lbs. per hour, or may include a heat source capable of producing more than 10 million BTU's per hour.	D2f, D2g	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may reach 50% of any of the thresholds in "a" through "c", above.	D2g	☐	☐
e. The proposed action may result in the combustion or thermal treatment of more than 1 ton of refuse per hour.	D2s	☐	☐
f. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	☐

7. Impact on Plants and Animals

The proposed action may result in a loss of flora or fauna. (See Part 1. E.2. m.-q.)

If "Yes", answer questions a - j. If "No", move on to Section 8.

☒ NO

☐ YES

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may cause reduction in population or loss of individuals of any threatened or endangered species, as listed by New York State or the Federal government, that use the site, or are found on, over, or near the site.	E2o	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may result in a reduction or degradation of any habitat used by any rare, threatened or endangered species, as listed by New York State or the federal government.	E2o	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may cause reduction in population, or loss of individuals, of any species of special concern or conservation need, as listed by New York State or the Federal government, that use the site, or are found on, over, or near the site.	E2p	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may result in a reduction or degradation of any habitat used by any species of special concern and conservation need, as listed by New York State or the Federal government.	E2p	☐	☐

e. The proposed action may diminish the capacity of a registered National Natural Landmark to support the biological community it was established to protect.	E3c	☐	2.2.a
f. The proposed action may result in the removal of, or ground disturbance in, any portion of a designated significant natural community. Source: _____	E2n	☐	☐
g. The proposed action may substantially interfere with nesting/breeding, foraging, or over-wintering habitat for the predominant species that occupy or use the project site.	E2m	☐	☐
h. The proposed action requires the conversion of more than 10 acres of forest, grassland or any other regionally or locally important habitat. Habitat type & information source: _____	E1b	☐	☐
i. Proposed action (commercial, industrial or recreational projects, only) involves use of herbicides or pesticides.	D2q	☐	☐
j. Other impacts: _____		☐	☐

8. Impact on Agricultural Resources The proposed action may impact agricultural resources. (See Part 1. E.3.a. and b.) ☒ NO ☐ YES <i>If "Yes", answer questions a - h. If "No", move on to Section 9.</i>			
	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may impact soil classified within soil group 1 through 4 of the NYS Land Classification System.	E2c, E3b	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may sever, cross or otherwise limit access to agricultural land (includes cropland, hayfields, pasture, vineyard, orchard, etc).	E1a, E1b	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may result in the excavation or compaction of the soil profile of active agricultural land.	E3b	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may irreversibly convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, either more than 2.5 acres if located in an Agricultural District, or more than 10 acres if not within an Agricultural District.	E1b, E3a	☐	☐
e. The proposed action may disrupt or prevent installation of an agricultural land management system.	E1 a, E1b	☐	☐
f. The proposed action may result, directly or indirectly, in increased development potential or pressure on farmland.	C2c, C3, D2c, D2d	☐	☐
g. The proposed project is not consistent with the adopted municipal Farmland Protection Plan.	C2c	☐	☐
h. Other impacts: _____		☐	☐

9. Impact on Aesthetic Resources

The land use of the proposed action are obviously different from, or are in sharp contrast to, current land use patterns between the proposed project and a scenic or aesthetic resource. (Part 1. E.1.a, E.1.b, E.3.h.)

☒ NO☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - g. If "No", go to Section 10.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. Proposed action may be visible from any officially designated federal, state, or local scenic or aesthetic resource.	E3h	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may result in the obstruction, elimination or significant screening of one or more officially designated scenic views.	E3h, C2b	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may be visible from publicly accessible vantage points: i. Seasonally (e.g., screened by summer foliage, but visible during other seasons) ii. Year round	E3h	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
d. The situation or activity in which viewers are engaged while viewing the proposed action is: i. Routine travel by residents, including travel to and from work ii. Recreational or tourism based activities	E3h E2q, E1c	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
e. The proposed action may cause a diminishment of the public enjoyment and appreciation of the designated aesthetic resource.	E3h	☐	☐
f. There are similar projects visible within the following distance of the proposed project: 0-1/2 mile 1/2 -3 mile 3-5 mile 5+ mile	D1a, E1a, D1f, D1g	☐	☐
g. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	☐

10. Impact on Historic and Archeological Resources

The proposed action may occur in or adjacent to a historic or archaeological resource. (Part 1. E.3.e, f. and g.)

☒ NO☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - e. If "No", go to Section 11.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may occur wholly or partially within, or substantially contiguous to, any buildings, archaeological site or district which is listed on the National or State Register of Historical Places, or that has been determined by the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places.	E3e	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may occur wholly or partially within, or substantially contiguous to, an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory.	E3f	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may occur wholly or partially within, or substantially contiguous to, an archaeological site not included on the NY SHPO inventory. Source: _____	E3g	☐	☐

d. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	
e. If any of the above (a-d) are answered "Moderate to large impact may occur", continue with the following questions to help support conclusions in Part 3:			
i. The proposed action may result in the destruction or alteration of all or part of the site or property.	E3e, E3g, E3f	☐	☐
ii. The proposed action may result in the alteration of the property's setting or integrity.	E3e, E3f, E3g, E1a, E1b	☐	☐
iii. The proposed action may result in the introduction of visual elements which are out of character with the site or property, or may alter its setting.	E3e, E3f, E3g, E3h, C2, C3	☐	☐

11. Impact on Open Space and Recreation

The proposed action may result in a loss of recreational opportunities or a reduction of an open space resource as designated in any adopted municipal open space plan.

(See Part 1. C.2.c, E.1.c., E.2.q.)

If "Yes", answer questions a - e. If "No", go to Section 12.

☒ NO

☐ YES

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may result in an impairment of natural functions, or "ecosystem services", provided by an undeveloped area, including but not limited to stormwater storage, nutrient cycling, wildlife habitat.	D2e, E1b E2h, E2m, E2o, E2n, E2p	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may result in the loss of a current or future recreational resource.	C2a, E1c, C2c, E2q	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may eliminate open space or recreational resource in an area with few such resources.	C2a, C2c E1c, E2q	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may result in loss of an area now used informally by the community as an open space resource.	C2c, E1c	☐	☐
e. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	☐

12. Impact on Critical Environmental Areas

The proposed action may be located within or adjacent to a critical environmental area (CEA). (See Part 1. E.3.d)

If "Yes", answer questions a - c. If "No", go to Section 13.

☒ NO

☐ YES

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may result in a reduction in the quantity of the resource or characteristic which was the basis for designation of the CEA.	E3d	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may result in a reduction in the quality of the resource or characteristic which was the basis for designation of the CEA.	E3d	☐	☐
c. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	☐

13. Impact on Transportation

The proposed action may result in a change to existing transportation systems.

(See Part 1. D.2.j)

If "Yes", answer questions a - f. If "No", go to Section 14.

☒ NO

☐ YES

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. Projected traffic increase may exceed capacity of existing road network.	D2j	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may result in the construction of paved parking area for 500 or more vehicles.	D2j	☐	☐
c. The proposed action will degrade existing transit access.	D2j	☐	☐
d. The proposed action will degrade existing pedestrian or bicycle accommodations.	D2j	☐	☐
e. The proposed action may alter the present pattern of movement of people or goods.	D2j	☐	☐
f. Other impacts: _____		☐	☐

14. Impact on Energy

The proposed action may cause an increase in the use of any form of energy.

(See Part 1. D.2.k)

If "Yes", answer questions a - e. If "No", go to Section 15.

☒ NO

☐ YES

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action will require a new, or an upgrade to an existing, substation.	D2k	☐	☐
b. The proposed action will require the creation or extension of an energy transmission or supply system to serve more than 50 single or two-family residences or to serve a commercial or industrial use.	D1f, D1q, D2k	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may utilize more than 2,500 MWhrs per year of electricity.	D2k	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may involve heating and/or cooling of more than 100,000 square feet of building area when completed.	D1g	☐	☐
e. Other Impacts: _____			

15. Impact on Noise, Odor, and Light

The proposed action may result in an increase in noise, odors, or outdoor lighting.

(See Part 1. D.2.m., n., and o.)

If "Yes", answer questions a - f. If "No", go to Section 16.

☒ NO

☐ YES

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may produce sound above noise levels established by local regulation.	D2m	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may result in blasting within 1,500 feet of any residence, hospital, school, licensed day care center, or nursing home.	D2m, E1d	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may result in routine odors for more than one hour per day.	D2o	☐	☐

d. The proposed action may result in light shining onto adjoining properties.	D2n	☐	2.2.a
e. The proposed action may result in lighting creating sky-glow brighter than existing area conditions.	D2n, E1a	☐	☐
f. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	☐

16. Impact on Human Health

The proposed action may have an impact on human health from exposure to new or existing sources of contaminants. (See Part 1.D.2.q., E.1. d. f. g. and h.)

☒ NO

☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - m. If "No", go to Section 17.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action is located within 1500 feet of a school, hospital, licensed day care center, group home, nursing home or retirement community.	E1d	☐	☐
b. The site of the proposed action is currently undergoing remediation.	E1g, E1h	☐	☐
c. There is a completed emergency spill remediation, or a completed environmental site remediation on, or adjacent to, the site of the proposed action.	E1g, E1h	☐	☐
d. The site of the action is subject to an institutional control limiting the use of the property (e.g., easement or deed restriction).	E1g, E1h	☐	☐
e. The proposed action may affect institutional control measures that were put in place to ensure that the site remains protective of the environment and human health.	E1g, E1h	☐	☐
f. The proposed action has adequate control measures in place to ensure that future generation, treatment and/or disposal of hazardous wastes will be protective of the environment and human health.	D2t	☐	☐
g. The proposed action involves construction or modification of a solid waste management facility.	D2q, E1f	☐	☐
h. The proposed action may result in the unearthing of solid or hazardous waste.	D2q, E1f	☐	☐
i. The proposed action may result in an increase in the rate of disposal, or processing, of solid waste.	D2r, D2s	☐	☐
j. The proposed action may result in excavation or other disturbance within 2000 feet of a site used for the disposal of solid or hazardous waste.	E1f, E1g E1h	☐	☐
k. The proposed action may result in the migration of explosive gases from a landfill site to adjacent off site structures.	E1f, E1g	☐	☐
l. The proposed action may result in the release of contaminated leachate from the project site.	D2s, E1f, D2r	☐	☐
m. Other impacts: _____ _____			

17. Consistency with Community Plans

The proposed action is not consistent with adopted land use plans.
(See Part 1. C.1, C.2. and C.3.)

☒ NO☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - h. If "No", go to Section 18.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action's land use components may be different from, or in sharp contrast to, current surrounding land use pattern(s).	C2, C3, D1a E1a, E1b	☐	☐
b. The proposed action will cause the permanent population of the city, town or village in which the project is located to grow by more than 5%.	C2	☐	☐
c. The proposed action is inconsistent with local land use plans or zoning regulations.	C2, C2, C3	☐	☐
d. The proposed action is inconsistent with any County plans, or other regional land use plans.	C2, C2	☐	☐
e. The proposed action may cause a change in the density of development that is not supported by existing infrastructure or is distant from existing infrastructure.	C3, D1c, D1d, D1f, D1d, E1b	☐	☐
f. The proposed action is located in an area characterized by low density development that will require new or expanded public infrastructure.	C4, D2c, D2d D2j	☐	☐
g. The proposed action may induce secondary development impacts (e.g., residential or commercial development not included in the proposed action)	C2a	☐	☐
h. Other: _____ _____		☐	☐

18. Consistency with Community Character

The proposed project is inconsistent with the existing community character.
(See Part 1. C.2, C.3, D.2, E.3)

☒ NO☐ YES

If "Yes", answer questions a - g. If "No", proceed to Part 3.

	Relevant Part I Question(s)	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
a. The proposed action may replace or eliminate existing facilities, structures, or areas of historic importance to the community.	E3e, E3f, E3g	☐	☐
b. The proposed action may create a demand for additional community services (e.g. schools, police and fire)	C4	☐	☐
c. The proposed action may displace affordable or low-income housing in an area where there is a shortage of such housing.	C2, C3, D1f D1g, E1a	☐	☐
d. The proposed action may interfere with the use or enjoyment of officially recognized or designated public resources.	C2, E3	☐	☐
e. The proposed action is inconsistent with the predominant architectural scale and character.	C2, C3	☐	☐
f. Proposed action is inconsistent with the character of the existing natural landscape.	C2, C3 E1a, E1b E2g, E2h	☐	☐
g. Other impacts: _____ _____		☐	☐

Full Environmental Assessment Form
Part 3 - Evaluation of the Magnitude and Importance of Project Impacts
and
Determination of Significance

Part 3 provides the reasons in support of the determination of significance. The lead agency must complete Part 3 for every question in Part 2 where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.

Based on the analysis in Part 3, the lead agency must decide whether to require an environmental impact statement to further assess the proposed action or whether available information is sufficient for the lead agency to conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse environmental impact. By completing the certification on the next page, the lead agency can complete its determination of significance.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

To complete this section:

- Identify the impact based on the Part 2 responses and describe its magnitude. Magnitude considers factors such as severity, size or extent of an impact.
- Assess the importance of the impact. Importance relates to the geographic scope, duration, probability of the impact occurring, number of people affected by the impact and any additional environmental consequences if the impact were to occur.
- The assessment should take into consideration any design element or project changes.
- Repeat this process for each Part 2 question where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.
- Provide the reason(s) why the impact may, or will not, result in a significant adverse environmental impact
- For Conditional Negative Declarations identify the specific condition(s) imposed that will modify the proposed action so that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result.
- Attach additional sheets, as needed.

The proposed Action is consistent with the character of the community and surrounding neighborhood. The proposed Cortland County Strategic Development Plan Adoption WILL NOT have a significant impact on the surrounding lands, surface water, flooding, traffic, energy use, wild life, aesthetic resources, natural resources, flooding or drainage, or human health.

The Cortland County Legislative Board has reviewed and accepted Part 1 of the Full Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) for this action. The Legislative Board completed a coordinated review under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Regulations and received no objections to being designated Lead Agency. The Legislative Board in a separate resolution designated themselves as lead agency, and as lead agency for this Action under the provisions of Part 617 of the SEQR Regulations has given a thorough and comprehensive evaluation of the impacts likely to result from the proposed Action. Based upon this evaluation and the Legislative Board's review of the Full EAF Part 2 and Part 3, the Legislative Board in a separate resolution adopted on December 19, 2024 has determined the proposed Action will not likely result in a significant adverse impact upon the environment and that a Negative Declaration is issued. Please see the attached documentation supporting the Full EAF in support of this decision.

Determination of Significance - Type 1 and Unlisted Actions

SEQR Status: ☒ Type 1 ☐ Unlisted

Identify portions of EAF completed for this Project: ☒ Part 1 ☒ Part 2 ☒ Part 3

Upon review of the information recorded on this EAF, as noted, plus this additional support information

and considering both the magnitude and importance of each identified potential impact, it is the conclusion of the
Cortland County Legislative Board as lead agency that:

☒ A. This project will result in no significant adverse impacts on the environment, and, therefore, an environmental impact statement need not be prepared. Accordingly, this negative declaration is issued.

☐ B. Although this project could have a significant adverse impact on the environment, that impact will be avoided or substantially mitigated because of the following conditions which will be required by the lead agency:

There will, therefore, be no significant adverse impacts from the project as conditioned, and, therefore, this conditioned negative declaration is issued. A conditioned negative declaration may be used only for UNLISTED actions (see 6 NYCRR 617.7(d)).

☐ C. This Project may result in one or more significant adverse impacts on the environment, and an environmental impact statement must be prepared to further assess the impact(s) and possible mitigation and to explore alternatives to avoid or reduce those impacts. Accordingly, this positive declaration is issued.

Name of Action: Cortland County Strategic Development Plan Adoption

Name of Lead Agency: Cortland County Legislative Board

Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency: Robert Corpora

Title of Responsible Officer: County Administrator

Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency: Date: December 19, 2024

Signature of Preparer (if different from Responsible Officer) Angelina M. White Date: December 19, 2024

For Further Information:

Contact Person: Robert Corpora, County Administrator

Address: 60 Central Ave Cortland, New York 13045

Telephone Number: 607-753-5046

E-mail: shempstead@cortlandcountyny.gov

For Type 1 Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a copy of this Notice is sent to:

Chief Executive Officer of the political subdivision in which the action will be principally located (e.g., Town / City / Village of)

Other involved agencies (if any)

Applicant (if any)

Environmental Notice Bulletin: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/enb/enb.html>

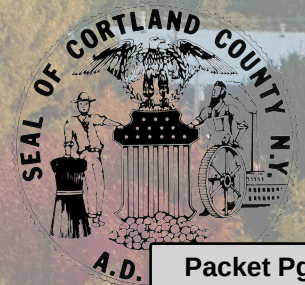
ELEVATE

CORTLAND

COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2025-2030

CORTLAND COUNTY, NY





Cortland County, NY

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2025-2030

CORTLAND COUNTY LEGISLATORS

Keith VanGorder	Joseph Nauseef	Sandy Price
Beau Harbin	Kevin Fitch	Kris Valentine Behnke
Cathy Bischoff	Linda Jones	Reed Cleland
Chris Newell	Mitchel D. Eccleston	Dominick Mantella
Douglas Bentley	Paul Heider	William McGovern
Eugene Waldbauer	Ronald Van Dee	

County Administrator: Robert Corpora

STEERING COMMITTEE

Melanie Vilardi, Deputy County Administrator

Trisha Hiemstra, Director of Planning

Beau Harbin, County Legislator

Brendan O'Bryan, Cortland County Business Development Corporation & Industrial Development Agency

Michelle Enright, Cortland County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Bob Haight, Cortland Area Chamber of Commerce

Amy Buggs, Cortland Workforce Development

Prepared by:



MRB
Group



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cortland County stands at the beginning of an exciting era, where recent economic development in neighboring areas and evolving consumer preferences present new opportunities for growth and innovation. These changes offer a unique chance for the County to adapt to the shifting economic landscape while preserving the core values that make our community special.

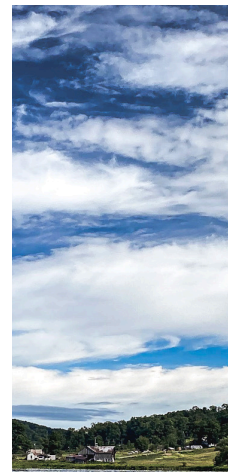
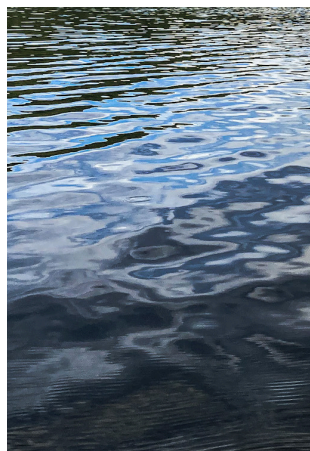
In response to these developments, Cortland County is taking proactive steps by embarking on the creation of its first countywide Strategic Development Plan since the 1978 Land Use Plan. This forward-thinking initiative is designed to guide the County through this period of change, ensuring that growth is managed thoughtfully and in a way that honors the traditions and character of the community.

Through strategic planning, Cortland County is poised to embrace new opportunities, attract investment, and enhance the quality of life for all residents. This plan will serve as a roadmap to a vibrant and sustainable future, where the County's core values remain at the heart of its development.

The plan centers around a core community vision developed through stakeholder interviews, public workshops, and review of prior planning initiatives:

Together, we envision a prosperous and sustainable future for Cortland County that offers expanded economic opportunities, fosters a welcoming environment, and embraces a quality of life centered on our natural, recreational, arts, and cultural assets, as well as our neighborly spirit.

We will Elevate Cortland by amplifying collaboration, vibrancy, and growth while honoring our community's unique character, ensuring residents and businesses are proud of the progress made and visitors always wish for more time to explore.



To accomplish this vision, this Plan outlines four

Focus Areas

for the County and its partners to advance:

1

**Economic
Development &
Workforce**

2

Housing

3

**Sustainability &
Open Spaces**

4

**Connectivity &
Infrastructure**

These focus areas were selected based on community feedback, data analysis, and conversations with municipal leaders. They are supported throughout this plan by three

Pillars

A

Collaboration

B

**Vibrant
Communities**

C

**Coordinated &
Aligned Growth**

Each of the four focus areas includes an Action Plan Matrix to provide a clear, implementable path forward for the County. It includes specific actions with the estimated order of magnitude cost, potential partners and resources, priority level, and timing. The County, towns, villages, and City of Cortland, along with other community partners, can implement these actions to direct and facilitate future development. It will be important to ensure that the County grows alongside the Central New York region and in a way that supports Cortland County's vibrancy and quality of life. Action items were designed based on stakeholder engagement, economic data, and a review of existing planning documents. Additionally, these actions are guided by and inclusive of the three Pillars of this plan—collaboration, vibrant communities, and coordinated and aligned growth.



Cortland County, NY

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2025-2030

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INTRODUCTION

About This Plan

Cortland County, NY is a picturesque area, rich with natural beauty and agricultural resources. It also encompasses key built assets and anchor institutions, such as Interstate 81 and SUNY Cortland. While the County government respects and supports strong local controls over land use decisions, there is growing recognition that a countywide strategy can enhance coordination, maximize financial resources, and strengthen community development efforts.

Though Cortland County had not undertaken a comprehensive strategic plan since the 1978 Land Use Plan, recent opportunities and challenges have highlighted the value of a unified approach to growth. Developing a countywide Strategic Development Plan allows for better alignment of resources, clearer communication with both local and external stakeholders, and the ability to foster sustainable growth and community-building initiatives throughout the County.

With a focus on public engagement, this Strategic Development Plan will ensure that the County's policies and investments align with the priorities of its residents and leverage the strengths of the entire region. By working collaboratively with local leaders, the County aims to create a shared vision that balances growth with the preservation of its unique character and assets.

To lead this important effort, Cortland County enlisted the expertise of the MRB Group and EDR, two consulting firms experienced in strategic planning and public engagement.

The first step in the process was creating a Steering Committee, which provided valuable insight and guidance throughout the planning process. The committee included County staff, public officials, and members of economic development, tourism, and workforce development entities. The next step was a research phase to set a foundational understanding of the current conditions in the County. During this phase, existing local, regional, County, and State plans and strategies were reviewed (summarized in Appendix B) and an Economic Base Report (Appendix C) was created. The latter overviews demographic, housing, economic, and real estate trends. This research established the base from which the County seeks to grow, and served as an initial indicator of where challenges and opportunities might exist.

Following this initial fact-finding phase, the County and consulting team undertook a series of public engagement activities to test the trends and concepts learned from the research and identify additional challenges, opportunities, trends, needs, gaps, and assets. The community engagement process is outlined in greater depth below and in Appendix D.

The feedback gained from these conversations and engagement mechanism is the backbone of this plan, and resulted in the following community vision:

Together, we envision a prosperous and sustainable future for Cortland County that offers expanded economic opportunities, fosters a welcoming environment, and embraces a quality of life centered on our natural, recreational, arts, and cultural assets, as well as our neighborly spirit.

We will Elevate Cortland by amplifying collaboration, vibrancy, and growth while honoring our community's unique character, ensuring residents and businesses are proud of the progress made and visitors always wish for more time to explore.

This plan lays out a strategic direction that Cortland County and its partners can follow from 2025-2030 and act as the basis for continued work thereafter in order to advance progress toward the community's vision. The plan is broken down into three Pillars and four Focus Areas.



Pillars

Explained in more detail below, the Pillars are:

A

Collaboration

B

Vibrant Communities

C

Coordinated & Aligned Growth

These concepts arose in nearly every conversation, focus group, and meeting. Residents, municipalities, businesses, and community organizations alike expressed the value of and need for these Pillars in any future development planning.

Focus Areas

The Pillars are called out separately as they are relevant to all four Focus Areas, being:

1

**Economic
Development &
Workforce**

2

Housing

3

**Sustainability &
Open Spaces**

4

**Connectivity &
Infrastructure**



These areas stood out as the most critical throughout the community engagement process and review of existing plans. These focus areas are rooted in the County's history, but with an eye toward future growth and development. Each of the four Focus Areas is presented with an Action Plan Matrix, which includes strategies organized by key objectives. Each action includes potential partners and funding resources, an order of magnitude cost, priority level, and general timeline. Note the following while reviewing the matrices in this plan:

- All items included in the Action Plans are priorities, but are further ranked high to low. In this sense, a "low" priority does not mean the action is unimportant generally, it just indicates priority in relation to other actions within the plan.
- Timing should be considered as follows: Near Term = started and/or accomplished within the next two years; Mid Term = started and/or accomplished within three to five years; Long Term = may take more than five years to get underway, or that are truly ongoing in perpetuity.
- The order of magnitude costs should be considered as follows: \$ = no or low cost, primarily staff time and small expenditures for materials, marketing, etc. may be necessary; \$\$ = more substantial expenditures, such as assistance from consultants, sizeable marketing campaigns, etc. may be necessary; and \$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures will be required.

Cortland County's approach to this plan was highly focused on the human experience. While the plan primarily aims to generate economic progress over the next five years, it also incorporates actions to address environmental sustainability, quality of life, and resident access to the resources necessary for long-term economic and personal prosperity.

Community Engagement Overview

A variety of engagement activities informed the development of the plan's Pillars and Focus Areas, creating a clear path forward for Cortland County's future.

In the Spring of 2024, six open house public meetings were conducted throughout Cortland County, including in Marathon, Truxton, Cortland/Cortlandville, Virgil, Homer, and McGraw. These meetings aimed to inform community members about the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan and to gather their feedback to refine its vision and strategies. Participants shared their thoughts on display boards regarding current conditions and future development ideas.

The feedback from these meetings highlighted several key themes. There was a strong emphasis on economic development, with a consistent call for attracting and retaining businesses that align with the community's values, such as agritourism and sustainable industries. Recommendations included offering financial incentives, supporting vocational training, and fostering entrepreneurship, particularly for young adults and retirees. A widespread desire for job creation, especially in manufacturing and skilled trades, was prominent.

In terms of community services and infrastructure, improving broadband access, transportation networks, and utilities emerged as crucial for supporting economic growth and enhancing quality of life. There was a notable focus on the importance of community services like childcare, healthcare, housing, and recreational facilities. Additionally, there were consistent concerns about homelessness, mental health services, and substance abuse support, indicating a need for comprehensive social services.

Sustainability and environmental conservation also featured prominently in the discussions. Residents expressed broad support for sustainable practices and environmental stewardship, suggesting initiatives such as promoting local food markets, enhancing recreational opportunities, and investing in renewable energy. There were shared concerns about pollution, climate change, and maintaining the rural character of the community.

Finally, there was a strong desire for creative solutions and active community engagement. Suggestions included promoting public art, supporting local artists and entrepreneurs, and fostering intergenerational mentorship programs. Emphasis was placed on creating inclusive spaces and activities that cater to diverse interests and age groups.

Overall, the feedback from these public meetings reflects a unified vision for economic prosperity, social equity, environmental sustainability, and community well-being in Cortland County, with residents actively contributing to shaping the future direction of their communities. A full detailed description of each theme from each meeting is captured in Appendix D of this report.

Following these activities, the public had the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan, ensuring that the final version truly embodies the needs, aspirations, and ideas of the entire community. Through this collaborative approach, Cortland County is positioning itself for sustainable growth, guided by the values and voices of its residents.



PILLARS

PHOTO CREDIT: MATT BALDELLI

Throughout the engagement process, it became clear that there are three key Pillars underlying the community's vision for Cortland County: Collaboration, Vibrant Communities, and Aligned Future Growth. These Pillars play a role in and can be impacted by each of the core Focus Areas outlined in this plan.

A

Collaboration - Coordinate and Communicate for Better Results

Across public meetings, focus groups, and interviews, there was a strong call for greater collaboration, communication, and coordination across priorities, actors, and sectors. Residents sought greater communication from the County and local government. Municipalities and human services agencies sought better coordination across communities to solve critical challenges. Various stakeholders noted the need for expanded communication and collaboration with SUNY Cortland to address housing challenges in the City of Cortland, but also to achieve progress in expanding the workforce pipeline, sustainability, transportation, and other key areas. At every level, there was an opportunity to improve connections between stakeholders.

Cortland County boasts an array of community and human services agencies that are each well-known and widely used. While these organizations and agencies work together on some things, collaboration has historically been limited. Greater coordination and collaboration between these entities, the community members they provide for, and the municipalities in which they exist offers an opportunity to expand services and the community's ability to leverage those services.

B

Vibrant Communities – Placemaking

Community members and stakeholders expressed pride in Cortland County's friendly, welcoming, and distinctly casual way of life, and a desire to maintain that character as communities grow and adapt into the future. While in more densely populated areas "vibrancy" may mean expanding traditional urban offerings, vibrancy can also mean protecting open spaces and agricultural landscapes. Each community, urban or rural, should be able to decide what "vibrant" looks like for them. For some, this may mean beautiful downtowns lined with small businesses surrounded by neighborhoods and open spaces. In others, it could mean a greater focus on agricultural activity, rural lifestyles, and outdoor amenities. Even in the City of Cortland, there is a clear desire to create a sense of place that is brimming with entertainment, recreation, business, and civic opportunities while avoiding the hustle of larger cities. Across the board, Cortland County residents aim to create and live in a community that thrives, not because it is Syracuse or Rochester, but rather a quieter complement to these cities and others like them.

For much of Cortland County, the public indicated that vibrancy means open spaces and strong recreational assets with connectivity to active downtowns/main streets bolstered by small businesses, public art, and cultural amenities. Placemaking is a powerful tool for community growth as it can have positive impacts for business and talent attraction, quality of life, and tourism. The arts can also be an economic driver in communities. In its *Arts & Economic Prosperity 6* report, Americans for the Arts found that investment in the arts yields strong returns, as "\$5 billion in direct arts funding by local, state, and federal governments yielded \$27.5 billion in government revenue."



C

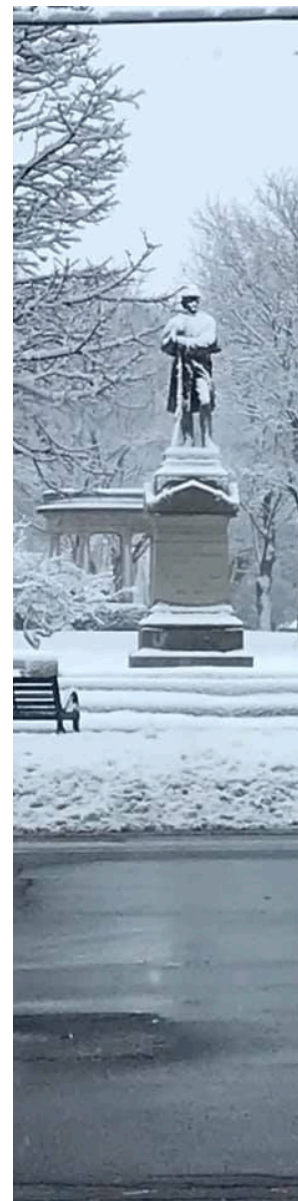
Coordinated & Aligned Future Growth

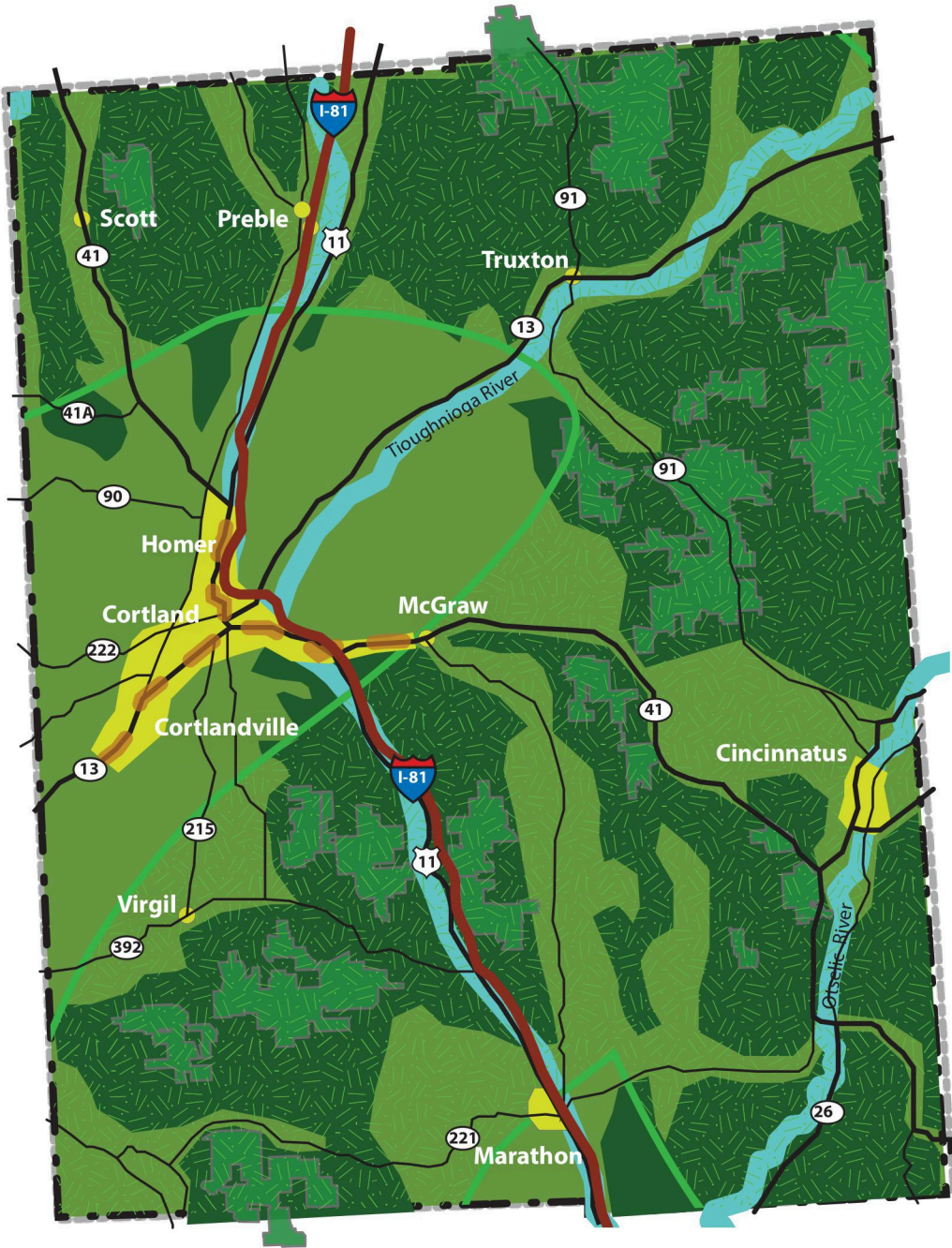
One message came through loud and clear during the public meetings: Cortland County residents are deeply connected to their communities and are eager to see thoughtful growth that enhances their way of life. Residents envision growth that reflects their unique style of vibrancy, creates new economic opportunities, and improves affordability and quality of life. By attracting new development, residents, and visitors in a coordinated way, the County can meet its broader needs while honoring the character and vision of each individual community. Balancing the diverse goals of growth and preservation across the County will require strong collaboration and facilitation among municipalities and community partners. Through this shared effort, Cortland County can achieve its vision for a vibrant future that benefits all.

The Strategic Development Plan reflects this shared vision, recognizing that success will come through collective agreement, coordinated planning, and complementary policies that align countywide objectives with local priorities. As the planning process unfolded, clear trends emerged around how future growth and preservation can coexist. The accompanying map (Figure 1) illustrates existing population and economic hubs, key transportation routes, and areas that could be ideal for development, connection, preservation, and recreation, including:

- A mobility corridor targeted to expand multi-modal connectivity between key economic areas of Cortland, Cortlandville, Homer, and McGraw.
- Greenway areas targeted for open space preservation and outdoor recreational uses.
- Blueway areas targeted for both conservation and water-based recreation, as well as connectivity between existing parks and trails.

Through this comprehensive and collaborative approach, Cortland County is well-positioned to achieve its goals, ensuring a bright future for its residents while protecting the natural and cultural assets that make it a special place.





IN: FIGURE 1. COORDINATED GROWTH STRATEGY
CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|
|  | Cortland County Boundary |  | Residential Area |
|  | Forest |  | Mobility Corridor |
|  | State Forestland |  | Roadway |
|  | Agriculture |  | Interstate 81 Corridor |
|  | Greenway |  | Blueway Development Corridor |

SCALE

0 1 2 Miles

DATE _____

9/20/2024

Source

NLCD, EDR

Map By:

EDR
a better
Pac

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Community Profile



PHOTO CREDIT: MATT BALDELLI

Located between three major urban areas—Ithaca, Binghamton, and Syracuse—Cortland County is part of both the Southern Tier 8 and Central New York regions of New York and is located among the world-renowned Finger Lakes. It is a rural oasis that offers high quality of life, low cost of living, abundant natural resources, and a growing arts and entertainment scene. The City of Cortland, three villages, and fifteen towns constitute the County and provide a variety of experiences, encompassing the best of urban and rural lifestyles.

This Strategic Development Plan comes on the heels of two federal tech hub designations: the NY SMART I-Corridor, which spans much of the I-90 corridor; and the New Energy New York (NENY) Battery Tech Hub, which is concentrated in the Southern Tier Region. Cortland County sits in the middle of these two new tech hubs and has the unique opportunity to leverage benefits—like higher-paying jobs, an influx of public and private investment, and the creation of support industries—that come with both. These tech hubs, as well as the new Micron facility outside of Syracuse, have spurred regional planning initiatives so that communities can be prepared for the type of growth that best fits their vision, goals, and character.

Cortland County at a Glance

Cortland County's population in 2023 was 45,920, over a third of which is concentrated in the City of Cortland. According to the NYS Department of Education, there were a total of 6,780 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at higher education institutions in Cortland County for the 2023 fall semester. While some of these students may not be County residents, it is clear that students make up a sizeable portion of the population. Median household income in 2023 was \$63,655, with higher incomes in the Towns than in the City. The median age in the County is 38.2 years, with the younger population concentrated in the City of Cortland.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Cortland County's population has declined by 6.9%, or 3,416 individuals, since 2010.
- Over the past decade, there has been a 2% increase in employment in the County, significantly greater than the Central New York region's 0.3% growth. Government, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Manufacturing are the top three industries in the County.
- Cortland County is relatively well-educated, with 30.4% of the population having a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 27.1% of households in the County have at least one individual with a disability.
- 13% of households live below the poverty level.
- Cortland County has a net outflow of 1,220 commuters, most of whom work in Tompkins County.

(Source: Esri)

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INDUSTRY

- Cortland County has a strong competitive advantage relative to other parts of the nation in Government, Other Services (except Public Administration) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting based on industry concentrations.
- Employment growth from 2013 to 2023 was primarily driven by Government, Other Services (except Public Administration), and Finance and Insurance.
- Conversely, there have been substantial job declines in Administrative and Support Services and Waste Management and Remediation Services; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance, each losing about 200 jobs over the last 10 years.
- Manufacturing, one of the top three employers in the County, experienced the greatest pre-pandemic declines from 2013 to 2019, with a loss of 253 jobs. Since 2020, the industry has grown by 10%, a testament to revitalized investment in manufacturing jobs in recent years.
- In Cortland County, the most in-demand specialized skills by employers are nursing, merchandising, warehousing, emergency medicine, anesthesiology, family medicine, internal medicine, critical care, general surgery, and gastroenterology.

(Source: Lightcast)



HOUSING

- Most homes (58%) in the County are owner-occupied, compared to 61.2% of housing units in Central New York.
- This difference is in part attributable to vacant housing units as Cortland County has a vacancy rate of 12.8% compared to the regional rate of 10.5%.
 - About 27% of these vacant units in Cortland County are seasonal/occasional use homes.
 - About 13% of vacant units in Cortland County are rented but not occupied, compared to 5% regionally.

This type of vacancy is concentrated in the City of Cortland and is likely driven by student housing.
- In 2023, the median home sale price in the County in 2023 was \$170,950 (source: NYSAR) and the median gross rent was \$811.
- Overall, housing costs in the County are relatively affordable compared to the larger region and State.

(Unless otherwise noted, source: Esri)

Past Planning Efforts

Municipalities within Cortland County enjoy local controls, which has resulted in less focus on County-level planning efforts for the past several decades. Since the most recent County Land Use Plan, adopted in 1978, there have been five planning reports written: the Overall Economic Development Program (1980), the Downtown Strategic Plans for Cortland County (2002), the Transportation Plan (2020), the Cortland County Agricultural District Review for 2021 to 2029, and the Cortland County Consolidated Housing Plan (2021). Local-level planning has been more common, but not consistent: six municipalities have no comprehensive plan, and only four communities have comprehensive plans that were updated in the past fifteen years.

Economic Development & Workforce

Since the turn of the century, Cortland County has struggled to recover from a series of economic downturns. Many plans at both the County and local level highlight the desire to protect the local agricultural economy and employment opportunities within it as automation and farm conglomerates threaten the traditional rural workforce and way of life. Business and talent attraction and retention are also mentioned in each plan at the County and local levels, highlighting the importance of such efforts for the County's revival and ongoing struggles in reaching those goals. The resistance to change in many of these communities, a declining and aging population, and insufficient financing and infrastructure are frequently listed as hurdles for business attraction and retention. Additionally, plans note the need for expanded workforce supports, including childcare, early childhood education, mental health, and addiction services.

Housing

The Cortland County Consolidated Housing Plan, which is available on the Cortland County Planning Department's website, was written in 2021 and notes the County's aging and deteriorating housing stock. Crucially, it explains the need for affordable housing and strategies to contend with the growing concerns around the homeless population, energy efficiency, and safe housing (free of environmental concerns, like radon, lead, and asbestos). Additionally, the Consolidated Housing Plan emphasizes the need to improve the housing stock to attract middle-income buyers and young professionals, who are a target demographic for employers and municipalities who wish to bolster incomes circulating in their local economies.

Preservation of Open Space & the Environment

In the available countywide and local planning documents, the preservation of natural resources including open space, aquifers, and productive agricultural land is emphasized and reemphasized as a priority. Clustered development is a preferred strategy for communities throughout the County, though this is not necessarily reflected in current land use regulations. The County places great value on its hiking, biking, boating, skiing, sporting, and other outdoor recreation opportunities. Ensuring that these spaces are preserved for future generations is a key focus across the County, as shown by the emphasis on this point in available local-level comprehensive plans.

Connectivity & Infrastructure

Cortland County completed a Transportation Plan in 2020, which sought to address the transportation needs of all residents. Despite this, County officials noted that the plan is already outdated after a major reorganization within the County's transportation system. However, the issues outlined in the Plan remain, including the need to provide services for the most vulnerable populations such as those with disabilities, older adults, and persons with limited incomes. This plan is also available on the Cortland County Planning Department's website.

Pedestrian safety is another major concern outlined in the Transportation Plan and local level planning documents. It is clear that better signage, walkways, and transportation options are needed throughout the County.



FOCUS AREA 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & WORKFORCE

Cortland County is embracing a vibrant economic evolution, building on its rich agricultural and manufacturing heritage while seizing new opportunities for growth like the arts, creative economy, and localized value-added agricultural production. Twenty-first century advancements in technology are shifting preferences and driving an economic transformation. Exciting new investments, including the near-complete City of Cortland Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) implementation, Village of Homer's DRI award, Gutchess Lumber Sports Complex, and the proposed Micron plant in Clay, are sparking a wave of innovation and expanding economic prospects throughout the County. Further, SUNY Cortland's presence, along with other major employers and tourism assets, offers an opportunity to introduce Cortland County to a wide array of individuals from different backgrounds. Intentionally working to expand the types of small businesses on offer, from varied cuisines to niche retail, will help a more diverse group of students, faculty, and visitors see themselves reflected in, served by, and welcomed to the community. Various individuals expressed this as an opportunity to attract and retain talent and residents of all ages and ethnicities. As such, this can be a dynamic time of diversification and development that can promise a bright future for Cortland County's economy.

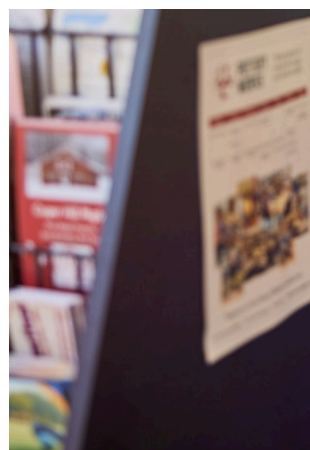


PHOTO CREDIT: MATT BALDELLI



Vision

To the right is Cortland County's vision for the future of its economy and workforce:

Cortland County will become a vibrant, resilient, and innovative **economy hub** by building on momentum in specific regions of the County and industry sectors, like **manufacturing, agriculture, and the arts**. Cortland County will cluster development to ensure preservation of revered agricultural and recreational lands. Economic development efforts will be **human-centered** and cognizant of the varied needs of the County's community, including **housing, workforce social supports like childcare, ongoing education** and support of SUNY Cortland, school districts, and other educational institutions, and a need to be **future-oriented in design**.

Current Context & Trends

DEMOGRAPHICS

Municipalities across Cortland County are experiencing a transformative period as they address past population shifts and embrace new opportunities for growth aimed at slowing or reversing population declines over the last decade.

Median household incomes are on the rise and projected to continue growing, with an anticipated increase to \$69,097 by 2028. The Villages, in particular, are poised to be a driving force behind this income growth, expected to surge by 11.4% to \$74,190 by 2028. Substantial investments and revitalization efforts in the villages are helping to drive this increase.

Cortland County’s demographic profile reflects a youthful edge compared to the Central New York Region, thanks in part to the vibrant presence of SUNY Cortland. The County’s median age is notably younger at 38.2 years, and the City of Cortland boasts a median age of just 30.4. Additionally, the City of Cortland stands out with the highest levels of educational attainment in the County.

Income distribution in the County is similar to the regional trends, with a balanced percentage of residents earning below \$50,000 and above \$100,000. This balance, combined with ongoing investment and a forward-looking approach, positions Cortland County for a promising economic future and enhanced quality of life (Table 1).

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC FUNDAMENTALS

SOURCE: ESRI

POPULATION				
	2010	2023	CHANGE	% CHANGE
Cortland County	49,336	45,920	(3,416)	(6.9%)
City of Cortland	19,204	17,337	(1,867)	(9.7%)
Towns	30,132	28,583	(1,549)	(5.1%)
Villages	5,201	4,907	(294)	(5.7%)
CNY Region	791,939	778,684	(13,255)	(1.7%)

Attachment: Cortland County Strategic Development Plan (12670 : Adopt the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan)

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC FUNDAMENTALS (CONT.)

SOURCE: ESRI

HOUSEHOLDS				
	2010	2023	CHANGE	% CHANGE
Cortland County	18,671	18,240	(431)	(2.3%)
City of Cortland	6,946	6,597	(349)	(5.0%)
Towns	11,725	11,643	(82)	(0.7%)
Villages	2,141	2,138	(3)	(0.1%)
CNY Region	311,956	319,363	7,407	2.4%
PROJECTED MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
	2023	2028	CHANGE	% CHANGE
Cortland County	\$63,655	\$69,097	\$5,442	8.5%
City of Cortland	\$52,494	\$55,278	\$2,784	5.3%
Towns	\$71,515	\$78,050	\$6,535	9.1%
Villages	\$66,579	\$74,190	\$7,611	11.4%
CNY Region	\$64,623	\$71,379	\$6,756	10.5%
PROJECTED MEDIAN AGE				
	2023	2028	CHANGE	% CHANGE
Cortland County	38.2	39.1	0.9	2.4%
City of Cortland	30.4	30.4	-	0.0%
Towns	43.5	44.4	0.9	2.1%
Villages	43.6	44.0	0.4	0.9%
CNY Region	40.8	41.7	0.9	2.2%

INDUSTRY

Cortland County's economy and employment is powered by a robust set of key sectors, including Government, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Manufacturing. With 4,839 jobs in Government, 2,406 in Health Care and Social Assistance, and 2,377 in Manufacturing as of 2023, these industries collectively represent nearly half of local employment. Significant growth is underway in Manufacturing, which has rebounded impressively by 10% since 2020 following pre-pandemic declines. This resurgence highlights the County's successful investments and revitalization efforts in this sector (Table 2).

Looking ahead, Cortland County is poised for exciting growth, with the Government sector projected to add approximately 1,149 jobs over the next ten years. Other sectors like Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade are also expected to expand significantly, and past declines in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry are expected to reverse in the next ten years. In fact, almost all industries are expected to add jobs over the next decade. So despite some industries, like Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, facing ongoing challenges and job declines, the County showcases a diverse set of economic opportunities for workers and the region. Overall, the County is anticipated to outpace regional growth, with an anticipated addition of 4,108 jobs by 2033, reinforcing its promising economic trajectory (Table 3).

In addition to the employment trends above, Cortland County has competitive advantages in Government, Other Services (except Public Administration), and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting, with high concentrations of jobs in these industries compared to other areas of the country. These industries, Agriculture in particular, thus offer unique economic opportunities for the County.



TABLE 2: CORTLAND COUNTY INDUSTRY COMPOSITION-HISTORIC TRENDS

2.3.a

NAICS & DESCRIPTION	2013	2023	CHANGE	% CHANGE
90 - Government*	4,062	4,839	777	19%
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	2,606	2,406	(200)	(8%)
31 - Manufacturing	2,425	2,377	(48)	(2%)
44 - Retail Trade	2,406	2,266	(140)	(6%)
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	2,250	2,189	(61)	(3%)
81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)	869	1,114	245	28%
54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	895	694	(201)	(22%)
56 - Admin & Support and Waste Manage & Remediation Services	904	692	(212)	(23%)
23 - Construction	675	613	(62)	(9%)
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	501	568	67	13%
52 - Finance and Insurance	425	536	111	26%
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	346	452	106	31%
42 - Wholesale Trade	353	276	(77)	(22%)
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	169	200	31	18%
61 - Educational Services	119	190	71	60%
48 - Transportation and Warehousing	184	120	(64)	(35%)
22 - Utilities	23	112	89	387%
51 - Information	100	100	0	0%
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	92	77	(15)	(16%)
99 - Unclassified Industry	27	49	22	81%
21 - Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	<10	25	-	-
TOTALS	19,440	19,893	453	2.3%

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST Q3 2023 DATA SET | *INCLUDES PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM EMPLOYMENT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & WORKFORCE

TABLE 3: CORTLAND COUNTY INDUSTRY COMPOSITION-PROJECTED TRENDS

NAICS & DESCRIPTION	2013	2023	CHANGE	% CHANGE
90 - Government*	4,839	5,988	1,149	24%
31 - Manufacturing	2,377	2,919	542	23%
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	2,189	2,693	504	23%
44 - Retail Trade	2,266	2,715	449	20%
81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,114	1,391	277	25%
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	568	761	193	34%
52 - Finance and Insurance	536	693	157	29%
56 - Admin & Support and Waste Manage and Remediation Services	692	847	155	22%
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	2,406	2,560	154	6%
42 - Wholesale Trade	276	391	115	42%
61 - Educational Services	190	282	92	48%
23 - Construction	613	697	84	14%
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	452	518	66	15%
22 - Utilities	112	173	61	54%
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	200	240	40	20%
99 - Unclassified Industry	49	83	34	69%
51 - Information	100	128	28	28%
48 - Transportation and Warehousing	120	145	25	21%
21 - Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	25	36	11	44%
54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	694	682	(12)	(2%)
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	77	59	(18)	(23%)
TOTALS	19,893	24,001	4,108	20.7%

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST Q3 2023 DATA SET | *INCLUDES PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM EMPLOYMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & WORKFORCE

Childcare & Early Childhood Education

In every focus group and public input event throughout the Strategic Development Plan process, one issue consistently rose to the top: the need for greater access to quality childcare and early childhood education options. There is a clear and unified recognition of the current childcare shortages in Cortland County and their impact on the workforce.

Addressing these challenges presents a significant opportunity for growth and improvement. State regulations, while ensuring high standards, have created complex and costly requirements for childcare providers that often face staffing and funding constraints. This environment can make it difficult for existing facilities to thrive - or even remain in operation - and for workers to be compensated fairly.

By focusing on enhancing and supporting childcare infrastructure, Cortland County has the chance to not only meet this crucial need but also to unlock new potential within the local workforce. This effort should include both finding additional resources to sustain and grow existing providers, as well as supporting activities to launch new providers throughout the County. Investing in better resources and fair compensation for childcare professionals can pave the way for long-term, positive change, benefiting both families and the broader community.



PHOTO CREDIT: MATT BALDELLI

Healthcare

Healthcare is a cornerstone of workforce and economic development, playing a pivotal role in both the well-being of the residents and workers, as well as business sustainability. Ensuring residents have access to quality healthcare options is crucial for maintaining a strong and thriving economy, as well as a meaningful and attractive quality of life. Comprehensive healthcare, including both behavioral health services and a full range of medical specialties, supports workforce stability, helps businesses retain valuable employees, and supports the economic activity driven by those who live in the area.

With the healthcare sector already employing 2,406 people in Cortland County, it is clear that investing in this industry not only improves individual health outcomes but also strengthens the County's economic foundation. By expanding and enhancing healthcare services, Cortland County can foster a healthier, more productive workforce and drive overall economic growth.

Focus Groups & Community Engagement

In an effort to build County goals and strategies from the ground-up, Cortland County hosted two focus groups related to economic and workforce development that sought to get to the core of the County's economic challenges and opportunities. The first of these focused on workforce, including community members from childcare, educational, non-profit, and social support organizations, while the second focus group targeted the local business community. These focus groups, along with ongoing public engagement and document review, aided in the development of goals, strategies, and specific actions that the County and its partners can undertake to facilitate economic growth and workforce expansion.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & WORKFORCE PILLARS

A

Collaboration

Collaboration and coordination are at the heart of driving successful economic development and workforce growth. As economic development is inherently interdisciplinary, fostering seamless communication among key stakeholders is essential to maximize the impact of new investments. Effective collaboration ensures that resources are utilized to their fullest potential, creating a thriving environment for both businesses and the workforce.

Similarly, addressing workforce challenges requires a unified approach that integrates human and business elements. By bringing together municipalities, business services organizations, companies, workers, human services providers, and residents, the County can tackle concerns more effectively and create a more cohesive strategy for progress.

Building strong partnerships across these diverse sectors will not only enhance economic development efforts, but also drive a more dynamic and resilient workforce, paving the way for a prosperous future for Cortland County.

B

Vibrant Communities

The essence of a vibrant community evolves with its people, businesses, and physical landscape, making flexibility crucial in economic development and workforce strategies. Tailoring approaches to suit the unique characteristics of each area ensures that communities can maintain their distinct identities and values.

In the rural areas that constitute the majority of Cortland County, economic development will be more focused on the agricultural economy that is present and highly valued. This may mean finding new ways to support farmers, with an emphasis on family farms, whether it be through financing, building circular economies, expanding agritourism opportunities, or targeted workforce development. In more urban areas, economic development and workforce solutions may require an approach more focused on the creative economy, retail, services, and small business development, seeing as those are key components of a healthy downtown corridor.

Investment in the arts can improve community vibrancy, but also be an economic driver. Americans for the Arts' *Arts & Economic Prosperity 6* report found that in 2017 "arts attendees spent \$31.47 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and lodging—vital income for local businesses." Arts attendees from outside of the host County spend even more, \$48 per person, and 69% reported traveling specifically to attend that activity. Assuming one-third of attendees are from outside of the County (the national average according to the report), a sold-out show at Homer Center for the Arts would generate nearly \$15,000 of additional spending in the Homer area.

In any type of community—rural, urban, or suburban—there are unique qualities and benefits that can be highlighted through placemaking initiatives. Placemaking is a method of creating communities that people love, feel connected to, and want to live in. By taking a community-first and a people-first approach to creating vibrancy in the County, economic development and workforce projects will be able to grow sustainably. Businesses will have a larger labor pool to hire talent from as individuals choose to remain in or move to these vibrant communities, which in turn helps to attract new businesses as well. Economic, workforce, and community vibrancy are tightly intertwined, but people are the priority.

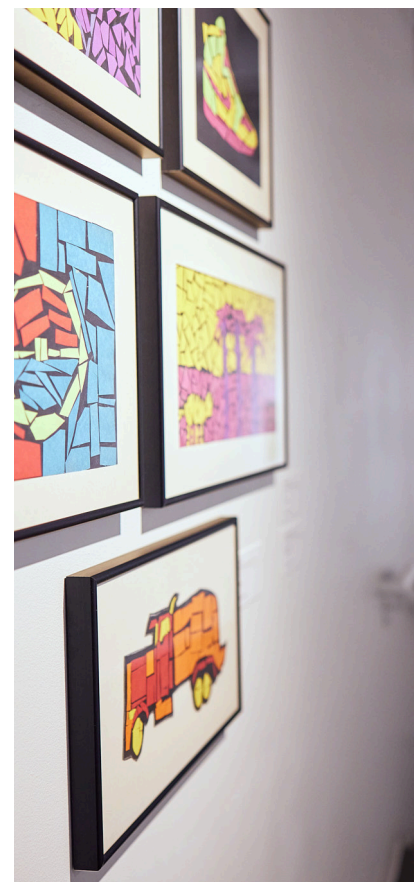


PHOTO CREDIT: MATT BALDELLI

C

Coordinated & Aligned Growth

Aligned future growth in the area of economic and workforce development entails defining areas for specific types of growth and planning for that growth in a coordinated way via infrastructure, policy, and marketing and promotion. This will allow the County to meet its needs for business and talent attraction and retention while retaining local community vision and character.

In more developed areas, aligned future growth may mean focusing on commercial developments and multi-family housing. These types of developments will require specific infrastructure as the population residing and visiting the area grows. Transportation and utility infrastructure may need to be updated, new zoning policies may need to be approved to allow for greater density, and marketing efforts by the County may be required to attract multi-family housing developers and occupants for storefronts. In less developed areas, aligned future growth will look different. They may want to focus on more industrial developments and will subsequently need to ensure that a site has the utility capacity to support a new industrial business. Similarly, they may want to encourage more housing developments, which will likely require reviewing zoning laws. Communities can market themselves as bedroom communities for larger developments, like Micron, or they can strive to become employment destinations if they would like.

Communities throughout Cortland County will want to examine their current character and determine what types of development, for both businesses and housing, will help to enhance their existing strengths.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & WORKFORCE STRATEGIES

Four strategies were identified to advance Cortland County's vision for economic development and the workforce. These strategies focus on improving access to childcare, strengthening educational and healthcare resources, improving talent attraction and retention with placemaking, and leveraging community assets to support key industries. These strategies will work together and with other focus areas to diversify the County's economy, helping it to continue growing as a vibrant, resilient, and innovative economic hub.

Strategy Matrix Key

Pillars Plan Pillars address by or aligned with the action	Timing The timeline in which the action could be completed	Cost The general cost of the action
Collaboration A	Near Term = within two years	\$ = no or low cost
Vibrant Communities B	Mid Term = three to five years	\$\$ = substantial but primarily noncapital expenditures
Coordinated & Aligned Growth C	Long Term = more than five years or ongoing	\$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures

STRATEGY 1: EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY EDUCATION

Much of Cortland County lacks sufficient childcare, creating a barrier for professionals with young families to work and/or live in the County. There are very few childcare providers, and those that do exist are often expensive. A number of employers in the County have noted the challenges faced by their employees in obtaining reliable, affordable, and local childcare services, which translate into staffing challenges when childcare falls through. Ensuring that everyone, regardless of income level, has access to childcare is key to talent attraction and retention.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Facilitate conversation and collaboration between employers, nonprofits, existing providers, agencies, and families to identify opportunities to support, lower the cost of, and/or create new spaces for additional childcare programs and services throughout the County.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland YWCA, Child Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, BDC/IDA, Employers, County/City/Towns/Villages, NYS OCFS

CONTINUED

Survey families with children to identify the specific scale and scope of needs and gaps across the County.			
High	Near Term	\$	Child Development Council, School Districts, Employers, Chamber of Commerce
Use a mapping platform to plot existing childcare centers and providers throughout the County and then work with employers, healthcare providers, and schools to share information about existing childcare options and identify ideal areas for new childcare operations of any kind.			
Med	Near Term	\$\$	Child Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, Guthrie Health, School Districts, Cortland County Planning
Develop an easy to follow, step by step guide about requirements and timeline for becoming a childcare provider.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Child Development Council, QualityStars NY
Increase awareness of and expand available childcare subsidy and grant programs, including, but not limited to, the creation of a pilot early childhood program within the County that the Chamber is already advocating with state and federal representatives.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Child and Adult Care Food Program, Child Development Council, Cortland County DSS
Create an educational program for in-home childcare providers, reducing barriers to becoming a childcare provider and maintaining certifications.			
Med	Long Term	\$\$	SBDC, Child Development Council, Central New York Community Foundation

STRATEGY 2: STRENGTHEN EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTHCARE RESOURCES FOR WORKERS AND RESIDENTS ACROSS EXPERIENCE LEVELS, AGES, AND WAGES

Cortland County has a strong healthcare and social assistance industry, but providers in the field—especially within behavioral health—struggle to meet demand. As the need for mental health and health professionals grows, attracting qualified individuals to work in those fields has been a challenge. Bolstering this industry will ensure more residents have access to care, improving their ability to retain employment, maintain good mental health, and increase productivity. Moreover, while educational resources are strong in the County, they must be prepared to accommodate shifting industry needs, expose students to a variety of career pathways, and adapt to the consequences of an aging workforce.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Continue to develop, support and promote civic and leadership development for young professionals through programs such as Leadership Cortland, management training opportunities, and networking.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County Workforce Development, IDA/BDC, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland
Coordinate messaging and improve community awareness of workforce development programming through inter-agency collaboration and outreach.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Workforce Development, Chamber of Commerce, IDA/BDC, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland, School Districts
Strengthen the County's already strong network of medical and behavioral service providers by connecting and coordinating them, helping to improve efficiencies and service to residents and reduce workforce challenges (shortages and inter-agency competition).			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Guthrie Health, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cayuga Health Services, Cortland County Mental Health
Ensure that at-risk and vulnerable populations experiencing homelessness receive mental and physical healthcare as they move to transitional and temporary housing to improve long-term outcomes.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Guthrie Health, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cayuga Health Services, County Emergency Response and Communications Department, Cortland County Mental Health Department, Youth Bureau, Cortland Free Library, Family Health Network
Expand career exposure opportunities for K-12 and college students so that they may become aware of, connect with, and learn from local employers, as well as to encourage students to take advantage of local career pathways and secure job placement.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Workforce Development, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland, School Districts, Youth Bureau, Workforce Development Initiative, Employers
Improve communication among workforce development providers, employers, and educational institutions like BOCES, TC3, school districts, and SUNY Cortland to support recent high school graduates who may be vulnerable after losing the K-12 support and guidance.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Workforce Development, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland, school districts, Youth Bureau, Workforce Development Initiative

CONTINUED

Address the shortage of skilled workers in the human services and housing nonprofit sectors by first surveying local organizations to identify specific skill gaps and workforce needs, then partnering with local education providers to establish specialized training programs and apprenticeship/internship programs.

High	Long Term	\$\$	CACTC, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland, School Districts, Youth Bureau, Workforce Development Initiative, Cortland County Workforce Development, Habitat for Humanity, Cortland Housing Authority, Catholic Charities
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Reintroduce the BOCES nursing program to strengthen the healthcare workforce in the County and relieve pressures on service providers.

High	Long Term	\$\$\$	OCM BOCES, Guthrie Health, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cayuga Health Services, Cortland County Workforce Development
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STRATEGY 3: PROMOTE AND ADVANCE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES, AND RECREATION ASSETS TO ENCOURAGE TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION, AS WELL AS ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Cortland County is home to a number of unique arts and cultural events and recreational assets, including the Gutches Lumber Sports Complex, Homer Center for the Arts, and the Cortland Repertory Theatre. The opportunity exists to market them to a wider audience, which will take their status from hidden gems to well-known destinations. Visitors to the County and prospective residents are often unaware of the myriad amenities available to them. Ensuring that these amenities continue to expand and are well-promoted will be important for attracting and retaining talent.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Promote Cortland County as an up-and-coming arts hub to continue the momentum of the growing arts industry in Homer and downtown Cortland.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County CVB, Center for the Arts of Homer, SUNY Cortland Arts and Business departments, Cortland Arts Connect
Support the integration of art into public spaces via murals, functional sculptures, colorful amenities, and more.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County CVB, Center for the Arts of Homer, SUNY Cortland Arts department, Cortland Arts Connect, All Municipalities

CONTINUED

Promote the Cortland Airport as a venue for community events, gathering, and connection.			
Med	Near Term	\$	County Planning, Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County CVB
Build on investments in Gutchess Park by creating and providing a dedicated resource for visiting sports teams and their families that highlights the restaurants, places to stay, other recreation, and arts and entertainment opportunities in the County.			
Med	Near Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County CVB, Gutchess Park, Cortland Regional Sports Council, Town of Cortlandville
Invite SUNY Cortland students to explore different areas of Cortland County, introducing them to the quality of life and opportunities available to them as young professionals via targeted marketing/outreach efforts, improving public transportation and microtransit options, and promoting local employment opportunities and low cost of living.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	SUNY Cortland, Cortland Transit, Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County CVB, City of Cortland
Create a case study of the Village of Homer's intentional and thoughtful downtown improvements, including façade improvements, historic preservation, small business support, and green space to use as a guiding example for the revitalization of other downtown areas in the County.			
Low	Mid Term	\$\$	Village of Homer, Cortland County Planning, City of Cortland

STRATEGY 4: LEVERAGE COMMUNITY ASSETS AND ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT AND DEVELOP SMALL BUSINESSES, THE CREATIVE ECONOMY, AGRICULTURE, AND TOURISM/RECREATION

Cortland County has a robust small business and agriculture ecosystem. As key economic drivers in the County, they must be supported to encourage their viability as farms continue to consolidate and big businesses overshadow the small. Tourism is one method to support both agriculture (through agritourism) and small businesses (through more foot traffic in downtown areas) while also generating revenues for recreation and larger one-time events.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Promote and support existing and new entrepreneurs through a variety of long-term initiatives that increase diversity, aid in funding, and connect small businesses, with particular emphasis on the creative economy, people of color, underserved populations, and rural main streets.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Center for the Arts of Homer, Blackstone LaunchPad, Cortland Arts Connect, USDA Rural Development, TC3
Recognize and support the arts, history, and the creative economy as increasingly important economic drivers in the County. This could take the form of supporting arts and cultural organizations' capital and programmatic funding requests, providing entrepreneurial training for artists, reinstating a full-time County historian, and connecting and cross promoting events and programming across audiences.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Center for the Arts of Homer, Blackstone LaunchPad, Cortland Arts Connect, Cortland Repertory Theater, TC3, Cortland County CVB, SUNY Cortland, CNY Arts
Using the aligned growth maps provided in the pillars section of this Plan as a starting point, facilitate an ongoing conversation with municipalities throughout the County to identify the appropriate areas to develop the key growth sectors of small business, the creative economy, agriculture, and tourism/recreation. Identify ideal sites for these uses throughout the County and promote communities and sites accordingly.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cities/Towns/Villages, County Planning, IDA/BDC, USDA Rural Development
Balance the growing needs of the renewable energy sector and agriculture by encouraging municipalities to review zoning that identifies and preserves productive agricultural land and limits solar farms on that land.			
High	Mid Term	\$	Cities/Towns/Villages, Cortland County Agricultural, Planning & Environmental Committee, USDA Rural Development, Cortland County Soil & Water

CONTINUED

Intentionally connect farmers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs to facilitate the development of a circular economy that results in local supply chains, waste reduction, and the production of local goods.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Rural Development, New York Farm Bureau, Cortland County Agricultural, Planning & Environmental Committee, Chamber of Commerce, IDA/BDC, Seven Valleys, TC3
Explore opportunities to utilize the Cortland County Airport as an asset for business owners, small business development, and tourism.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	County Planning, Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County CVB
Create a program that provides information and technical assistance to small farmers to promote farm succession and other resources for growing farm-to-table and agritourism in the County.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County Soil & Water, USDA Rural Development, New York Farm Bureau, Cortland County Agricultural, Planning & Environmental Committee
Facilitate cross promotion among and between local businesses to improve vibrancy and advertising, and boost the already strong "shop small, shop local" sentiment among residents and tourists.			
Low	Long Term	\$	Cortland County Chamber of Commerce, IDA/BDC, Cortland County CVB



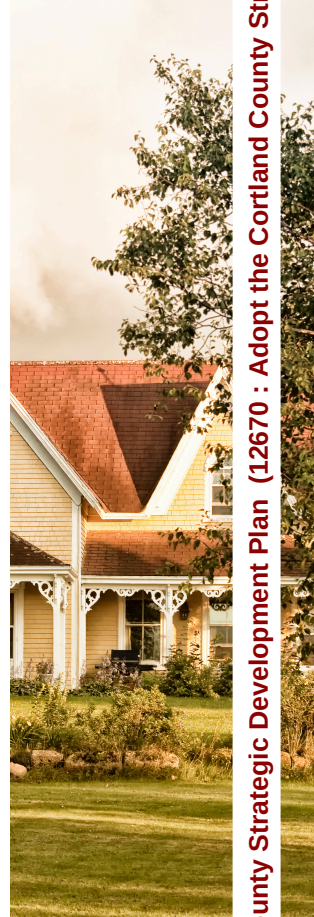
FOCUS AREA 2: HOUSING

As the County looks to the future, there is a strong commitment to revitalizing and expanding the existing housing stock. While challenges such as high construction and renovation costs exist, they also open the door to collaborative efforts between the County, developers, and homeowners. By incentivizing the development of new housing units and the rehabilitation of existing properties, Cortland County is positioning itself as a desirable location for a dynamic workforce, supporting economic development, and enhancing the overall quality of life.

Vision

The following is Cortland County's vision for the future of its open space and sustainability efforts:

Cortland County will have a diverse, high-quality, and affordable housing stock that accommodates the needs of its residents, allowing them to move from rental to ownership, age in place, and prioritize other areas of their lives. Additionally, an enhanced housing stock will attract new residents across income types and ages, expanding the County's population and injecting new incomes into the local economy, thereby supporting local businesses and events.



Current Context & Trends



Affordable, safe, and accessible housing for renters and homeowners is a challenge across Upstate communities. In Cortland County, rental and home sale prices have steadily increased, driven in part by the pandemic-induced urban exodus and decreasing household sizes.

While wages have not kept pace with housing costs nationally or in Cortland County, this situation presents a unique opportunity to explore innovative solutions that can meet the needs of residents across all income levels and geographic areas. Cortland County's housing market remains more affordable compared to the broader Central New York region and the state, but public input confirmed that current residents are still struggling with the recent increases. Efforts are underway to make Cortland communities more accessible to those who live and work in the area, and community input indicated support for expanded eviction and foreclosure prevention resources.

The community is actively seeking ways to create a balanced and inclusive housing market by focusing on expanding housing options for lower-income individuals, young families, and seniors. Participants at the Community Summit held in June 2024 indicated, in particular, a need for safe, quality studio and one-bedroom units for single minimum wage workers (\$250-\$500) and 3- and 4-bedroom rentals for families (\$1,200). Furthermore, by addressing the need for additional senior housing, Cortland County aims to free up single-family homes, enabling

younger families to settle and contribute to the community's vitality. These approaches would help to both attract workforce-aged individuals and ensure that those already residing in the County have the opportunity to stay and thrive. Allowing for and expanding the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) could be part of this solution in some areas of the County.

However, local housing developers interviewed noted that rents in Cortland County are not high enough to support housing development costs. These costs have increased drastically in recent years, and developers have struggled to make projects work even while utilizing grant funding. On occasion, they've even had to forego awarded grant funds because they could not support the remaining financing at current rental levels. The same is true of single-family homes that in the past would have been developed as starter or middle-income homes. Realtors also indicate that buyers searching for second homes or seeking to downsize are stuck in a pinch point. Increases in both home prices and interest rates means that they are finding they need to pay the same or more for less space and/or a less desirable location.

Safety, accessibility, and sustainability were noted as priorities in community feedback. Stakeholders indicated a need to address both environmental (e.g. lead, asbestos, radon, etc.) and physical (e.g. code noncompliance, mechanical systems, etc.) hazards, as well as ensure that housing units are individually accessible. New construction and rehabilitation of units would help to upgrade energy standards, reduce carbon footprints, and improve resiliency. The establishment of a land bank, or intermunicipal agreement with a nearby land bank, could be beneficial in pursuing these activities, particularly if New York State continues to provide relevant funding opportunities for land banks.

SUNY Cortland plays a significant role in shaping the local housing landscape with a mix of on-campus housing and privately owned student accommodations. The University contributes to the vibrant downtown area. Currently, SUNY Cortland is conducting a comprehensive housing analysis to better understand and address the needs of both students and the broader community. This initiative aims to create more cohesive and inclusive housing solutions that benefit everyone.

Through these concerted efforts, Cortland County is not just addressing housing challenges, but is actively shaping a future where everyone can find a place to call home in this growing and welcoming community.

THE DATA

The median home sale price in the County is \$170,950 (Source: NYSAR), and the median gross rent is \$811 (Source: Esri). These prices are relatively affordable when compared to the Central New York Region. However, about a quarter of households in the County earn under \$35,000 annually and would be cost-burdened by both home ownership and renting at these median levels. Cost-burdened in this context is defined as spending 30% or more of annual household income on rent or mortgages. Additionally, the cost-burden measure primarily illuminates conditions for the workforce and senior populations, and does not necessarily reflect statistics for low-income housing. Since 2019, the median home price in the County has increased by 32%. This is less than the State's 41% increase, but still large enough to be a concern as income growth lags behind increases in housing prices.

Single-family detached homes constitute almost two-thirds (65%) of the County's housing stock. As would be expected, the City of Cortland boasts higher population density than the rest of the County and thus has a larger share of multi-family properties. Over half (62%) of all housing units in the County were built prior to 1970, meaning that environmental hazards like lead, radon, and asbestos have a higher likelihood of being present, potentially creating health risks for residents.

About 13% of housing units in the County are vacant, which is higher than the regional average of 10.5%. Most of these vacancies are in the City of Cortland where 14.2% of units are vacant. Various academic and research sources indicate that a community-wide rental vacancy rate of 5-8% is ideal, and Census data indicates that generally rental vacancy rates (6-9%) are a bit higher than homeowner vacancy rates (1-2%).

A third of the vacant housing units in the City are rented and not occupied, potentially a result of the student housing there. Over 40% of the vacant units in the City and villages are in the "other" vacant category, which captures units that are in foreclosure, uninhabitable, or have an owner living elsewhere (like assisted living), among other reasons. This supports the public comments indicating a need for foreclosure prevention services, as well as indicates the need and opportunity for rehabilitation of existing units.

In the County as a whole, 27.5% of vacant units are seasonal/occasional homes, which is a testament to the County's strong and growing tourism industry and the beautiful scenery that entices households to purchase second homes to vacation in the County. See Table 1 on the next page for more detail about types of vacancy.

TABLE 1: TYPE OF VACANCY

SOURCE: ESRI

	CORTLAND COUNTY	CITY OF CORTLAND	TOWNS	VILLAGES	CNY REGION
Total Vacant Units	2,538	1,079	1,459	122	42,731
For Rent	6.6%	10.4%	3.8%	2.5%	16.2%
Rented, Not Occupied	13.4%	30.5%	0.8%	0.0%	5.3%
For Sale Only	5.9%	8.8%	3.8%	0.0%	7.3%
Sold, Not Occupied	10.2%	1.7%	16.6%	43.4%	4.3%
Seasonal/Occasional	27.5%	7.8%	42.0%	13.9%	31.1%
Other	36.4%	40.9%	33.0%	40.2%	35.7%

HOUSING PILLARS

A

Collaboration

Strengthened coordination among governments, human service agencies, developers, and residents is critical to addressing housing availability, quality, and costs in a comprehensive way. One of Cortland County's strengths is its plethora of health, housing, and human services organizations. While these organizations do have a history of communication, they would benefit from improved coordination between and among their varied activities. More active and intentional collaboration would promote a holistic approach to addressing the full range of housing needs across incomes, abilities, and geographies.

B

Vibrant Communities

Cortland County is a diverse community, offering everything from peaceful rural landscapes to bustling urban centers. To ensure every area thrives, housing strategies must be carefully crafted to reflect the unique needs and character of each community. By embracing a range of development approaches, we can create vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods that align with countywide housing goals.

In the County's rural areas, where residents cherish independence and a quieter lifestyle, housing strategies will focus on maintaining the traditional spread-out nature of homes. These areas value open space and agriculture, so developments will complement and enhance these elements. By continuing to focus on single-family homes and introducing more opportunities for accessory dwelling units, we can provide rental options for young workers seeking the rural experience and

seniors who wish to downsize without leaving their beloved communities. This approach will help rural areas retain their unique charm while attracting like-minded residents who appreciate the serenity and values these communities offer.

In the more densely populated villages and hamlets, vibrancy takes on a different form, centered around walkability, access to arts and entertainment, and a strong sense of neighborhood connectivity. Housing strategies in these areas will likely include higher-density housing, mixed-use developments, and enhancements to public infrastructure to support both new and improved housing units. These efforts will preserve the character of these communities while attracting residents who value the convenience and activity of more connected living.

For the most densely populated parts of the County, especially the City of Cortland, creating vibrant communities means building on existing infrastructure and amenities while embracing strategies to increase housing density. By implementing measures like promoting smaller lot sizes, increasing multifamily housing, and expanding mixed-use development in the downtown core, we can enhance connectivity and enrich the services and amenities available to residents and visitors alike. These efforts will contribute to a more dynamic and vibrant county, benefiting all who call Cortland County home.

Through thoughtful, localized strategies, Cortland County is poised to foster vibrant communities that reflect the diverse lifestyles and values of its residents, ensuring that every corner of the County continues to flourish.

C

Coordinated & Aligned Growth

The population and business growth desired by the County and some component municipalities can only be achieved through intentional improvements to and expansion of the housing stock that align with community character. These efforts to enhance quality and quantity will better align the housing market with area needs. Accomplishing this alignment will require a comprehensive look at existing and future infrastructure, as well as cross-community conversations about where the greatest opportunities exist for different housing types.



HOUSING STRATEGIES

Three strategies are recommended to advance the County's vision for housing. These include enhancing housing diversity and quality for all, accommodating the differing characteristics and visions of each municipality in the County, and improving partnerships to enhance housing accessibility and affordability. When implemented, these strategies will improve quality of life and enhance the County's position as a desirable location for a dynamic workforce.

Strategy Matrix Key

Pillars Plan Pillars address by or aligned with the action	Timing The timeline in which the action could be completed	Cost The general cost of the action
Collaboration A	Near Term = within two years	\$ = no or low cost
Vibrant Communities B	Mid Term = three to five years	\$\$ = substantial but primarily noncapital expenditures
Coordinated & Aligned Growth C	Long Term = more than five years or ongoing	\$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures

STRATEGY 1: ENHANCE HOUSING DIVERSITY AND QUALITY ACROSS THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

Housing diversity is the foundation on which a healthy housing market sits, and that foundation needs reinforcement in Cortland County. Currently, the housing market is primarily made up of single-family detached homes priced beyond the reach of young families and below median income-earning households. Additionally, seniors may want to stay in their communities, but elect to move out of their single-family homes due to high costs or maintenance requirements. If appropriate housing options were available locally in the form of senior rentals, townhomes, or condos, these single-family homes would become available to young families and workers who are eager to take care of them. A lack of diverse housing options persists across the County in both urban and rural municipalities. This has a two-fold effect. First, it makes adequate housing difficult to find no matter a household's income, desired location, employment status, age, or size. Second, the lack of housing diversity means that households struggle to move along the housing continuum as their needs and desires change. Increasing diversity will help move someone in an affordable rental unit move into a market-rate unit, then into homeownership, and onwards. A range of housing options are needed to attract and retain residents, no matter the income level, age, or location in the County of the individual.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Educate municipal planning and zoning boards on the methods available to them to increase housing diversity, including by creating inclusionary zoning, decreasing lot size requirements, and/or allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs).			
Med	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cities/Towns/Villages, Thoma Development, CNY RPDB, USDA Rural Development, US HUD

CONTINUED

Examine where ADUs would be most beneficial, allowing for an increased rental stock.			
Low	Near Term	\$\$	City/Town/Village zoning boards, Cortland County Planning
Encourage development of senior housing units across income levels, allowing residents to age in place. This effort should include both rental and ownership opportunities (e.g. apartments, duplexes, condos, townhomes).			
High	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Office For Aging, Cortland Housing Authority, developers
Facilitate the creation of both rental and owned housing units that are affordable to middle-income and young professional households (roughly 80%-120% AMI) by creating new incentives and technical assistance for housing developers, encouraging greater density where it makes sense, and incentivizing residential use of upper-floors of mixed-use properties in downtown areas.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	NYS Pro-Housing Communities funding, NYS HCR, US HUD, 485a tax abatement
Educate the community on the realities of temporary and transitional housing and support the development of new temporary and transitional units to uplift individuals and households struggling to afford shelter.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, US HUD, NYS HCR
Invest in upgrading the large stock of older homes by working with landlords and homeowners to remediate health hazards (including lead, asbestos, and radon) and improve exterior deterioration and landscaping.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Health Department, local codes departments, tax abatements/credits (i.e. 444a, historic home rehabilitation credit), local foundations, US HUD, NYS HCR
Explore different ways to acquire and sell vacant and abandoned properties so as to encourage local ownership and development.			
Low	Long Term	\$\$	National Community Stabilization Trust, churches, local banks and lending institutions, Article 19A, Article 1111-a, surplus municipal property, donations/estates, market acquisitions, real estate agents and developers

STRATEGY 2: ACCOMMODATE AND PLAN FOR GEOGRAPHIC AND COMMUNITY DIFFERENCES (I.E. RURAL VS URBAN) IN HOUSING GOALS AND NEEDS

Cortland County is home to a range of community types, from rural and sparsely populated to urban and densely populated areas. The differences in each community and the desire to preserve existing community character mean that housing needs vary across geographies. Planning for this variety will ensure that each community develops and/or maintains the housing it most needs.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Provide technical support to municipalities who wish to pursue Pro-Housing Community certification, which is advantageous for grant applications and funding resources.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYS ESD, Pro-Housing Communities
Conduct a comprehensive housing market analysis and development strategy to pinpoint needs and strategies across communities.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, NYS ESD, Pro-Housing Communities
Provide technical support to municipalities who wish to create or update their comprehensive plans and encourage them to include Pro-Housing and Smart Growth policies.			
Med	NearTerm	\$	Cortland County Planning, CNYRPDB, NYS DOS
Facilitate conversations across communities to identify areas that can support or be targeted for higher density housing or mixed-use development versus areas that should remain low-density.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cities/Towns/Villages
Evaluate the current structure and operations of fire and safety services throughout the County, particularly staffing and volunteer recruitment, to ensure that residents and businesses are fully covered and protected.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Emergency Response and Communications, public safety entities, NYS Association of Fire Chiefs, FEMA, SYS Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services, Department of Environmental Conservation Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant Program,
Identify the needs in each community, then create cross-border plans for addressing those needs collaboratively (i.e. shared services for codes enforcement, infrastructure, health and safety, amenities, etc.).			
Med	Long Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cities/Towns/Villages

STRATEGY 3: IMPROVE PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE SUPPLY, AFFORDABILITY, AND FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY OF HOUSING

There are a number of organizations in the County that work on housing issues. While these organizations communicate with one another well, they do not necessarily actively coordinate their efforts to achieve maximum effectiveness or efficiency. Facilitating broader collaboration among these organizations and their programming will help to enhance housing services and improve affordability, accessibility, and expansion of the housing stock.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Strengthen coordination among anchor institutions, municipalities, and housing organizations to create housing that reflects the needs and income levels of each community.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland Housing Authority, SUNY Cortland, Catholic Charities, Cortland Housing Assistance Council, CC Social Services, Access to Independence, Walden Place
Collaborate with SUNY Cortland to develop a comprehensive rental strategy for downtown Cortland.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	City of Cortland, SUNY Cortland, Cortland County Planning
Expand and promote eviction and foreclosure prevention resources to help at-risk households maintain homeownership and prevent homelessness.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland Housing Authority
Encourage physical accessibility in new housing developments, especially where populations may be older or have higher rates of disability, and ensure that the existing housing stock sees similar accessibility improvements.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Office For Aging, Access to Independence
Explore and facilitate co-development partnerships with employers in the County who are interested in creating dedicated housing for their employees that aligns with wage levels.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Chamber of Commerce, iSpice, Intertek, IDA/BDC, school districts, Workforce Development Initiative

CONTINUED

Partner with local housing organizations and anchor institutions to enhance and promote educational and financial programs for first-time homebuyers to ensure long term and sustainable home ownership.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland Housing Authority, SUNY Cortland, Catholic Charities, Cortland Housing Assistance Council, CC Social Services, Access to Independence
Encourage environmental sustainability in new housing developments and for homeowners working on renovations to reduce energy costs - for example, by converting to more electric heating and cooling.			
Low	Mid Term	\$\$	Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), CAPCO Weatherization Assistance Program
Explore land banking and community-directed and -owned housing development mechanisms (e.g. revolving loan funds, NYS Affordable Homeownership Program, local development corporation, cooperative housing models, neighborhood nonprofit trust or endowment, etc.) to ensure equitable progress in the County's housing stock.			
Low	Long Term	\$	SUNY Cortland, NYS Affordable Homeownership Program, Cortland Housing Authority, Cortland Housing Assistance Council, CC Social Services

FOCUS AREA 3: SUSTAINABILITY & OPEN SPACE

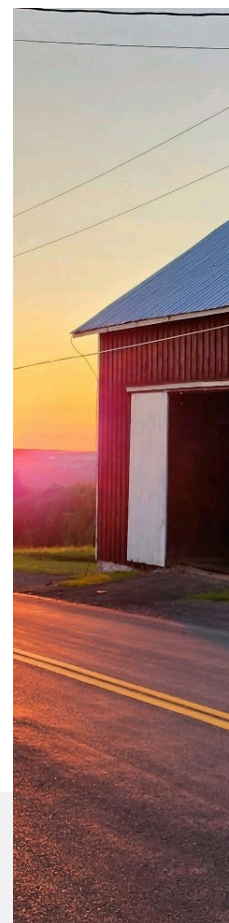
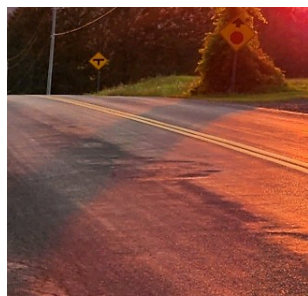
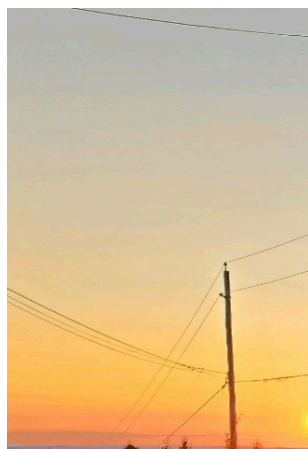
Nestled centrally within the State of New York among state forests and the Finger Lakes, Cortland County boasts natural beauty as one of its greatest assets. Proximity to recreational amenities, preservation of open space, and intentional natural resource conservation and sustainability efforts are essential components to preserving the County's quality of life.

Recognizing that these are essential components that make up the environment in which people live, work, and recreate, this Strategic Plan foregrounds the County's desire to guide coordinated growth and development to preserve these vital resources.

Vision

The following is Cortland County's vision for the future of its open space and sustainability efforts:

Cortland County will preserve its natural resources for future generations while providing stable job opportunities in new industries as well as legacy industries, like manufacturing and agriculture. County residents will take great pride in knowing their energy and food are produced locally, while waste and wastewater are dealt with responsibly to ensure the County's natural resources remain high-quality. Preservation of open spaces will make Cortland County's natural beauty a major attraction for residents and visitors alike. A robust trail network will support a thriving outdoor recreation industry, agritourism, and ecotourism while promoting a high quality of life for residents. Initiatives such as promoting local food markets, enhancing recreational opportunities, and investing in renewable energy will be common mechanisms for helping Cortland County achieve its overall vision.



Current Context & Trends - Sustainability

NYS INITIATIVES

Cortland County acknowledges the need to align this Strategic Plan with the sustainability goals of New York State (NYS) to ensure planning synergies. The impacts of climate change do not adhere to municipal boundaries; thus, planning for a sustainable future necessitates coordinated efforts across local, county, state, and federal lines.

NYS has several programs and initiatives in place to guide the State and local communities towards sustainability goals. The 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) or the "Climate Act" is the leading driver of sustainability progress in NYS. The main goal of the Climate Act aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85% relative to the 1990 baseline by 2050. Following the inception of this act, NYS has invested over \$44.4 billion across a range of programs supporting renewable energy and transmission projects, building emissions reduction, NYS Green Bank commitments, and clean transportation initiatives.[1] More recently, in 2022, NYS passed the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act with the intention to invest an additional \$4.2 billion to support sustainability initiatives across NYS communities. Despite the competitive nature of these funding sources, communities throughout Cortland County have been successful in securing and utilizing these NYS funding sources.

To guide municipalities at a local level, the NYS Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate. Communities that participate in the program are eligible for grants, rebates for electric vehicles, and free technical assistance to support their sustainability efforts. Over 400 NYS communities are registered in the program, including several in Cortland County, such as the Village of Homer, the City of Cortland, the Town of Preble, and the County itself. The Village of Homer is Cortland County's first municipality to achieve the full CSC certification. The CSC program is a great resource as County staff can collaborate with the CSC regional coordinator, the Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board (CNYRPDB), to advance projects/plans within the CSC program that work towards the County's sustainability goals. Cortland County also intends to work with CNYRPDB to advance towards full CSC certification itself and to provide technical assistance to municipalities that want to participate in the program.

[1] NYSDERDA Press Office. (2022, December 19). New York State Climate Action Council finalizes scoping plan to advance nation-leading climate law. NYSDERDA.

<https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Newsroom/2022-Announcements/2022-12-19-NYS-Climate-Action-Council-Finalizes-Scoping-Plan-to-Advance-Nation-Leading-Climate-Law>



To complement the CSC program, the Clean Energy Communities (CEC) program, offered through NYSDERDA is another State program that provides grant funding and technical assistance to help local governments track energy usage and implement “high-impact actions” to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are over 900 participating communities in the State, including 14 in Cortland County. Communities that complete four high-impact actions move beyond the “participating communities” status to become a designated CEC, which opens opportunities to apply for grant funds to support clean energy projects. In Cortland County, four communities have earned designation in the CEC program including the City of Cortland, Cortland County, Town of Cortlandville, and Village of Homer. Similar to the CSC program, Cortland County plans to continue its relationship with the regional CEC coordinator, also CNYRPDB, to advance projects/plans within the CEC program and provide technical assistance to municipalities that want to participate and advance their designation status.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Cortland County is in a great geographic position to benefit from development in the renewable energy sector. The County’s more rural areas provide the essential space to appropriately site renewable energy infrastructure, creating economic development opportunities in communities that have sometimes felt left behind. Cortland County has several renewable energy facilities already, including solar and geothermal infrastructure.

Data suggests that distributed wind is the County’s greatest potential renewable energy asset, with greater MWh generation potential than utility-scale solar and wind combined. Distributed wind installations are typically small-scale systems intended to serve on-site energy demand for residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and community sites. With intentional resource development and investment, the County could be a vital resource to connect residents and businesses to technical assistance needed to harness renewable energy assets.

While local control for utility-scale projects is limited due to NYS involvement, there are various avenues that the County can take to be proactive about planning for utility-scale development to ensure the benefits of the project are concentrated locally and negative impacts are minimized.

Additional detail on renewable energy is available in Appendix E.



Current Context & Trends - Open Space

Open space comprises the majority of land in Cortland County, contributing to the region's beautiful landscape and ample natural resources. Open space systems within Cortland County are comprised of parkland, private forestland, conservation land, waterways and waterbodies, and working agricultural land (Figure 2). The majority of the County's agricultural lands are concentrated in the valleys, while forested land tends to cover the steep slopes and highland. It is essential to protect the County's open space in order to ensure the continued viability of local ecosystems, expand outdoor recreational opportunities, and preserve the rural landscape cherished by residents.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture comprises a significant portion of Cortland County's economy and open space system. The annual market value of the County's agricultural product totals \$108.1 million. According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, there are 397 farms in Cortland County totaling 91,594 acres that are primarily used for field crops and dairy farming (Figure 3). The livestock farms include cattle, calves, hogs, sheep, donkeys, goats, and horses. Cortland County is split into four agricultural districts (Figure 4), which are managed at the County level and afford legal protections and some tax benefits for viable agricultural land. Additional land may be added to the agricultural districts during county-designated annual open enrollment periods.

Cortland County should continue promoting agricultural land conservation efforts, recognizing agriculture's impact on the economy along with its scenic and ecological value. The Environment Focus Group held on March 26th, 2024 identified challenges and opportunities pertaining to the County's environment and natural resources. Agritourism was identified as an underutilized sector that could spur local economic growth and additional "value-add" agricultural opportunities for local businesses. Small-scale farmers can incorporate agritourism activities such as self-pick fields, farm tours, etc. that utilize their existing agricultural resources while creating new revenue streams. Given the rise of agritourism throughout NYS, Cortland County should prioritize agritourism and traditional agriculture support to protect viable agricultural land for its many economic and environmental benefits.



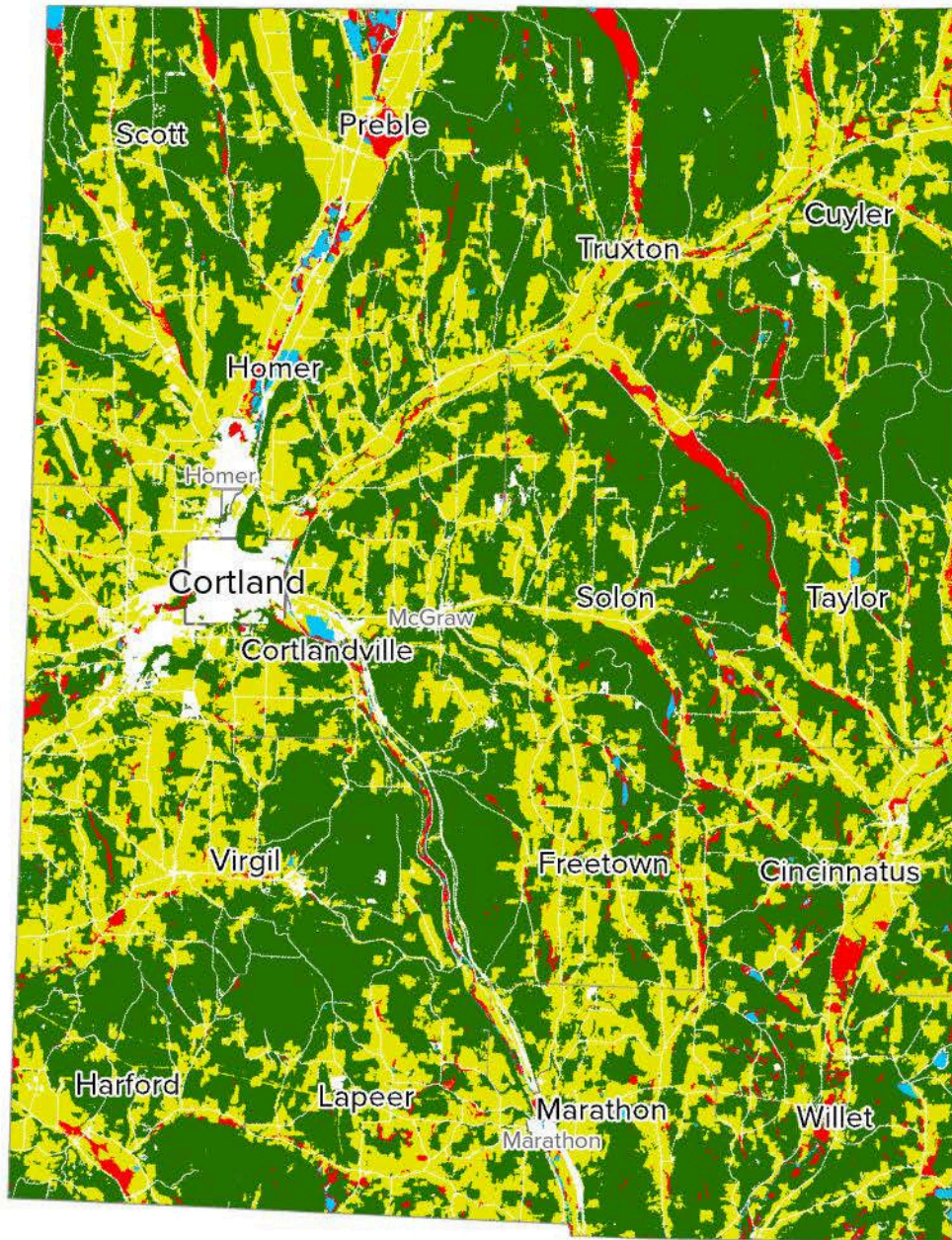


FIGURE 2: LAND COVER
CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Forest
- Agriculture
- Wetland
- Open Water
- City and Town Boundary

SCALE

0 1 2 Miles
|-----|-----|

DATE

9/20/2024

Source:

NLCD



Map
By:



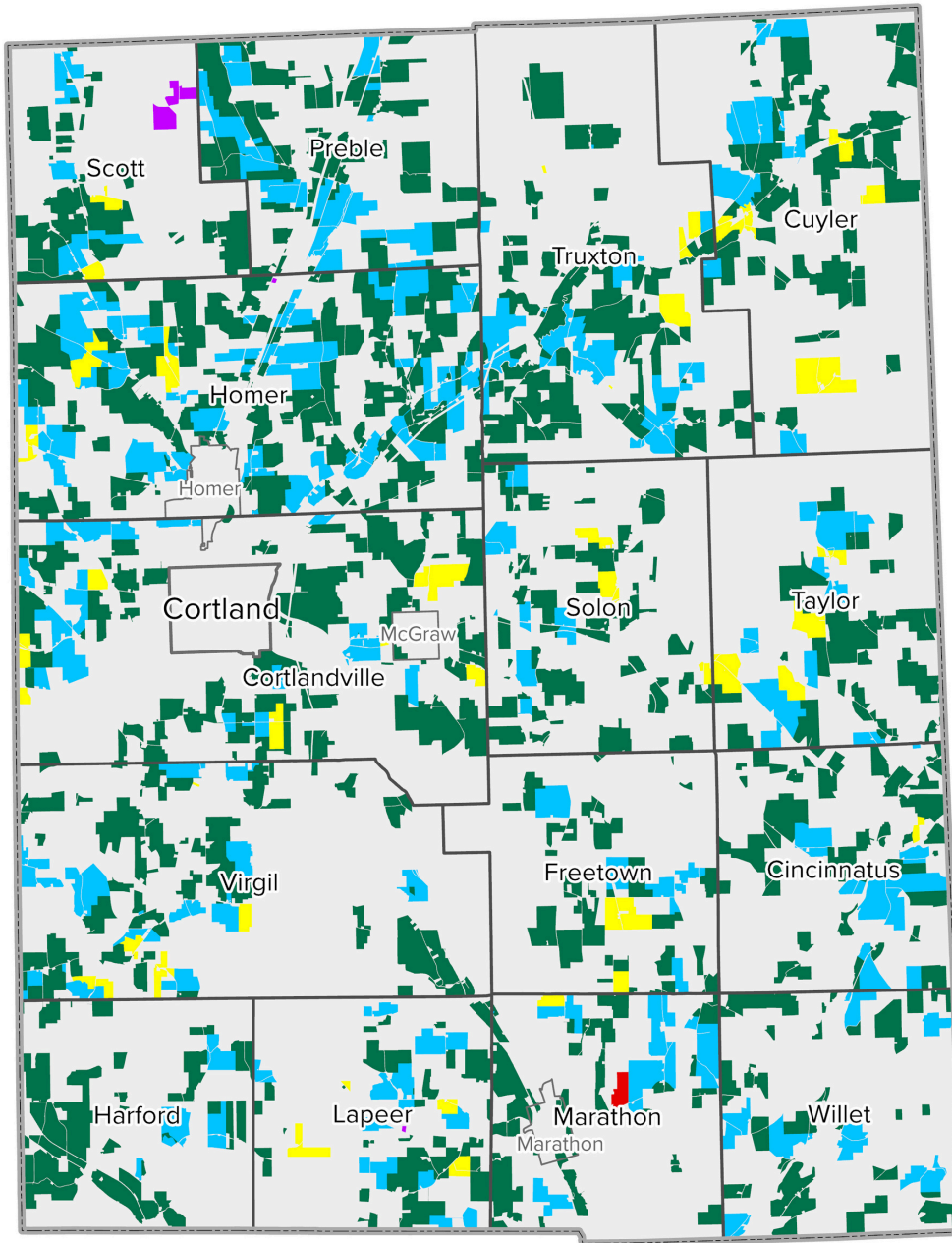


FIGURE 3: ACTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND USE
CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

-  Cortland County Boundary
-  City and Town Boundary
-  Field and Crop Lands
-  Dairy
-  Livestock
-  Fruits
-  Specialty Farms

SCALE

0 1 2 Miles

DATE

9/20/2024

Source:
USDA

Map
By:



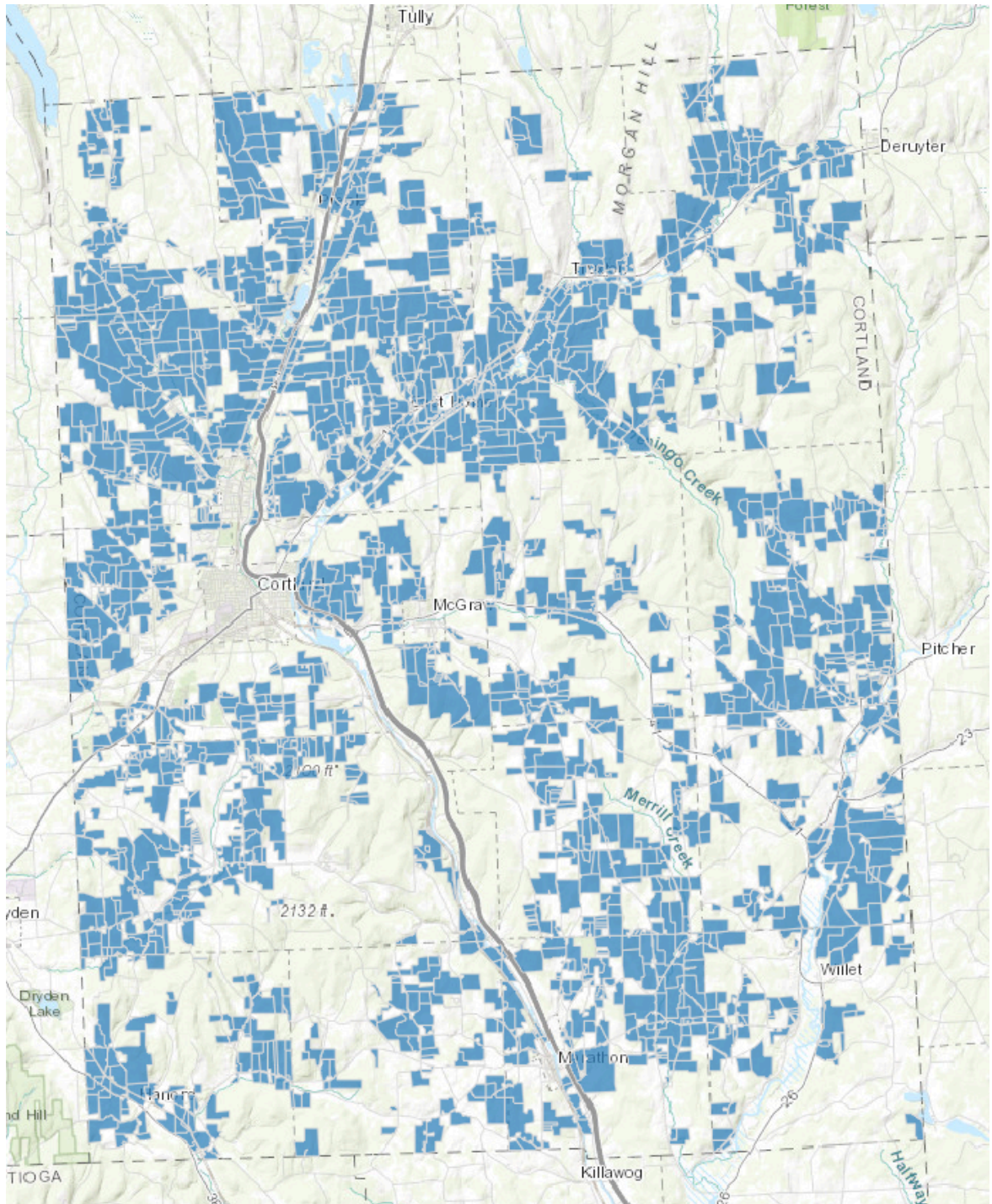


FIGURE 4: AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS
CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

-  Cortland County Boundary
-  City and Town Boundary
-  2021-2029 Cortland Agricultural Districts

SCALE

0 1 2 Miles

DATE

6/9/2024

Source:

Cortland County GIS

Map
By:



Cortland County
Planning Office

Packet Pg. 82

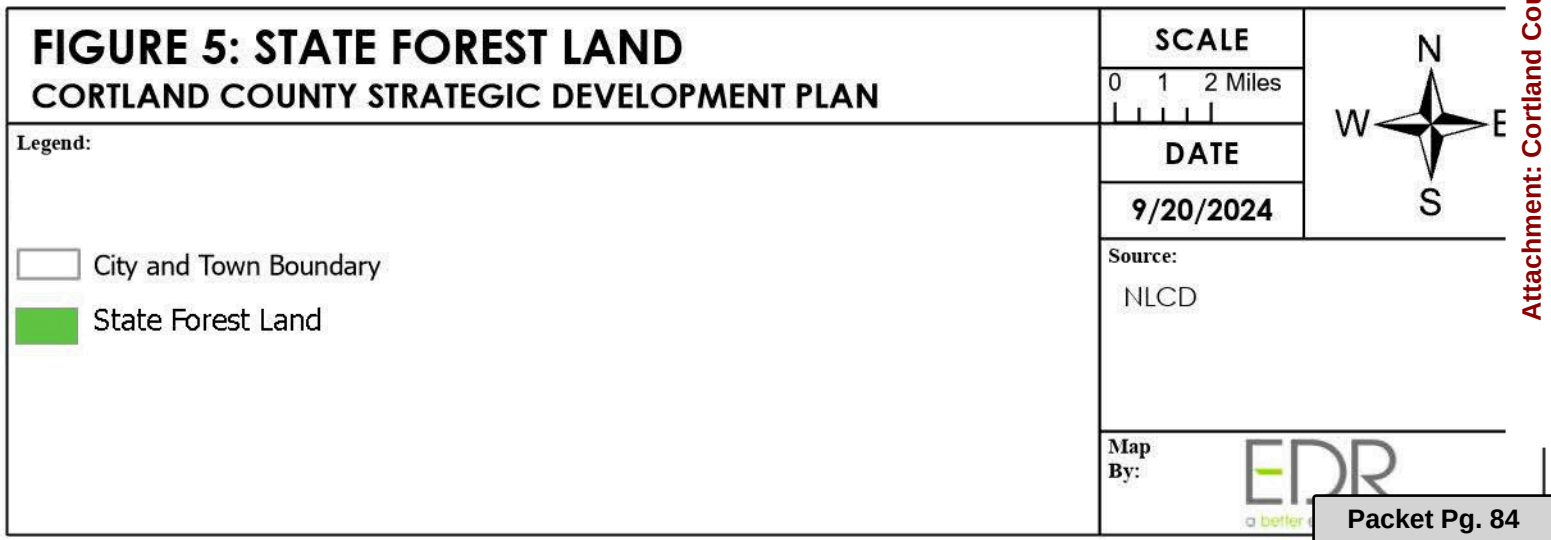
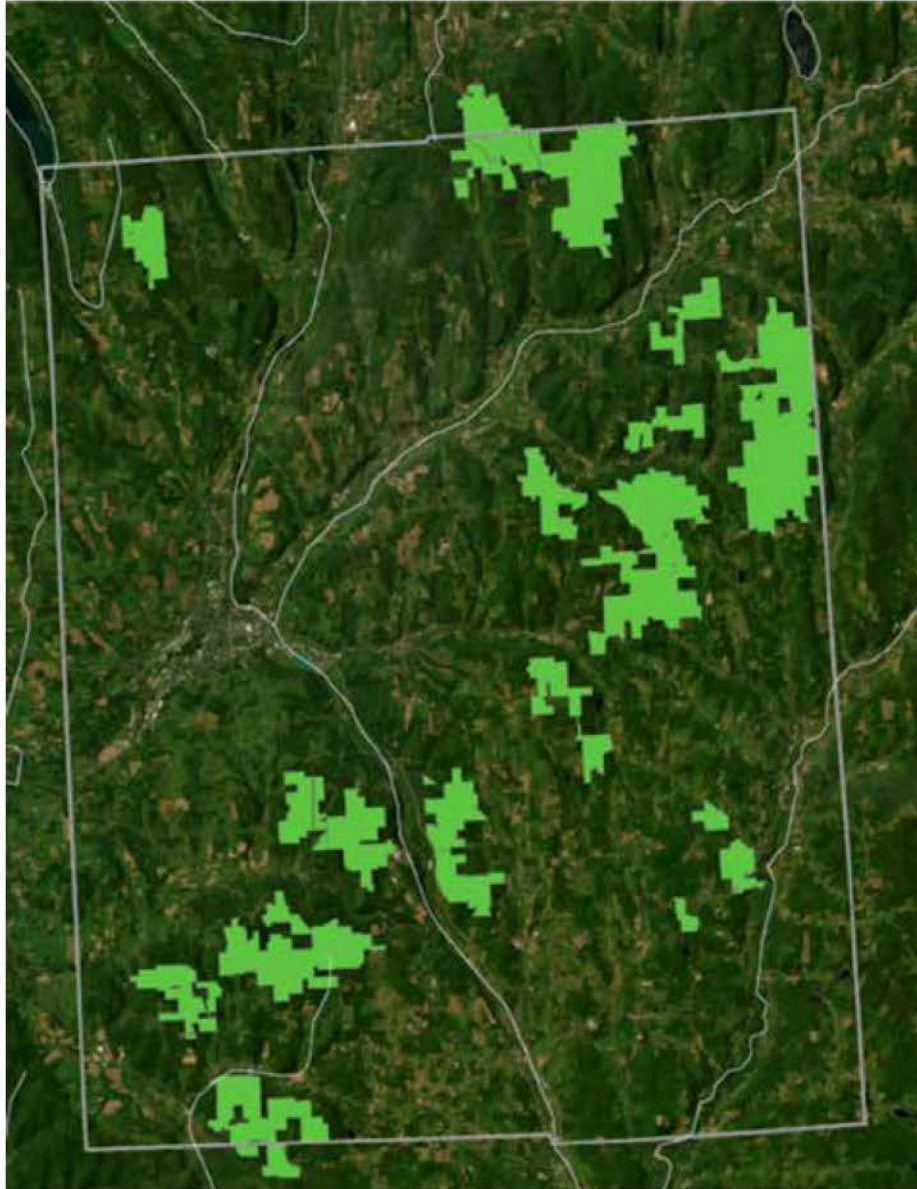


NATURAL RESOURCES

Cortland County's natural resources comprise an immeasurable asset that must be protected to preserve the environment and protect quality of life. For the context of this report, natural resources consist of forests, waterbodies, and Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) located in Cortland County.

The Environment Focus Group identified widespread support for sustainable practices, environmental stewardship, and preserving natural resources within Cortland County. Unsurprisingly, this support indicates a desire to protect the County's natural resources that are the backbone of why people choose to settle in this region. From an economic development perspective, sustainability and environmental stewardship practices enable the County to leverage its natural resources to support a robust outdoor recreation and tourism industry. The County's natural resources include over 30,000 acres of NYS Forests (Figure 5) that create a critical wildlife corridor connecting the southwest and northeast corners of the County between the High Allegheny Plateau and the Adirondacks. These NYS forestlands comprise the majority of the County's natural resources and are vital for the health of the region's ecosystem. They also provide recreational opportunities, like hiking and mountain biking.

In particular, participants of the Environment Focus Group highlighted Lime Hollow Nature Center as a valuable resource for the County. The nearly 594-acre nature center provides year-round recreation and environmental education opportunities centered around the utilization and protection of the natural and cultural resources of the area. Recognizing and supporting existing centers of environmental education is important in considering future development, as instilling environmental stewardship principles in the younger generations is essential to preserving vital natural resources for decades to come. Additionally, focus group participants indicated a desire for more investment in recreational amenities, like community parks and tennis courts. The County should continue to support local municipalities in opportunities for maintenance and investment in existing and future recreational facilities, as these resources are important for enhancing resident quality of life and supporting healthy lifestyles.



Cortland County is home to a number of Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs). CEAs are lands designated by the NYSDEC that have at least one of the following characteristics: a feature that is a benefit or threat to human health; an exceptional or unique natural setting; an exceptional or unique social, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational value; or an inherent ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any physical disturbance. Correctly managing these areas is crucial to maintaining the healthy ecosystems and biodiversity that allow Cortland County's open spaces to thrive. State designated CEAs in Cortland County include the Homer Public Water Supply Source, the sole source aquifer for the City of Cortland, and the Village of McGraw Groundwater Protection Overlay District (Figure 6a). In addition, the County has a series of Aquifer Protection Districts, which regulate land uses that might contribute to contamination of aquifers that are critical to the County's current and future water supply (Figure 6b).

Cortland County's waterbodies offer scenic views, recreational assets, and critical drinking water sources to the area. Cortland County is home to a portion of southeast Skaneateles Lake—considered one of the cleanest lakes in the country—which is the drinking water source for the City of Syracuse and surrounding municipalities. The Tioughnioga River is abundant in smallmouth bass, walleye, and brown trout, among other species. The Otselic River runs through the southeast corner of Cortland County and has similar fishing assets, including a NYS DEC access point with public fishing rights in the Town of Taylor and two DEC-managed hand launches in the Town of Willet. The Environment Focus Group identified a number of threats and opportunities to the County's waterways, including concerns regarding pollution due to stormwater runoff from increased rain and opportunities for water tourism centered on fly fishing. Recognizing the interconnectedness of the region's waterbodies, future development should be carefully considered for environmental impacts, especially in close proximity to waterbodies. Similarly to the County's agricultural lands and natural resources, water quality protection is of the utmost importance to ensure the continued viability of Cortland's ecosystems and, by extension, recreational economic development opportunities.



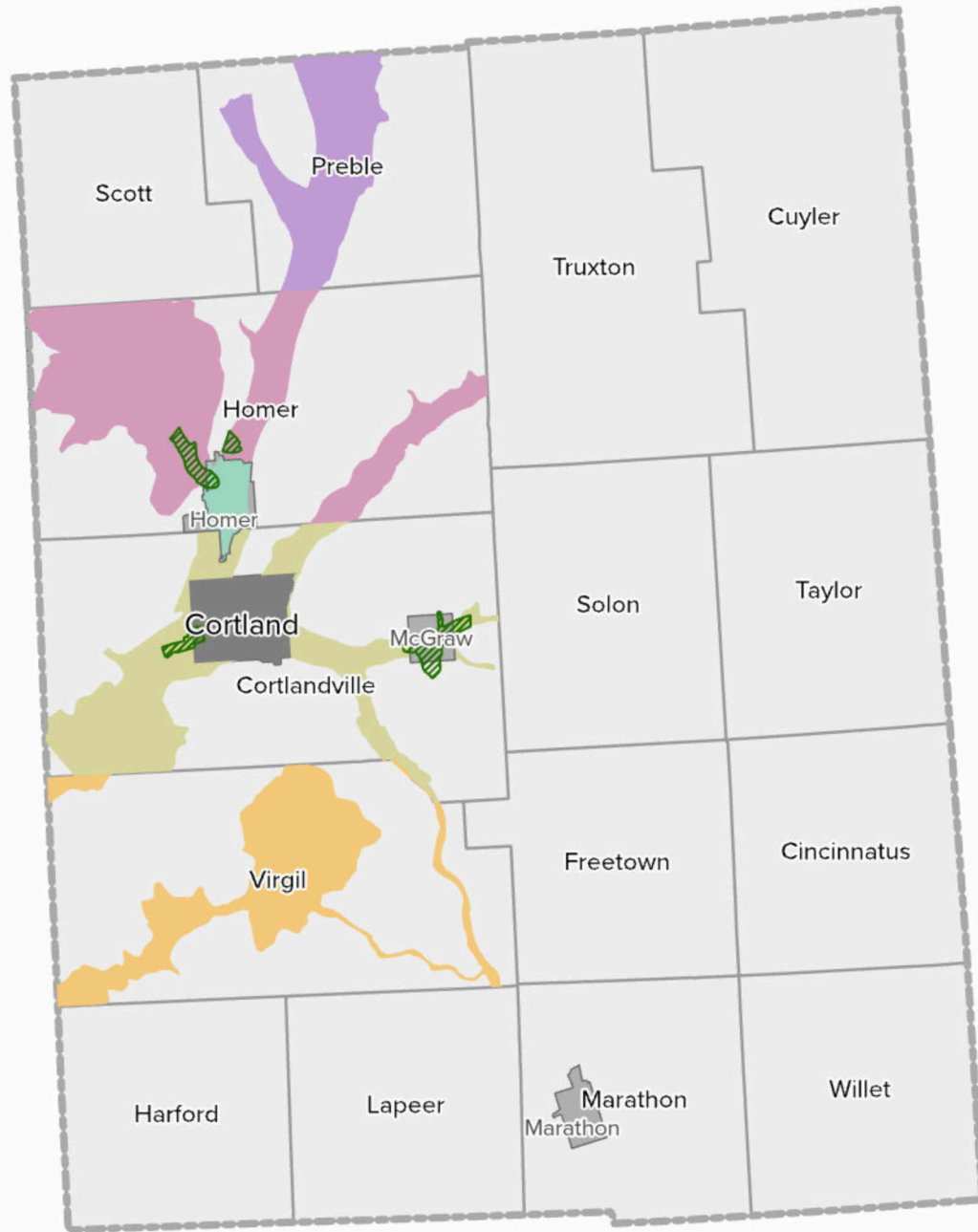


FIGURE 6: CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS AND AQUIFER PROTECTION DISTRICTS
CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Critical Environmental Area |  Town of Homer Aquifer Protection District |
|  Cortland County Boundary |  Town of Preble Aquifer Protection District |
|  City and Town Boundary |  Town of Cortlandville Aquifer Protection District |
|  Town of Virgil Aquifer Protection District | |
|  Village of Homer Aquifer Protection District | |

SCALE

0 1 2 Miles

DATE

11/8/2024

Source:

NYSDEC

Map
By:



GREENWAYS AND BLUEWAYS

Greenways and blueways help to preserve land by protecting natural area corridors that provide value to the broader ecosystem while also providing recreational assets to the community. Greenways may be based on existing transportation and utility corridors or natural landforms that connect open spaces to create alternative pathways for regional connections. Blueways, or water trails, are marked routes for recreational use on navigable waterways such as rivers, lakes, and canals. Similar to greenways, blueways connect existing parks and trails, creating one immersive system that stretches across regions. These systems contribute to improved water and air quality, enhanced scenic beauty, maintenance of wildlife habitat and corridors, and flood mitigation. They also encourage residents to be stewards of natural resources by categorizing them as important community assets.

Greenways and blueways also have economic value. They can increase property values for those who live near them and improve quality of life for those who use them. Additionally, they encourage travel between areas and frequently connect to downtown corridors, boosting tourism, foot traffic, and local economies.

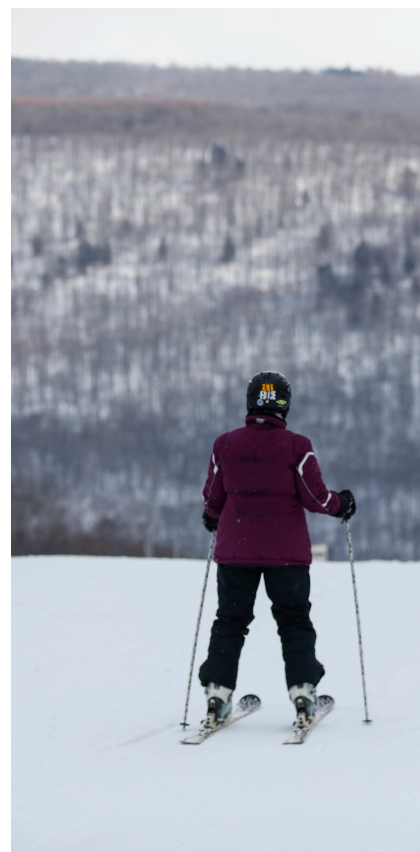
Greenways and blueways provide outlets for outdoor recreation and often include infrastructure to make lands and waterways more accessible. According to the NYSDEC, there are currently two wheelchair-accessible recreation destinations in Cortland County: Tinker Falls in Labrador Hollow Unique Area off Route 91, and a fishing platform at Casterline Pond off Route 11.



Lime Hollow Nature Center is also increasing accessibility features through its Trails for All Campaign and currently offers an Action Trackchair. Increasing accessibility throughout greenways and blueways would allow more residents and visitors to enjoy the natural resources that make Cortland County special. The County does have three active ski resorts: Greek Peak, Labrador Mountain, and Song Mountain. These ski areas take advantage of some of the unique topography that is present within the County and serve as seasonal recreation destinations for skiing and snow sports, as well as mountain biking and other outdoor recreation activities.

The Environment Focus Group highlighted numerous opportunities to enhance greenways and blueways, such as establishing river trail systems and enhancing bike trails, like the CNY Peace Trail. Public engagement also indicated strong support for continued efforts to build out waterfront amenities, access, and trails along the Tioughnioga River.

The County should utilize its greenways and blueways to develop a regional trail plan that links to larger trail networks. The Finger Lakes Regional Trail System runs from the southwest to northeast corner of Cortland County and links up with the North Country National Scenic Trail in the Town of Cuyler. However, it lacks meaningful connections to the County's downtown centers. There are opportunities for multimodal corridors along Route 11 and I-81, connecting to downtown areas and linking to the Dryden Rail Trail. The Tioughnioga River and Route 11 also create a unique opportunity for a greenway and blueway connection. These greenway and blueway opportunities have been identified as proposed trails in the 2021 NYS Statewide Trails Plan (Figure 7). Developing greenways and blueways along these corridors would establish a core set of trails connecting the County's major destinations with opportunities for future trail development and spurs from the core trail system.



SUSTAINABILITY & OPEN SPACE PILLARS

A

Collaboration

Partnerships between municipalities, farmers, land conservancies, and New York State will pair the knowledge of people intimately familiar with Cortland County with the resources to advance the County's sustainability efforts, promote land conservation, and provide ample recreation opportunities.

B

Vibrant Communities

Cortland County's focus on the sustainability of its community vibrancy will attract people, businesses, and tourists that see the County's commitment to preserving its natural beauty and assets as economic drivers worth investing in.

C

Coordinated & Aligned Growth

Areas for development will be considered carefully along with their impacts on the natural environment and demand for scarce resources. Growth will occur in a coordinated manner to ensure future development promotes vibrant downtowns while preserving the pastoral landscapes and rural character of the County.



FIGURE 7: GREENWAYS AND BLUEWAYS
CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Greenways | Spur/Loop, Blue Blazed |
| Blueways | Hunting Closure |
| Trail Section Segments | Hunting Closure Bypass |
| Main Finger Lakes Trail, White Blazes | |
| Thru Trail, Blue Blazes | |
| Spur/Loop, Orange Blazes | |
| Spur/Loop, Yellow Blazes | |

SCALE

0 1 2 Miles

DATE

9/20/2024

Source:

Finger Lakes Trails

Map
By:



SUSTAINABILITY & OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

Five strategies were identified to advance Cortland County's vision for sustainability and open space. These strategies focus on continuing to work with existing State sustainability programs, creating a renewable energy strategy plan, providing technical assistance to municipalities within the County, preserving Cortland County's rural character and resources, and promoting greenways and blueways throughout the County. Together, these strategies will guide coordinated growth and development in the County that preserves vital natural and recreational resources.

Strategy Matrix Key

Pillars Plan Pillars address by or aligned with the action	Timing The timeline in which the action could be completed	Cost The general cost of the action
Collaboration A	Near Term = within two years	\$ = no or low cost
Vibrant Communities B	Mid Term = three to five years	\$\$ = substantial but primarily noncapital expenditures
Coordinated & Aligned Growth C	Long Term = more than five years or ongoing	\$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures

STRATEGY 1: RESUME WORK WITHIN EXISTING NYS PROGRAMS PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

NYS has set an aggressive goal of an 85% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions relative to the 1990 baseline by 2050. NYS is spending significant resources to achieve this goal and has invested more than \$44.4 billion in sustainability initiatives; these funds are often accessed through competitive grant applications. The State has several programs aimed at assisting communities planning for sustainability. Active involvement in these programs significantly improves a municipality's competitiveness in State grant applications, and which is required by some funding resources. In addition to funding, these programs offer resources and technical assistance to help communities understand the programs' impacts and plan for a sustainable future across a variety of sectors. Strategies to advance sustainability within Cortland County are focused on leveraging these State programs to their maximum potential.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Connect with the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) to make them aware the County intends to resume activity in the New York State Climate Smart Communities (CSC) and Clean Energy Communities Programs (CEC). Determine what services CNY RPDB can provide to assist in these efforts.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB

CONTINUED

Establish a sustainability task force that will serve officially as the County's CSC task force, while also working to advance sustainability through other initiatives.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Legislature
Identify a staffed position within the County that can serve as the County's point person for sustainability initiatives. This position will also serve as the County's official CSC Coordinator, which is a mandatory requirement for certification.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Legislature
Conduct outreach to municipalities and institutions in the County that are active in the CSC and CEC programs to identify opportunities for partnerships on initiatives and/or plans.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB, City/Town/Village leadership, SUNY Cortland, Tompkins Cortland Community College
Work within the CSC program to complete actions that will make Cortland County a certified community within the program.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB
Work within the CEC program to complete high impact actions and advance Cortland County's score within the program.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB
Complete a Government Operations and Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory in collaboration with CNY RPDB.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB
Coordinate with other County planning departments in the region that have had success in these programs to learn about their experiences and identify opportunities for regional collaboration.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Madison County Planning, Onondaga County Planning

STRATEGY 2: DEVELOP A RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY PLAN TO PROMOTE LOCAL ENERGY GENERATION IN A MANNER THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE COMMUNITY, CREATES JOBS LOCALLY, AND MAXIMIZES LOCAL BENEFITS BY LEVERAGING STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

A Renewable Energy Strategy would help Cortland County - and its municipalities - comprehensively prepare for renewable energy development within the County. Residents and stakeholders expressed strong support for small-scale distributed energy production methods including hydroelectric, wind, and solar. A Renewable Energy Strategy would help the County understand how to advance the development of these small-scale renewable energy projects that are supported by the community. Additionally, residents and stakeholders expressed support for larger renewable projects and statewide sustainability goals while also voicing concerns about the impacts these projects may have locally. Understanding that large projects are permitted by the State rather than local governments, a Renewable Energy Strategy would help the County plan for how to accommodate a large-scale project in a manner that maximizes local benefits in the event a large-scale project is proposed within the County. Finally, the Renewable Energy Strategy could be used to identify technical assistance and training opportunities that would better prepare various entities throughout the County's renewable energy development. This could include educational sessions for farmers and landowners whose lands may be desirable for renewable energy development, workforce development training to prepare the County's workforce for green jobs, or training for municipal officials to better prepare them for local review of renewable energy projects.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Coordinate with NYSERDA, ORES, and other state or federal entities for guidance on renewable energy permitting and funding programs to understand the regulations developers must navigate, and the incentive programs available to developers to invest locally.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYSERDA, ORES, CNY RPDB, NYSDEC, U.S. EPA
Apply for a grant through the NYSERDA CEC program to develop a Renewable Energy Strategy. This may require additional coordination with NYSERDA and the CNY RPDB as this is a novel planning concept.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYSERDA, CNY RPDB, National Grid, NYSEG, SUNY Cortland, Alliance for Clean Energy (ACE) NY
Provide technical assistance to municipalities to update local regulations and eliminate barriers for distributed renewable energy generation.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYSERDA, CNY RPDB, ACE NY

CONTINUED

Partner with SUNY Cortland to research agrivoltaics and other methods of co-utilization of land used for renewable energy generation.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland SWCD, SUNY Cortland, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYSDAM, Cortland County Planning
Coordinate with National Grid and NYSEG to understand utility infrastructure needs to support renewable energy generation. Identify opportunities to advance other sustainability and open space goals along with utility upgrades, like trail development along utility corridors.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County DPW, NYSEG, National Grid, NYSEDA

STRATEGY 3: PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO PROMOTE COUNTYWIDE EFFORTS TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABILITY AND MAINTAIN CLEAN WATER AND CLEAN AIR

Many municipalities in Cortland County have limited staff capacity to plan for and address issues and opportunities related to sustainability and open space resources. The County can leverage its resources, staff, and relationships with large institutions to assist municipalities in achieving local and regional goals related to sustainability in a coordinated manner, ensuring that clean water and air are available for generations to come.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Create sustainability and open space working groups consisting of key County staff, representatives from local municipalities, institutions, and other stakeholders. These working groups should meet at regular intervals (e.g. quarterly) to discuss opportunities to advance sustainability and open space goals across the County.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County SWCD, CNY RPDB, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Finger Lakes Land Trust, SUNY Cortland, TC3
Provide regular training in collaboration with key partners to municipal officials, planning boards, zoning boards, and other decision makers to build technical knowledge and capacity to advance sustainability and open space goals locally.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYSDOS Local Government Services, CNY RPDB, Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY Cortland

CONTINUED

Develop a partnership program with SUNY Cortland and TC3 that connects municipalities with students and service-learning projects to assist municipalities with research and initiatives related to sustainability and open space goals.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, SUNY Cortland, TC3
Convene public and private partners to explore, strategize, and implement a community composting program, including consideration for food rescue prior to composting. Leverage information and resources provided by the US EPA's Community Composting webpage: https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/community-composting .			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County SWCD, Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY Cortland, US EPA, Cortland County DPW, Seven Valleys Health Coalition
Create a sustainability and open spaces resources library on the County website to assist municipal officials and local advocates in finding useful resources and tools that will help them advance sustainability and open space goals within their communities.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB, SUNY Cortland
Build and maintain a sustainability dashboard in collaboration with CNY RPDB to track progress towards achieving County sustainability and open space goals. The dashboard should function as a tool to guide local decision makers towards priority actions.			
Low	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB
Develop a forest inventory to understand the positive impacts and carbon sequestration potential of the forested land within the County. Leverage this study to spur outside investment in the conservation efforts and position Cortland County as a carbon sequestration hub in New York State.			
Med	Long Term	\$\$	Cortland County SWCD, Cortland County Planning, NYSDEC, SUNY ESF

STRATEGY 4: SUPPORT LAND CONSERVATION EFFORTS, INCLUDING FARMLAND, TO PRESERVE THE RURAL CHARACTER AND SCENIC RESOURCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

Cortland County is rich in open space lands and pristine natural environments. However, many of these environments are not officially deeded for conservation or preservation and are therefore at risk of development. Strategies to promote land conservation in Cortland County focus on leveraging existing local groups and state programs to formally conserve many of the County's existing resources.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Apply for a Farmland Protection Planning Grant through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to develop an up-to-date farmland protection plan.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County SWCD
Coordinate with the Finger Lakes Land Trust and other land conservation organizations in the region to develop a list of high-priority lands for conservation in the County.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Finger Lakes Land Trust, NYALT
Create informational materials informing the agricultural community of the benefits of opting into agricultural districts. Provide technical assistance for farmers interested in enrolling in the voluntary program.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cortland County SWCD, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Apply for a Farmland Protection and Implementation Grant through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to acquire funding needed to implement farmland protection activities.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County SWCD, Finger Lakes Land Trust
Coordinate with the Cortland County CVB, Cortland County Chamber of Commerce, and others to develop a countywide agritourism plan that promotes farms and Cortland County farm products in conjunction with outdoor recreation opportunities.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County CVB, Cortland County Planning, Chamber of Commerce, Finger Lakes Land Trust, Cornell Cooperative Extension

STRATEGY 5: PROMOTE GREENWAYS AND BLUEWAYS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY TO DEVELOP A ROBUST TRAIL SYSTEM THAT LINKS TO LARGER REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS

Cortland County has a wealth of natural resources and open space assets that would be best utilized if connected with a system of greenway and blueway trails. These trails will create additional corridors of open space that help to preserve natural resources while also creating new recreational opportunities for residents that will improve quality of life. Strategies to advance greenways and blueways in Cortland County focus on developing already-identified corridors for greenways and blueways, such as a Tioughnioga River trail, while planning for a robust and comprehensive network of greenways and blueways throughout the County.

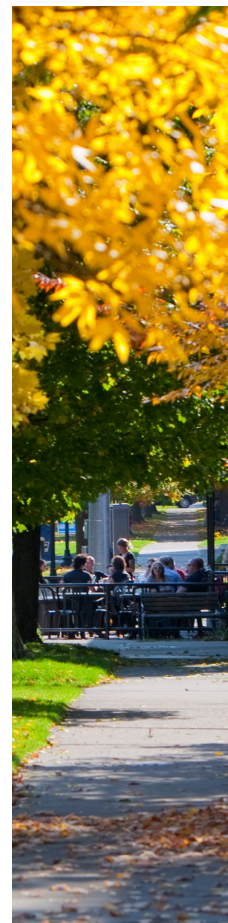
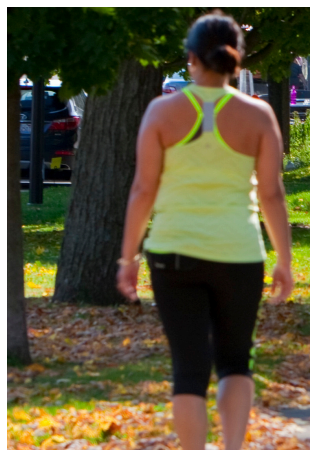
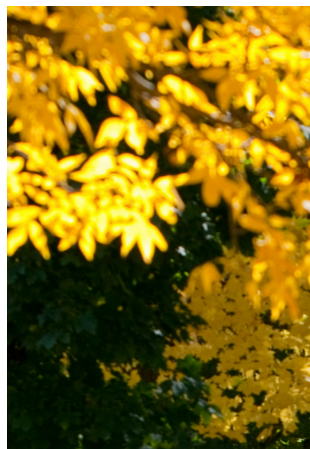
Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Collaborate with Parks and Trails NY (PTNY) to assist municipalities in participating in PTNY's Trail Towns program which provides technical assistance to municipalities to maximize the local benefits of trails.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, PTNY
Collaborate with PTNY, the Trust for Public Land, and other local trail groups to identify and advance statewide trail funding opportunities.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, PTNY, Trust for Public Land, Finger Lakes Land Trust
Apply for a New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Recreational Trails Program grant to formally plan and construct trails along Route-81 and the Tioughnioga River as identified in the NYS Statewide Trails Plan.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Planning, NYS OPRHP, Finger Lakes Land Trust, PTNY, Trust for Public Land
Create an inventory of corridors that could serve as future trail connections, including abandoned rail right-of-ways, utility corridors, navigable waterways, and road systems with excess right-of-way.			
High	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Finger Lakes Land Trust
Apply for a grant to develop a countywide trails master plan. Funding could be accessed through the NYS OPRHP Recreational Trails Program, NYS Empire State Development tourism promotion grants, or various conservation organizations like PTNY, the Trust for Public Land, Open Space Institute, and others.			
High	Long Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning

FOCUS AREA 4: CONNECTIVITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Physical built infrastructure connects residents' homes and workplaces to the broader community and the County at large. Water and sewer mains, stormwater facilities, and roads are the most well-known infrastructure considerations, but infrastructure also includes internet connectivity and energy transmission.

Infrastructure is pivotal to community development, intertwining with housing, employment, public safety, and economic growth. Adequate infrastructure ensures that housing can be developed where water and sewer capacity are available, and that transportation systems support access to jobs, services, and recreation. This connectivity is crucial for attracting and retaining businesses and talent and for enhancing the County's long-term economic vitality.

As the world shifts toward an increase in online and remote work, ensuring robust broadband infrastructure is essential for supporting the new generation of workers and potential residents. By investing in quality, high-speed internet, Cortland County can enhance its competitive edge, foster economic opportunities, and ensure residents have the connectivity needed to thrive in a digital age.



Vision

The following is Cortland County's vision for the future of its transportation and utilities:

TRANSPORTATION:

Cortland County will be more than just moving vehicles; it will connect people and markets in a manner that enhances communities and protects the sensitive natural environments that make Cortland County great. Safe and sustainable transportation options will be woven into the fabric of our community, fostering a happier, healthier environment and a vibrant quality of life for every resident and visitor.

UTILITIES:

Cortland County residents will have affordable access to quality high-speed internet connectivity regardless of their location within the County. Water and wastewater systems will adequately support development needs within the developed core of the County.



PHOTO CREDIT: MATT BALDELLI

Current Context & Trends

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation systems are vital to community development, providing residents with an array of choices to meet their needs—whether traveling by car, bus, bike, or on foot. Evaluating existing transportation options allows the County to understand the needs of residents and visitors and plan for future growth. Furthermore, this evaluation considers how transportation choices subject non-users to externalities (e.g. pollution) so that policy makers can factor this into decision-making.

Cortland County's population is expected to shrink and age, as well as continue to have pockets of poverty throughout the County. The highest traffic volume is on Interstate 81 and other arterial routes within or near the City of Cortland such as Routes 13 and 281. The average commute time in Cortland County is 21.7 minutes although commute times are shorter within the City of Cortland, and there is a net outflow of workers to other counties, particularly Tompkins County.

There is limited car access in some areas, especially the City of Cortland and Town of Cortlandville, and owning a car is increasingly expensive. Public transportation exists, but requires improvement to meet the needs of residents. During the development of this plan, Cortland County joined the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority and will be served by Centro moving forward.

Similarly, sidewalks exist in some areas, but these would benefit from additional infrastructure for safe use such as clearer pedestrian crosswalks and signage. Pedestrian infrastructure is generally provided in populated areas, but could be improved by completing networks and expanding.

Biking infrastructure in the County is limited, with some designated routes, but no protected lanes. This raises safety concerns and acts as a disincentive for biking as a form of exercise, recreation, and transportation.

Road conditions are improving, but the agricultural nature of rural parts of the County places stress on rural roads due to heavy farm equipment. Several bridges are weight-limited or closed. The County has a small airport and access to freight routes and rail lines, which could be draws for some industries and employers.



Crash fatality rates are high throughout the County, with the greatest density of severe collisions occurring in the City of Cortland and the Town of Cortlandville. This generally aligns with where most of the County's population resides, as well as where foot traffic is greatest in the downtown corridors that are lined with small businesses. Transportation choices impact health beyond the risk of crashes: walking and biking offer proven health benefits like a strengthened immune system and cardiopulmonary system, as well as improved mental health, sleep quality, and cognitive functioning. In contrast, driving is linked to adverse health effects. Transportation, especially via personal vehicles, significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and water pollution, which have lasting impacts beyond the immediate community.

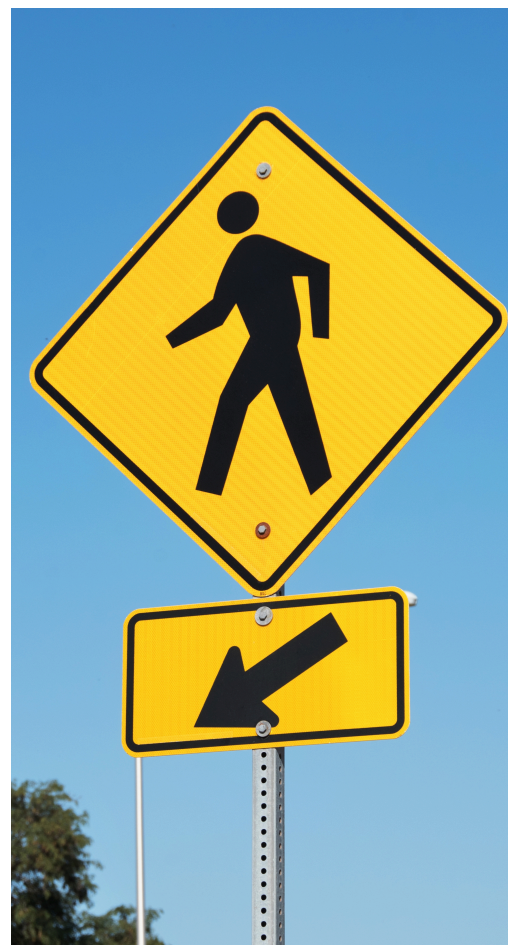
BROADBAND

While it is reported that Cortland County is well covered by high-speed internet options (especially satellite providers), community feedback revealed that these options are not available in all places advertised, do not provide speeds at modern standards, are generally unreliable, and can be very expensive. General consensus from our engagement indicates that Cortland County residents, businesses, and organizations are woefully underserved when it comes to quality, affordable broadband, even if official measures would suggest otherwise.

WATER & WASTEWATER

Only the City of Cortland, areas close to the City, and a handful of Town and Village water systems supply potable water. Elsewhere, potable water is supplied by private wells. The Cortland County Department of Health monitors the municipal water systems, which were designed and installed anticipating significant population increases over time. Subsequently, they have room for growth without the need for immediate system upgrades. Most existing water piping is quite old, ranging from 40 to 60 years of age throughout the County. Favorable soil conditions and stable soil geology have allowed the County's water piping to last for very long periods without failure due to age.

There are only four public wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) in Cortland County. Most homes and businesses in the County have individual septic systems located on their properties, which discharge the treated effluent to groundwater. With the exception of the City of Cortland WWTP, the three other WWTPs in Virgil, Marathon, and Cuyler are small systems which treat the largely residential flows in each area. The Cortland WWTP can accept minor additional flows, but is currently close to capacity. The existing WWTPs are old, most having been originally constructed 40 to 60 years ago. Despite their age, each facility is maintained in good working order and have had periodic improvements made to maintain the existing capacity.



Not all growth will require new infrastructure, but currently unserved areas seeking to attract substantial business and/or housing development will need to identify the most viable options for adding water and sewer service. For areas desiring this level of growth, the first consideration should be identifying existing areas of density that could be a starting point. More density typically points to a broader base of users to support the development, maintenance, and operational costs of the system, as well as, obviously, more demand. The second consideration should be whether there are any nearby systems that can be extended and the available capacity of those systems. This would in most cases involve intermunicipal collaboration, with systems crossing town, and perhaps even county, lines. Depending on the distance and capacity, a shared system could be more cost effective and operationally efficient than building a new system. That said, creation of new systems may be the most viable option in some areas that are not near already serviced areas.

Cortland County has over 50 dams, which are registered and regulated by the State of New York per the Dam Safety Program. Most of the dams located in the County are low hazard dams, but there are also several intermediate and high hazard dams. The established NYS program requires periodic inspection and repairs.



ELECTRIC & NATURAL GAS

The electrical system within the County consists of transmission lines, associated substations and transformers, and a number of solar generation facilities. National Grid owns and operates the large electrical transmission and distribution system within the County. Large transmission lines run north and south through the center of the County and distribution lines branch off from them to service the County's users. The City of Cortland and the Villages' electrical system can accommodate larger loads, as they generally have access to three-phase power. Almost all rural areas have access to single-phase power, which aligns with rural areas' lower energy requirements. Additionally, the vast open space available in the County has attracted solar farm developments, which produced about 8-10% of the total power consumed in 2023 in the County. A number of new solar installations are planned in coming years, which will increase the County's access to renewable energy.

New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) supplies natural gas to Cortland County. Primary supply is accomplished by four large diameter transmission lines—two running generally north/south, and two running east/west. Distribution lines to homes and businesses are not widespread. Besides the City of Cortland, the Villages of Marathon and Homer have natural gas distribution piping along many streets. Existing natural gas lines vary in age, but are in good condition. They are regularly inspected by NYSEG and maintained in working order.

CONNECTIVITY & INFRASTRUCTURE PILLARS

A

Collaboration

Numerous municipalities—the County, the State, or other public and private entities—own the transportation and utility infrastructure throughout Cortland County. Additionally, some types of infrastructure cross municipal lines and the built condition of this infrastructure has impacts on other jurisdictions. These factors mean infrastructure must be coordinated beyond the local jurisdiction and any individual segment. Furthermore, there is a need for coordination among the various transportation modes (e.g. walking, biking, driving, bussing, etc.) to ensure that safe and efficient transportation options are available for the varied needs of residents.

B

Vibrant Communities

A vibrant community, whether rural or urban, thrives through tailored transportation and infrastructure systems. For rural areas, creating lively and charming spaces requires efficient, space-conscious transportation options and utilities that match local needs. Infrastructure should preserve natural and agricultural landscapes, avoiding sprawl that can jeopardize these valuable resources. Transportation should also intentionally connect communities to services and amenities, such as retail areas, healthcare services, and recreational assets like trails, arts venues, and the Gutches Lumber Sports Complex.

In both urban and rural settings, reliable broadband and electricity are essential. However, water and wastewater systems should be carefully balanced – overbuilding can strain taxpayers and spur undesirable development, while underbuilding can stifle growth. Streets should enhance rather than divide neighborhoods, serving as vital public spaces that foster community interaction. Many of the County’s hamlets and main streets, designed before the dominance of personal vehicles, were centered around slower modes of transportation. Revitalizing these areas presents a chance to harmonize vehicle and pedestrian traffic, improving accessibility while boosting foot traffic to local businesses and strengthening community ties.

By thoughtfully addressing the unique needs of each area, from utilities to transportation, Cortland County can create vibrant communities that support both economic vitality and a high quality of life.

C

Coordinated & Aligned Growth

Transportation and utility infrastructure is rightly a crucial component of economic development. Any large-scale industrial or logistics facility requires transportation options to move raw and finished materials in a cost-effective manner, while service, retail, and hospitality businesses require effective ways for their workers and customers to reach them. Many also require water and sewer infrastructure to support their production or operation. Most, if not all, require high-speed internet access in an increasingly digital economic and communication environment. As the economy continues shifting to become more service-oriented and technological, infrastructure must also shift to accommodate a more diverse set of workers and industries in the future. Communities in Cortland County can work together to determine where the creation, adjustment, or expansion of each type of infrastructure is needed to support the desired development in that area. Some areas might focus solely on broadband, while others might require additional water and wastewater to support larger industry or broader housing development.



CONNECTIVITY & INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES

Five strategies were identified to further the County's vision for connectivity and infrastructure. These include improving community access to natural amenities and recreational resources, improving street design to create community identity and vitality, prioritizing transportation safety improvements and expanded travel options, investing in sustainable transportation, and enhancing utility infrastructure to support growth and quality of life. Together, these strategies will aid in attracting and retaining both businesses and talent, while also enhancing the County's long-term economic vitality.

Strategy Matrix Key

Pillars Plan Pillars address by or aligned with the action	Timing The timeline in which the action could be completed	Cost The general cost of the action
Collaboration A	Near Term = within two years	\$ = no or low cost
Vibrant Communities B	Mid Term = three to five years	\$\$ = substantial but primarily noncapital expenditures
Coordinated & Aligned Growth C	Long Term = more than five years or ongoing	\$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures

STRATEGY 1: IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS TO COMMUNITY AMENITIES AND TO THE COUNTY'S RECREATION RESOURCES

Cortland County will seek to create a vibrant network where neighborhoods seamlessly connect to nature trails via a scenic walking path or where residents of the County's rural hamlets can easily access services on the other side of the County. By bridging the gaps currently existing between Cortland's assets and the people who seek to use them, the County will increase its appeal to a modern workforce, encourage good health, and cultivate deeper connections to the community.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Improve housing and transportation policy coordination to create space-efficient transportation modes while not promoting sprawl.[2]			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities

[2] Moore, T., Thorsnes, P., & Appleyard, B. (2007). The Transportation/Land Use Connection. American Planning Association.

CONTINUED

Create a multimodal master plan to identify gaps in existing infrastructure and opportunities for enhanced active, on-call, and intra-community transportation infrastructure (e.g. priority corridors for intra-county recreational cycling facilities), among other considerations.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, All Municipalities, NYS DOT, NYS DEC, Finger Lakes Trail Conference
Connect schools to surrounding neighborhoods with slow streets and safe pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, All Municipalities, School Districts, SUNY Cortland
Host events, create maps, and provide marketing materials to show how residents and visitors can access recreation resources.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Cortland County CVB, Cortland Youth Bureau, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management
Identify priority assets such as parks, grocery stores, schools, and medical facilities and identify opportunities to connect them to nearby population centers by multiple modes of safe transportation infrastructure.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities, School Districts, SUNY Cortland, Centro, NYS DOT
Create a dedicated and protected cycling facility for the Millenium Trail and extend it to connect with the Gutches Lumber Sports Complex.			
Low	Long Term	\$\$\$	NYS DOT, City of Cortland, Town of Cortlandville, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, Lime Hollow Nature Center

STRATEGY 2: IMPROVE STREET DESIGN TO CREATE COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND VITALITY

Through thoughtful alterations, Cortland County and its municipalities can transform streets into vibrant gathering places similar to public parks. To create vitality, it is critical to create spaces where people will linger and interact. This can be done through built interventions like street trees, traffic calming, furniture, wider sidewalks, and public art to create a slower, more comfortable place where residents can foster community connections. These changes harken back to the founding and growth of these hamlets and main streets, where they were built around pedestrians before being redesigned to facilitate fast vehicular traffic. By creating places where community characters can congregate and create, community identity will form.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Incorporate a Vision Zero and Safe System[3] framework into transportation investments.			
High	Near Term	\$	NYS DOT, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Centro
Prioritize pedestrians and cyclists when designing streets in hamlets, downtowns, and main streets.			
High	Near Term	\$	NYS DOT, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Centro
Support the creation of sidewalk programs where appropriate that also incorporate beautification measures, such as tree planting, public art, benches, and other micro-mobility elements.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, United Way of Cortland County, All Municipalities, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Centro, NYS DOT
Pursue the creation of parking benefit districts to fund streetscape improvements.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Chamber of Commerce, City of Cortland, Cortland County Planning
Experiment with treatments that reduce rural road speeds and severe collisions.[4]			
Med	Long Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, FHWA, USDA, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Centro, NYS DOT

[3] *Zero Deaths and Safe System*. (n.d.) United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

[4] Proven safety countermeasures in rural communities. (FHWA-SA-24-005). (2024). United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2024-01/FHWA_PSCs_in_Rural_Communities_508.pdf

STRATEGY 3: PRIORITIZE IMPROVEMENTS TO TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL OPTIONS

A transportation system is not effective if it is exclusive and unsafe. This strategy aims to create a transportation system built on safety, where everyone, from young children to seniors, feels confident navigating their surroundings. Additionally, this strategy will create a transportation tapestry, woven with various travel options. Through an improved transit system and a network of bike lanes and sidewalks, Cortland County will create an environment where car ownership is a choice and not a necessity. While safety and mode choice are the goals, these changes will also save residents money, benefit health, and improve the quality of life for all residents.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Provide technical support and partnership for municipalities seeking grant funding for safety and multi-modal enhancements.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, All Municipalities, Cortland County Mobility Management
Create a comprehensive safety action plan[5] or a local road safety plan[6] that identifies high-crash and high injury-corridors and intersections.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, US DOT
Promote smart growth and mobility-oriented development to municipalities and ensure new subdivisions provide multi-modal transportation design elements so as not to be disconnected from existing and potential future developments.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, Centro, NYS DEC, NYS DOS, CCPB
Advocate for increased transit funding from NYS and Federal governments.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Centro, Elected Officials, NYS Legislature, US DOT
Create educational materials for the public on the public and private costs, benefits, and risks to transportation options.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, Centro

[5] *Comprehensive Safety Action Plans*. (n.d.) United States Department of Transportation.

[6] *Local Road Safety Plans*. (n.d.) United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

CONTINUED

Increase the lane miles of protected bike infrastructure.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$\$	All Municipalities, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, NYS DOT
Install red-light and speed enforcement cameras.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	All Municipalities, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, NYS DOT
Create a safe, complete streets design guide for different types and contexts of streets for use by municipalities.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board
Support the implementation of the Cortland County Airport's 10 Year Master Plan to maintain long-term viability and expanded use, as well as to position it for future technologies and opportunities.			
Med	Long Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Highway, US FAA, US DOT



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STRATEGY 4: INVEST IN SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION OF THE FUTURE

This strategy is not just about reducing emissions; it's about embracing innovation. Cortland County will pave the way for cutting-edge options, like self-driving vehicles and dockless electric bike-sharing programs, that can revolutionize how residents navigate the community. By investing in sustainable, modern transportation, the County will build a cleaner, quieter, and more efficient transportation network that will establish Cortland County as a leader of the future.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Encourage the elimination of minimum parking requirements within local zoning codes, particularly in downtowns.			
High	Near Term	\$	All Municipalities, Cortland County Planning
Promote to property owners and strategically install electric vehicle chargers throughout the County at municipal or county-owned facilities, employment centers, and multi-unit dwellings. [7]			
High	Near Term	\$\$	All Municipalities, Cortland County Planning, NYSEDA
Provide incentives for residents to purchase electric bikes. [8]			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities
Explore the creation of electric bike and scooter share networks and create regulations to limit negative impacts of their use. Identify and incorporate best practices from communities of a similar size and character.			
High	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Centro, Cortland County Planning
Identify, plan, and implement transit service enhancements and offer additional shared mobility services.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Centro, NYS DOT, FTA, USDA, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities
Support the safe testing and operations of autonomous vehicles on public highways and educate the public on benefits like reduced parking demand and mobility options for residents who lack access to a car or cannot drive.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Cortland County Mobility Management, Centro

[7] Charging Station Programs. [n.d.] NYSEDA. <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Charging-Station-Programs>

[8] About the Program. [n.d.] Columbus' Resident E-Bike Subsidy Program. <https://www.columbusebikeincentives.com/about-program>

STRATEGY 5: ENHANCE UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT GROWTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

This strategy considers utility infrastructure, which varies based on the type of utility and local goals. The community has expressed a strong need for accessible, affordable, and quality broadband countywide to improve quality of life, economic opportunity, and connectivity. Electric infrastructure is also needed countywide, but at varying capacities and levels depending on community character. Water and wastewater infrastructure needs vary the most across municipalities. Some communities can be served perfectly well by private wells and septic systems, while others require public infrastructure to accommodate current community needs and future desired growth.

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Facilitate discussions, and, if desirable, planning regarding the extension of sewer and water infrastructure into areas surrounding the City of Cortland that could be prime for housing and business development.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, City of Cortland, Town of Cortlandville, NYS EFC
Assess desired development against water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the County, and then create a plan to expand capacity (particularly at the Cortland WWTP) accordingly.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	City of Cortland, Cortland County Planning, NYS EFC
Ensure that capital improvement plans in similar communities are aligned to the extent possible to realize economies of scale and improve competitiveness for grant funding.			
Mid	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County, All Municipalities
Coordinate with National Grid to better understand power availability in targeted growth areas for increased demand and proactively study what upgrades will be needed to support the coordinated growth strategy.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, National Grid
Partner with CNYRPDB on a regional fiber spine and plan for investment in last mile connections.			
High	Long Term	\$\$\$	CNYRPB, Cortland County Legislature, ConnectALL, US NTIA, ST8

CONCLUSION

This Cortland County Strategic Development Plan represents a pivotal step towards building a more connected, vibrant, and sustainable future for the region. The County has embraced a comprehensive strategic approach, recognizing that a unified vision and collaborative effort can significantly enhance community development and resource utilization.

By enlisting the expertise of a consulting team and establishing a knowledgeable and engaged Steering Committee, the County has ensured that the development of this plan was both informed and inclusive. The extensive research phase, combined with an intentional public engagement process, provided the foundation for understanding the current strengths and challenges faced by the County. This process was instrumental in crafting the community's vision for the future:



Together, we envision a prosperous and sustainable future for Cortland County that offers expanded economic opportunities, fosters a welcoming environment, and embraces a quality of life centered on our natural, recreational, arts, and cultural assets, as well as our neighborly spirit.

We will Elevate Cortland by amplifying collaboration, vibrancy, and growth while honoring our community's unique character, ensuring residents and businesses are proud of the progress made and visitors always wish for more time to explore.

The plan is structured around the three foundational Pillars—**Collaboration, Vibrant Communities, and Coordinated and Aligned Future Growth**—and four Focus Areas. It emphasizes the importance of working together, leveraging the unique assets of Cortland County, and building a future that balances growth with the preservation of open space and natural assets. The Plan will provide a clear roadmap for the County and its partners to follow in the coming years.

The Focus Areas, and key aspects thereof, are:

1

Economic Development & Workforce

Cortland County has a rich economic history rooted in agriculture and manufacturing, as well as exciting new opportunities in the creative economy, arts, and small business development. Community members are proud of Cortland's economic legacy, but also embrace the advancement of new industries and models. This focus area outlines strategies to: support and empower the workforce through expanded access to childcare, education, and healthcare; facilitate growth that aligns with existing community character; enhance quality of life through placemaking; identify potential circular economies that promote sustainability and resiliency; and target resources at critical legacy and emerging industries that define the future of the County's economy.

2

Housing

Housing is a critical need for any community, and recent shifts in the market and demographic conditions have created new challenges across the state and country. In Cortland County, businesses, residents, and community organizations alike highlighted housing availability, affordability, quality, and safety as a priority. Recognition of universal housing has led to the creation of new State and Federal resources that the County and local municipalities can leverage to advance housing goals. The strategies in this focus area outline actions that aim to: increase the housing stock across income levels while addressing safety and quality; pinpoint gaps in the market to ensure that the right housing is being developed in the right places; and expand collaboration and coordination to streamline housing development and placement efforts.



3

Sustainability & Open Space

The community highly values its open space, as well as agricultural and natural assets. This focus area calls for a balanced approach to growth that both expands economic opportunity and preserves these esteemed assets. The strategies in this area outline activities for: the development of small-scale renewable energy; promotion and advancement of sustainability efforts in conjunction with NYS programs; leveraging natural resources responsibly to build upon the already strong foundation of outdoor recreation; and establishing greenways and blueways to ensure protection and continued enjoyment of natural resources.

4

Connectivity & Infrastructure

The built environment connects people – to each other, to employment, to healthcare, to recreation, and to so much more. It also plays a vital role in public health, productivity, and the economy. Community feedback pointed to multimodal transportation and broadband as the top infrastructure priorities. Improved physical connections between and among rural communities and economic hubs of the County, as well as digital connections to the world at large, were expressed as essential to quality of life, tourism, and business. This focus area includes strategies to: improve the accessibility and safety of multiple modes of transportation, including bicycling and walking; work locally and regionally to expand broadband accessibility and quality; and target other infrastructure development (water, wastewater, electric, etc.) investments to advance growth in areas that desire it.



As the County moves forward, this Strategic Development Plan will serve as a guiding document to align policies, investments, and initiatives with the community's shared goals. The County's commitment to collaboration, inclusivity, and strategic foresight will not only foster sustainable growth, but also create a stronger, more connected community for all residents.

APPENDIX A: COMPILED ELEVATE CORTLAND STRATEGIES

All of the strategies and actions from the Elevate Cortland Strategic Development Plan are collected on the following pages for ease of access and reference. These appear exactly as they do within each Forus Area section of Plan.

Strategy Matrix Key

Pillars Plan Pillars address by or aligned with the action	Timing The timeline in which the action could be completed	Cost The general cost of the action
Collaboration Vibrant Communities Coordinated & Aligned Growth	Near Term = within two years Mid Term = three to five years Long Term = more than five years or ongoing	\$ = no or low cost \$\$ = substantial but primarily noncapital expenditures \$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures

FOCUS AREA 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & WORKFORCE

STRATEGY 1: EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY EDUCATION

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Facilitate conversation and collaboration between employers, nonprofits, existing providers, agencies, and families to identify opportunities to support, lower the cost of, and/or create new spaces for additional childcare programs and services throughout the County.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland YWCA, Child Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, BDC/IDA, Employers, County/City/Towns/Villages, NYS OCFS
Survey families with children to identify the specific scale and scope of needs and gaps across the County.			
High	Near Term	\$	Child Development Council, School Districts, Employers, Chamber of Commerce

Use a mapping platform to plot existing childcare centers and providers throughout the County and then work with employers, healthcare providers, and schools to share information about existing childcare options and identify ideal areas for new childcare operations of any kind.

Med

Near Term

\$\$

Child Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, Guthrie Health, School Districts, Cortland County Planning

Develop an easy to follow, step by step guide about requirements and timeline for becoming a childcare provider.

Low

Near Term

\$

Child Development Council, QualityStars NY

Increase awareness of and expand available childcare subsidy and grant programs, including, but not limited to, the creation of a pilot early childhood program within the County that the Chamber is already advocating with state and federal representatives.

Low

Mid Term

\$

Child and Adult Care Food Program, Child Development Council, Cortland County DSS

Create an educational program for in-home childcare providers, reducing barriers to becoming a childcare provider and maintaining certifications.

Med

Long Term

\$\$

SBDC, Child Development Council, Central New York Community Foundation

STRATEGY 2: STRENGTHEN EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTHCARE RESOURCES FOR WORKERS AND RESIDENTS ACROSS EXPERIENCE LEVELS, AGES, AND WAGES

Action

Priority

Timing

Cost

Resources & Partners

Continue to develop, support and promote civic and leadership development for young professionals through programs such as Leadership Cortland, management training opportunities, and networking.

High

Near Term

\$\$

Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County Workforce Development, IDA/BDC, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland

Coordinate messaging and improve community awareness of workforce development programming through inter-agency collaboration and outreach.

Low

Near Term

\$

Cortland County Workforce Development, Chamber of Commerce, IDA/BDC, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland, School Districts

CONTINUED

Strengthen the County's already strong network of medical and behavioral service providers by connecting and coordinating them, helping to improve efficiencies and service to residents and reduce workforce challenges (shortages and inter-agency competition).			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Guthrie Health, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cayuga Health Services, Cortland County Mental Health
Ensure that at-risk and vulnerable populations experiencing homelessness receive mental and physical healthcare as they move to transitional and temporary housing to improve long-term outcomes.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Guthrie Health, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cayuga Health Services, County Emergency Response and Communications Department, Cortland County Mental Health Department, Youth Bureau, Cortland Free Library, Family Health Network
Expand career exposure opportunities for K-12 and college students so that they may become aware of, connect with, and learn from local employers, as well as to encourage students to take advantage of local career pathways and secure job placement.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Workforce Development, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland, School Districts, Youth Bureau, Workforce Development Initiative, Employers
Improve communication among workforce development providers, employers, and educational institutions like BOCES, TC3, school districts, and SUNY Cortland to support recent high school graduates who may be vulnerable after losing the K-12 support and guidance.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Workforce Development, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland, school districts, Youth Bureau, Workforce Development Initiative
Address the shortage of skilled workers in the human services and housing nonprofit sectors by first surveying local organizations to identify specific skill gaps and workforce needs, then partnering with local education providers to establish specialized training programs and apprenticeship/internship programs.			
High	Long Term	\$\$	CACTC, OCM BOCES, TC3, SUNY Cortland, School Districts, Youth Bureau, Workforce Development Initiative, Cortland County Workforce Development, Habitat for Humanity, Cortland Housing Authority, Catholic Charities
Reintroduce the BOCES nursing program to strengthen the healthcare workforce in the County and relieve pressures on service providers.			
High	Long Term	\$\$\$	OCM BOCES, Guthrie Health, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cayuga Health Services, Cortland County Workforce Development

STRATEGY 3: PROMOTE AND ADVANCE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES, AND RECREATION ASSETS TO ENCOURAGE TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION, AS WELL AS ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Promote Cortland County as an up-and-coming arts hub to continue the momentum of the growing arts industry in Homer and downtown Cortland.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County CVB, Center for the Arts of Homer, SUNY Cortland Arts and Business departments, Cortland Arts Connect
Support the integration of art into public spaces via murals, functional sculptures, colorful amenities, and more.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County CVB, Center for the Arts of Homer, SUNY Cortland Arts department, Cortland Arts Connect, All Municipalities
Promote the Cortland Airport as a venue for community events, gathering, and connection.			
Med	Near Term	\$	County Planning, Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County CVB
Build on investments in Gutchess Park by creating and providing a dedicated resource for visiting sports teams and their families that highlights the restaurants, places to stay, other recreation, and arts and entertainment opportunities in the County.			
Med	Near Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County CVB, Gutchess Park, Cortland Regional Sports Council, Town of Cortlandville
Invite SUNY Cortland students to explore different areas of Cortland County, introducing them to the quality of life and opportunities available to them as young professionals via targeted marketing/outreach efforts, improving public transportation and microtransit options, and promoting local employment opportunities and low cost of living.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	SUNY Cortland, Cortland Transit, Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County CVB, City of Cortland
Create a case study of the Village of Homer's intentional and thoughtful downtown improvements, including façade improvements, historic preservation, small business support, and green space to use as a guiding example for the revitalization of other downtown areas in the County.			
Low	Mid Term	\$\$	Village of Homer, Cortland County Planning, City of Cortland

STRATEGY 4: LEVERAGE COMMUNITY ASSETS AND ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT AND DEVELOP SMALL BUSINESSES, THE CREATIVE ECONOMY, AGRICULTURE, AND TOURISM/RECREATION

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Promote and support existing and new entrepreneurs through a variety of long-term initiatives that increase diversity, aid in funding, and connect small businesses, with particular emphasis on the creative economy, people of color, underserved populations, and rural main streets.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Center for the Arts of Homer, Blackstone LaunchPad, Cortland Arts Connect, USDA Rural Development, TC3
Recognize and support the arts, history, and the creative economy as increasingly important economic drivers in the County. This could take the form of supporting arts and cultural organizations' capital and programmatic funding requests, providing entrepreneurial training for artists, reinstating a full-time County historian, and connecting and cross promoting events and programming across audiences.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Center for the Arts of Homer, Blackstone LaunchPad, Cortland Arts Connect, Cortland Repertory Theater, TC3, Cortland County CVB, SUNY Cortland, CNY Arts
Using the aligned growth maps provided in the pillars section of this Plan as a starting point, facilitate an ongoing conversation with municipalities throughout the County to identify the appropriate areas to develop the key growth sectors of small business, the creative economy, agriculture, and tourism/recreation. Identify ideal sites for these uses throughout the County and promote communities and sites accordingly.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cities/Towns/Villages, County Planning, IDA/BDC, USDA Rural Development
Balance the growing needs of the renewable energy sector and agriculture by encouraging municipalities to review zoning that identifies and preserves productive agricultural land and limits solar farms on that land.			
High	Mid Term	\$	Cities/Towns/Villages, Cortland County Agricultural, Planning & Environmental Committee, USDA Rural Development, Cortland County Soil & Water

CONTINUED

Intentionally connect farmers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs to facilitate the development of a circular economy that results in local supply chains, waste reduction, and the production of local goods.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Rural Development, New York Farm Bureau, Cortland County Agricultural, Planning & Environmental Committee, Chamber of Commerce, IDA/BDC, Seven Valleys, TC3
Explore opportunities to utilize the Cortland County Airport as an asset for business owners, small business development, and tourism.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	County Planning, Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County CVB
Create a program that provides information and technical assistance to small farmers to promote farm succession and other resources for growing farm-to-table and agritourism in the County.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County Soil & Water, USDA Rural Development, New York Farm Bureau, Cortland County Agricultural, Planning & Environmental Committee
Facilitate cross promotion among and between local businesses to improve vibrancy and advertising, and boost the already strong "shop small, shop local" sentiment among residents and tourists.			
Low	Long Term	\$	Cortland County Chamber of Commerce, IDA/BDC, Cortland County CVB

Pillars	Timing	Cost
A Collaboration B Vibrant Communities C Coordinated & Aligned Growth	Near Term = within two years Mid Term = three to five years Long Term = more than five years or ongoing	\$ = no or low cost \$\$ = substantial but primarily noncapital expenditures \$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures

FOCUS AREA 2: HOUSING

STRATEGY 1: ENHANCE HOUSING DIVERSITY AND QUALITY ACROSS THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Educate municipal planning and zoning boards on the methods available to them to increase housing diversity, including by creating inclusionary zoning, decreasing lot size requirements, and/or allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs).			
Med	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cities/Towns/Villages, Thoma Development, CNY RPDB, USDA Rural Development, US HUD
Examine where ADUs would be most beneficial, allowing for an increased rental stock.			
Low	Near Term	\$\$	City/Town/Village zoning boards, Cortland County Planning
Encourage development of senior housing units across income levels, allowing residents to age in place. This effort should include both rental and ownership opportunities (e.g. apartments, duplexes, condos, townhomes).			
High	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Office For Aging, Cortland Housing Authority
Facilitate the creation of both rental and owned housing units that are affordable to middle-income and young professional households (roughly 80%-120% AMI) by creating new incentives and technical assistance for housing developers, encouraging greater density where it makes sense, and incentivizing residential use of upper-floors of mixed-use properties in downtown areas.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	NYS Pro-Housing Communities funding, NYS HCR, US HUD, 485a tax abatement
Educate the community on the realities of temporary and transitional housing and support the development of new temporary and transitional units to uplift individuals and households struggling to afford shelter.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, US HUD, NYS HCR

CONTINUED

Invest in upgrading the large stock of older homes by working with landlords and homeowners to remediate health hazards (including lead, asbestos, and radon) and improve exterior deterioration and landscaping.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Health Department, local codes departments, tax abatements/credits (i.e. 444a, historic home rehabilitation credit), local foundations, US HUD, NYS HCR
Explore different ways to acquire and sell vacant and abandoned properties so as to encourage local ownership and development.			
Low	Long Term	\$\$	National Community Stabilization Trust, churches, local banks and lending institutions, Article 19A, Article 1111-a, surplus municipal property, donations/estates, market acquisitions, real estate agents and developers

STRATEGY 2: ACCOMMODATE AND PLAN FOR GEOGRAPHIC AND COMMUNITY DIFFERENCES (I.E. RURAL VS URBAN) IN HOUSING GOALS AND NEEDS

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Provide technical support to municipalities who wish to pursue Pro-Housing Community certification, which is advantageous for grant applications and funding sources.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYS ESD, Pro-Housing Communities
Conduct a comprehensive housing market analysis and development strategy to pinpoint needs and strategies across communities.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, NYS ESD, Pro-Housing Communities
Provide technical support to municipalities who wish to create or update their comprehensive plans and encourage them to include Pro-housing and Smart Growth policies.			
Med	NearTerm	\$	Cortland County Planning, CNYRPDB, NYS DOS
Facilitate conversations across communities to identify areas that can support or be targeted for higher density housing or mixed-use development versus areas that should remain low-density.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cities/Towns/Villages

CONTINUED

Evaluate the current structure and operations of fire and safety services throughout the County, particularly staffing and volunteer recruitment, to ensure that residents and businesses are fully covered and protected.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Emergency Response and Communications, public safety entities, NYS Association of Fire Chiefs, FEMA, SYS Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services, Department of Environmental Conservation Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant Program,
Identify the needs in each community, then create cross-border plans for addressing those needs collaboratively (i.e. shared services for codes enforcement, infrastructure, health and safety, amenities, etc.).			
Med	Long Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cities/Towns/Villages

STRATEGY 3: IMPROVE PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE SUPPLY, AFFORDABILITY, AND FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY OF HOUSING

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Strengthen coordination among anchor institutions, municipalities, and housing organizations to create housing that reflects the needs and income levels of each community.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland Housing Authority, SUNY Cortland, Catholic Charities, Cortland Housing Assistance Council, CC Social Services, Access to Independence, Walden Place
Collaborate with SUNY Cortland to develop a comprehensive rental strategy for downtown Cortland.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	City of Cortland, SUNY Cortland, Cortland County Planning
Expand and promote eviction and foreclosure prevention resources to help at-risk households maintain homeownership and prevent homelessness.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland Housing Authority
Encourage physical accessibility in new housing developments, especially where populations may be older or have higher rates of disability, and ensure that the existing housing stock sees similar accessibility improvements.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Office For Aging, Access to Independence

CONTINUED

Explore and facilitate co-development partnerships with employers in the County who are interested in creating dedicated housing for their employees that aligns with wage levels.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Chamber of Commerce, iSpice, Intertek, IDA/BDC, school districts, Workforce Development Initiative
Partner with local housing organizations and anchor institutions to enhance and promote educational and financial programs for first-time homebuyers to ensure long term and sustainable home ownership.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland Housing Authority, SUNY Cortland, Catholic Charities, Cortland Housing Assistance Council, CC Social Services, Access to Independence
Encourage environmental sustainability in new housing developments and for homeowners working on renovations to reduce energy costs - for example, by converting to more electric heating and cooling.			
Low	Mid Term	\$\$	Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), CAPCO Weatherization Assistance Program
Explore land banking and community-directed and -owned housing development mechanisms (e.g. revolving loan funds, NYS Affordable Homeownership Program, local development corporation, cooperative housing models, neighborhood nonprofit trust or endowment, etc.) to ensure equitable progress in the County's housing stock.			
Low	Long Term	\$	SUNY Cortland, NYS Affordable Homeownership Program, Cortland Housing Authority, Cortland Housing Assistance Council, CC Social Services

Pillars	Timing	Cost
A Collaboration B Vibrant Communities C Coordinated & Aligned Growth	Near Term = within two years Mid Term = three to five years Long Term = more than five years or ongoing	\$ = no or low cost \$\$ = substantial but primarily noncapital expenditures \$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures

FOCUS AREA 3: SUSTAINABILITY & OPEN SPACE

STRATEGY 1: RESUME WORK WITHIN EXISTING NYS PROGRAMS PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Connect with the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) to make them aware the County intends to resume activity in the New York State Climate Smart Communities (CSC) and Clean Energy Communities Programs (CEC). Determine what services CNY RPDB can provide to assist in these efforts.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB
Establish a sustainability task force that will serve officially as the County's CSC task force, while also working to advance sustainability through other initiatives.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Legislature
Identify a staffed position within the County that can serve as the County's point person for sustainability initiatives. This position will also serve as the County's official CSC Coordinator, which is a mandatory requirement for certification.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Legislature
Conduct outreach to municipalities and institutions in the County that are active in the CSC and CEC programs to identify opportunities for partnerships on initiatives and/or plans.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB, City/Town/Village leadership, SUNY Cortland, Tompkins Cortland Community College
Work within the CSC program to complete actions that will make Cortland County a certified community within the program.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB
Work within the CEC program to complete high impact actions and advance Cortland County's score within the program.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB

CONTINUED

Complete a Government Operations and Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory in collaboration with CNY RPDB.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB
Coordinate with other County planning departments in the region that have had success in these programs to learn about their experiences and identify opportunities for regional collaboration.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Madison County Planning, Onondaga County Planning

STRATEGY 2: DEVELOP A RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY PLAN TO PROMOTE LOCAL ENERGY GENERATION IN A MANNER THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE COMMUNITY, CREATES JOBS LOCALLY, AND MAXIMIZES LOCAL BENEFITS BY LEVERAGING STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Coordinate with NYSERDA, ORES, and other state or federal entities for guidance on renewable energy permitting and funding programs to understand the regulations developers must navigate, and the incentive programs available to developers to invest locally.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYSERDA, ORES, CNY RPDB, NYSDEC, U.S. EPA
Apply for a grant through the NYSERDA CEC program to develop a Renewable Energy Strategy. This may require additional coordination with NYSERDA and the CNY RPDB as this is a novel planning concept.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYSERDA, CNY RPDB, National Grid, NYSEG, SUNY Cortland, Alliance for Clean Energy (ACE) NY
Provide technical assistance to municipalities to update local regulations and eliminate barriers for distributed renewable energy generation.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYSERDA, CNY RPDB, ACE NY

CONTINUED

Partner with SUNY Cortland to research agrivoltaics and other methods of co-utilization of land used for renewable energy generation.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland SWCD, SUNY Cortland, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYSDAM, Cortland County Planning
Coordinate with National Grid and NYSEG to understand utility infrastructure needs to support renewable energy generation. Identify opportunities to advance other sustainability and open space goals along with utility upgrades, like trail development along utility corridors.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County DPW, NYSEG, National Grid, NYSEDA

STRATEGY 3: PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO PROMOTE COUNTYWIDE EFFORTS TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABILITY AND MAINTAIN CLEAN WATER AND CLEAN AIR

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Create sustainability and open space working groups consisting of key County staff, representatives from local municipalities, institutions, and other stakeholders. These working groups should meet at regular intervals (e.g. quarterly) to discuss opportunities to advance sustainability and open space goals across the County.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County SWCD, CNY RPDB, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Finger Lakes Land Trust, SUNY Cortland, TC3
Provide regular training in collaboration with key partners to municipal officials, planning boards, zoning boards, and other decision makers to build technical knowledge and capacity to advance sustainability and open space goals locally.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, NYSDOS Local Government Services, CNY RPDB, Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY Cortland
Develop a partnership program with SUNY Cortland and TC3 that connects municipalities with students and service-learning projects to assist municipalities with research and initiatives related to sustainability and open space goals.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, SUNY Cortland, TC3

CONTINUED

Convene public and private partners to explore, strategize, and implement a community composting program, including consideration for food rescue prior to composting. Leverage information and resources provided by the US EPA's Community Composting webpage: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/community-composting>.

Med

Mid Term

\$\$\$

Cortland County SWCD, Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY Cortland, US EPA, Cortland County DPW, Seven Valleys Health Coalition

Create a sustainability and open spaces resources library on the County website to assist municipal officials and local advocates in finding useful resources and tools that will help them advance sustainability and open space goals within their communities.

Low

Mid Term

\$

Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB, SUNY Cortland

Build and maintain a sustainability dashboard in collaboration with CNY RPDB to track progress towards achieving County sustainability and open space goals. The dashboard should function as a tool to guide local decision makers towards priority actions.

Low

Mid Term

\$\$

Cortland County Planning, CNY RPDB

Develop a forest inventory to understand the positive impacts and carbon sequestration potential of the forested land within the County. Leverage this study to spur outside investment in the conservation efforts and position Cortland County as a carbon sequestration hub in New York State.

Med

Long Term

\$\$

Cortland County SWCD, Cortland County Planning, NYSDEC, SUNY ESF

STRATEGY 4: SUPPORT LAND CONSERVATION EFFORTS, INCLUDING FARMLAND, TO PRESERVE THE RURAL CHARACTER AND SCENIC RESOURCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

Action

Priority

Timing

Cost

Resources & Partners

Apply for a Farmland Protection Planning Grant through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to develop an up-to-date farmland protection plan.

High

Near Term

\$\$

Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County SWCD

Coordinate with the Finger Lakes Land Trust and other land conservation organizations in the region to develop a list of high-priority lands for conservation in the County.

High

Near Term

\$

Cortland County Planning, Finger Lakes Land Trust, NYALT

CONTINUED

Create informational materials informing the agricultural community of the benefits of opting into agricultural districts. Provide technical assistance for farmers interested in enrolling in the voluntary program.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cortland County SWCD, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Apply for a Farmland Protection and Implementation Grant through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to acquire funding needed to implement farmland protection activities.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County SWCD, Finger Lakes Land Trust
Coordinate with the Cortland County CVB, Cortland County Chamber of Commerce, and others to develop a countywide agritourism plan that promotes farms and Cortland County farm products in conjunction with outdoor recreation opportunities.			
Med	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County CVB, Cortland County Planning, Chamber of Commerce, Finger Lakes Land Trust, Cornell Cooperative Extension

STRATEGY 5: PROMOTE GREENWAYS AND BLUEWAYS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY TO DEVELOP A ROBUST TRAIL SYSTEM THAT LINKS TO LARGER REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Collaborate with Parks and Trails NY (PTNY) to assist municipalities in participating in PTNY's Trail Towns program which provides technical assistance to municipalities to maximize the local benefits of trails.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, PTNY
Collaborate with PTNY, the Trust for Public Land, and other local trail groups to identify and advance statewide trail funding opportunities.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, PTNY, Trust for Public Land, Finger Lakes Land Trust

CONTINUED

Apply for a New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Recreational Trails Program grant to formally plan and construct trails along Route-81 and the Tioughnioga River as identified in the NYS Statewide Trails Plan.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Planning, NYS OPRHP, Finger Lakes Land Trust, PTNY, Trust for Public Land
Create an inventory of corridors that could serve as future trail connections, including abandoned rail right-of-ways, utility corridors, navigable waterways, and road systems with excess right-of-way.			
High	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Finger Lakes Land Trust
Apply for a grant to develop a countywide trails master plan. Funding could be accessed through the NYS OPRHP Recreational Trails Program, NYS Empire State Development tourism promotion grants, or various conservation organizations like PTNY, the Trust for Public Land, Open Space Institute, and others.			
High	Long Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning

Pillars	Timing	Cost
A Collaboration B Vibrant Communities C Coordinated & Aligned Growth	Near Term = within two years Mid Term = three to five years Long Term = more than five years or ongoing	\$ = no or low cost \$\$ = substantial but primarily noncapital expenditures \$\$\$ = large, primarily capital expenditures

FOCUS AREA 4: CONNECTIVITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY 1: IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS TO COMMUNITY AMENITIES AND TO THE COUNTY'S RECREATION RESOURCES

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Improve housing and transportation policy coordination to create space-efficient transportation modes while not promoting sprawl. [2]			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities
Create a multimodal master plan to identify gaps in existing infrastructure and opportunities for enhanced active, on-call, and intra-community transportation infrastructure (e.g. priority corridors for intra-county recreational cycling facilities), among other considerations.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, All Municipalities, NYS DOT, NYS DEC, Finger Lakes Trail Conference
Connect schools to surrounding neighborhoods with slow streets and safe pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, All Municipalities, School Districts, SUNY Cortland
Host events, create maps, and provide marketing materials to show how residents and visitors can access recreation resources.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Cortland County CVB, Cortland Youth Bureau, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management
Identify priority assets such as parks, grocery stores, schools, and medical facilities and identify opportunities to connect them to nearby population centers by multiple modes of safe transportation infrastructure.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities, School Districts, SUNY Cortland, Centro, NYS DOT

[2] Moore, T., Thorsnes, P., & Appleyard, B. (2007). The Transportation/Land Use Connection. American Planning Association.

CONTINUED

Create a dedicated and protected cycling facility for the Millenium Trail and extend it to connect with the Gutches Lumber Sports Complex.

Low	Long Term	\$\$\$	NYS DOT, City of Cortland, Town of Cortlandville, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, Lime Hollow Nature Center
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STRATEGY 2: IMPROVE STREET DESIGN TO CREATE COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND VITALITY

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Incorporate a Vision Zero and Safe System[3] framework into transportation investments.			
High	Near Term	\$	NYS DOT, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Centro
Prioritize pedestrians and cyclists when designing streets in hamlets, downtowns, and main streets.			
High	Near Term	\$	NYS DOT, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Centro
Support the creation of sidewalk programs where appropriate that also incorporate beautification measures, such as tree planting, public art, benches, and other micro-mobility elements.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, United Way of Cortland County, All Municipalities, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Centro, NYS DOT
Pursue the creation of parking benefit districts to fund streetscape improvements.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Chamber of Commerce, City of Cortland, Cortland County Planning
Experiment with treatments that reduce rural road speeds and severe collisions.[4]			
Med	Long Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, FHWA, USDA, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Centro, NYS DOT

[3] *Zero Deaths and Safe System*. (n.d.) United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

[4] Proven safety countermeasures in rural communities. (FHWA-SA-24-005). (2024). United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2024-01/FHWA_PSCs_in_Rural_Communities_508.pdf

STRATEGY 3: PRIORITIZE IMPROVEMENTS TO TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL OPTIONS

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Provide technical support and partnership for municipalities seeking grant funding for safety and multi-modal enhancements.			
High	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, All Municipalities, Cortland County Mobility Management
Create a comprehensive safety action plan[5] or a local road safety plan[6] that identifies high-crash and high injury-corridors and intersections.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, US DOT
Promote smart growth and mobility-oriented development to municipalities and ensure new subdivisions provide multi-modal transportation design elements so as not to be disconnected from existing and potential future developments.			
Med	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, Centro, NYS DEC, NYS DOS, CCPB
Advocate for increased transit funding from NYS and Federal governments.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Centro, Elected Officials, NYS Legislature, US DOT
Create educational materials for the public on the public and private costs, benefits, and risks to transportation options.			
Low	Near Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, Centro
Increase the lane miles of protected bike infrastructure.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$\$	All Municipalities, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, NYS DOT
Install red-light and speed enforcement cameras.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$	All Municipalities, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, NYS DOT

[5] *Comprehensive Safety Action Plans*. (n.d.) United States Department of Transportation.

[6] *Local Road Safety Plans*. (n.d.) United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

CONTINUED

Create a safe, complete streets design guide for different types and contexts of streets for use by municipalities.			
Med	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Traffic Safety Board
Support the implementation of the Cortland County Airport's 10 Year Master Plan to maintain long-term viability and expanded use, as well as to position it for future technologies and opportunities.			
Med	Long Term	\$\$\$	Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Highway, US FAA, US DOT

STRATEGY 4: INVEST IN SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION OF THE FUTURE

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Encourage the elimination of minimum parking requirements within local zoning codes, particularly in downtowns.			
High	Near Term	\$	All Municipalities, Cortland County Planning
Promote to property owners and strategically install electric vehicle chargers throughout the County at municipal or county-owned facilities, employment centers, and multi-unit dwellings. [7]			
High	Near Term	\$\$	All Municipalities, Cortland County Planning, NYSEDA
Provide incentives for residents to purchase electric bikes. [8]			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities
Explore the creation of electric bike and scooter share networks and create regulations to limit negative impacts of their use. Identify and incorporate best practices from communities of a similar size and character.			
High	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Mobility Management, Centro, Cortland County Planning

[7] Charging Station Programs. [n.d.] NYSEDA. <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Charging-Station-Programs>[8] About the Program. [n.d.] Columbus' Resident E-Bike Subsidy Program. <https://www.columbusebikeincentives.com/about-program>

CONTINUED

Identify, plan, and implement transit service enhancements and offer additional shared mobility services.			
High	Mid Term	\$\$\$	Centro, NYS DOT, FTA, USDA, Cortland County Planning, Cortland County Mobility Management, All Municipalities
Support the safe testing and operations of autonomous vehicles on public highways and educate the public on benefits like reduced parking demand and mobility options for residents who lack access to a car or cannot drive.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Traffic Safety Board, Cortland County Mobility Management, Centro

STRATEGY 5: ENHANCE UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT GROWTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Action			
Priority	Timing	Cost	Resources & Partners
Facilitate discussions, and, if desirable, planning regarding the extension of sewer and water infrastructure into areas surrounding the City of Cortland that could be prime for housing and business development.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County Planning, City of Cortland, Town of Cortlandville, NYS EFC
Assess desired development against water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the County, and then create a plan to expand capacity (particularly at the Cortland WWTP) accordingly.			
High	Near Term	\$\$	City of Cortland, Cortland County Planning, NYS EFC
Ensure that capital improvement plans in similar communities are aligned to the extent possible to realize economies of scale and improve competitiveness for grant funding.			
Mid	Near Term	\$\$	Cortland County, All Municipalities
Coordinate with National Grid to better understand power availability in targeted growth areas for increased demand and proactively study what upgrades will be needed to support the coordinated growth strategy.			
Low	Mid Term	\$	Cortland County Planning, National Grid
Partner with CNYRPDB on a regional fiber spine and plan for investment in last mile connections.			
High	Long Term	\$\$\$	CNYRPB, Cortland County Legislature, ConnectALL, US NTIA, ST8

APPENDIX B: EXISTING PLANS & STRATEGIES

Cortland County engaged MRB Group and EDR to aid in the creation of a countywide Strategic Development Plan, which will be the first comprehensive update to the County's 1978 Land Use Plan. This Strategic Development Plan will inform strategies to leverage regional opportunities and community assets, including the County's strong agricultural base, natural resources like the Tioughnioga River, and the Micron plant development in neighboring Onondaga County.

To ensure this strategy aligns with and builds upon existing community goals and efforts, MRB Group first assessed the current economic and planning conditions by reviewing existing Comprehensive Plans, zoning laws, land use plans, and local, regional, and County strategies to identify common themes and needs.



Regional Plans

Cortland County is uniquely located on the border of the Central New York and Southern Tier regions. While it is part of the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council (CNY REDC) and Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) service areas, Cortland County is also a member of Southern Tier 8 (ST8) for purposes of participation in Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funding. The CNY RPDB provides two key reports for understanding the regional context within which Cortland County communities must situate themselves: the Regional Recreation and Heritage Plan (2017) and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which was last updated in June 2020. Additionally, the CNY REDC published their 2023 Strategic Plan, which details basic areas of concern and the state of regional goals and ambitions. Both of these organizations serve a five-county region, consisting of Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego Counties. The ST8 CEDS also has important planning and funding implications for Cortland, as well, and consists of Broome, Chemung, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties.

Cortland County is the southernmost County in the region, and is known for beautiful natural spaces, which communities in the County strive to maintain, protect, and improve. The CNY RPDB Regional Recreation and Heritage Plan from 2017 highlights the region's interest in developing regional recreation opportunities, deepening their heritage identity, and growing the tourism industry in a sustainable way. To achieve these goals, protecting and promoting the rich history and environment emerge as common themes, achievable through brownfield restoration, redevelopment of abandoned railroads, rehabilitation of historic and cultural resources and settlements, improving access to public waterfront lands, and increasing carbon storage, biodiversity, and renewable energy efforts.

The CNY RPDB CEDS emphasizes interest in the following industries: manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, Internet of Things (IoT), semiconductor manufacturing, and clean energy – all of which are components of the larger industry clusters of biomedical and life sciences, distribution and transportation, technology and electronics, and materials processing. The region's strategy identifies short-term goals to strengthen these industries by:

- Maintaining a strong foundation for the management and efficient delivery of government services at all levels; and
- Supporting the development and maintenance of a modern infrastructure network.

The long-term goals identified in the 2020 CEDS decidedly focus on industry and employment concerns, specifically working towards the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" in the IoT industry cluster in CNY. The CNY RPDB hopes that the development of a strong entrepreneurial culture in CNY - along with business retention and expansion programs, better alignment of workforce supply and demand, and increased capital funding, infrastructure, and shovel-ready sites - will create an economy well-poised to adapt to coming changes driven by climate change and technological advancement.

Most recently, the 2023 Strategic Plan from the CNY REDC explains five strategic goals set by the Region:

- Workforce: Build a future-ready workforce that is innovative and accessible industry-focused programs and tailored support for diverse populations.
- Industry Ecosystems: Connect and grow innovative industry ecosystems through forward-thinking, cross-sector initiatives around entrepreneurial support, R&D, and technology adoption to drive growth.
- Equitable growth: Break down barriers to economic opportunity through innovative actions that foster equitable entrepreneurship and accessible career pathways.

- Place: Invest in the built environment to support the economy of future generations, while investing in the preservation of the natural environment.
- Collaboration: Cultivate a culture of trust and co-creation across Central New York's economy.

Multiple challenges stand in the way of reaching those goals, primarily an aging labor force and an inability to attract and retain a workforce base that fits the needs of regional employers. Another significant challenge facing the CNY region is the shift from a manufacturing economy to a tech-based economy. To improve the quality of the workforce (therefore making the region more attractive for businesses), the CNY REDC places emphasis on upskilling individuals in low-wage jobs so they can advance to higher-wage employment, achievable through career pipeline programs, filling gaps in the workforce ecosystem, and building communities that support workers' fundamental needs. Additionally, the region outlines five industry ecosystems: agribusiness; biotechnology and life sciences; manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, and distribution; smart systems; and recreation, tourism, and film. Targeting these more comprehensive clusters is intended to foster growth and innovation. Fulfillment of these regional goals, completed in alignment with the strategic initiatives outlined by the State—placemaking, workforce, tradable sectors, and innovation—will improve the position of the region as a destination for both industry and workforce.

The 2018-2022 ST8 CEDS outlined the region's goals and proposed "obtainable strategies to encourage private sector economic growth across the eight-county region." ST8 serves the counties of Tompkins, Tioga, Cortland, Broome, Chenango, Otsego, Delaware, and Schoharie. Together, these counties are an EDA designated Economic Development District and an ARC designated Local Development District. The CEDS notes the significant population and job decline experienced throughout the counties. The loss of the manufacturing industry, as well as uncompetitive fees and regulations, are considered the main contributing factors in this decline. A recurring theme in the CEDS is the region's proximity to the NY-PA border, and the threat that these "uncompetitive" fees and regulations as a result of that proximity. CEDS objectives for the five-year period from 2018 to 2022 include developing best practices for economic development strategies, enabling people to improve their employment status with educational and social supports, addressing infrastructure deficiencies, adopting regional marketing strategies, improving community well-being, and supporting rural communities that often get left behind. These echo strategies and goals laid out in the various CNY planning documents.

ST8 actively has five initiatives that are addressed by ten programs. The initiatives are economic development, workforce investment, infrastructure adaptation, regionalism approach, and rural advancement. The programs that address one or more of these initiatives are:

- Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Planning
- Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Recovery-To-Work Ecosystem Development
- Water Quality Improvement Program
- Project Development and Technical Assistance with ARC Investments
- The Climate Smart Communities Development Program
- Project Development and Technical Assistance with EDA Investments
- The Regional Opportunity Zone Portfolio
- Industry Summit: Professional Development Program Series Host
- STEM Ecosystem Development
- Clean Energy Industry Cluster Support

Cortland County's position between the CNY and ST8 regions not only gives it access to a greater wealth of resources and planning initiatives, but also the benefits that will come from being between two Tech Hubs: the New Energy New York (NENY) Battery Tech Hub in the Southern Tier, and the Smart I-Corridor Tech Hub to the North with a major node in Syracuse. The NENY Tech Hub focuses on end-to-end battery development and manufacturing, and seeks to address the "critical gaps in the domestic battery supply chain and meet the growing demand for energy storage, a crucial part of the clean energy transition." The Smart I-Corridor targets Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Ithaca, Auburn, and Batavia to enhance semiconductor manufacturing in the state. Led by CenterState CEO, the Tech Hub will cement New York's "position as a leader in semiconductor manufacturing and supply chain sustainability." Cortland County is in a prime physical location to leverage both opportunities.

County Plans

Cortland County has five reports that illuminate the conditions communities must navigate: the Land Use Plan (1978), the Overall Economic Development Program (1980), the Downtown Strategic Plans for Cortland County (2002), the Transportation Plan (2020), the Cortland County Agricultural District Review for 2021 to 2029, and the Cortland County Consolidated Housing Plan (2021).

The influence of the Land Use Plan, written and adopted over 40 years ago, can be seen in the goals and priorities of local Comprehensive plans today. Perhaps most relevant is the plan's emphasis on protecting economically viable farmland and agribusiness community, a goal that is reiterated in each of the five County plans examined for this report. In the Land Use Plan, the County proposes clustered development in eight designated growth centers: Greater Cortland; the Villages of McGraw, Homer, and Marathon; the Hamlets of Preble and Truxton; the unincorporated Hamlet of Cincinnatus; and the Virgil Planned Unit Development (PUD). To continue the patterns of growth that the County experienced.

in the 1970's, the County recommended improving quality of life through a full range of community facilities, protection of historic and environmental resources, and expansion of industry to create a sound economic base.

Two years later, in 1980, the County adopted the Overall Economic Development Program. This Prog The early 2000's Downtown Strategic Plans for Cortland County outlined goal areas for four areas: the City of Cortland and the Villages of Homer, Marathon, and McGraw. This plan noted the challenge of overcoming diminishing household paychecks, significant growth in lower-paying service jobs, slow job growth in higher paying job opportunities, and an inability to raise necessary taxes for the maintenance and improvement of municipal services. The goals for each downtown region are relatively similar, with emphasis placed on improving the aesthetics of buildings, resolving parking issues, and encouraging development of upper-floor spaces downtown through updated building codes. In McGraw and Marathon, the plan also emphasized the need to address severe flooding from the Tioughnioga River, important for the successful creation of a countywide Tioughnioga River Trail intended to connect to downtown areas in the County.

The goals of the 2020 CPTP seek to address the transportation needs of all county residents, especially among individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with limited incomes. In meetings with the County, they explained that although the plan is “recent,” it is already outdated. At the time of writing, the County used a third party, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, for mobility management, which has since been moved in-house. The transportation currently operates on a “flag-down” system, with no well-developed routes. The plan called for the County to secure funding for planning studies that examine the feasibility of an on-demand system for rural areas, as well as funding for a County-owned transportation facility. However, in 2024 the County joined the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority and will be serviced by Centro instead. The goals outlined in 2020 all encourage coordination between counties, transportation providers, employers, health and human service agencies, and educational institutions to meet the County’s (and region’s) transportation needs. Though the Transportation Plan may be outdated, it’s community- and collaboration-minded approach to goal-setting is certainly transferrable to future plans.

The Cortland County Agricultural District review for 2021 to 2029 is the mandatory eight-year district review established in Agricultural District Law, with the goal of enabling complex considerations that balance growth while protecting valuable natural resources. The report explains that the Cortland County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board decided to remove select parcels under seven acres that most likely were not being used for farming or farm related activities from the County’s Agricultural District. The report also emphasizes its aim to support state agricultural land policy, which has the following four goals:

- Conserve, protect, and encourage the development and improvement of farmland for agricultural production.
- Conserve and protect agricultural farmland as a valued natural and ecological resource which contributes to environmental and landscape preservation
- Provide for locally-initiated Agricultural Districts to protect and enhance agriculture as a viable segment of local and state economies
- Promote local initiatives for agricultural and farmland protection in addition to the Agricultural District Program

The Cortland County Consolidated Housing Plan, written in 2021, explains County challenges, goals, and needs as they relate to housing. The plan notes that the County’s housing stock is old and outdated and boasts a myriad of issues. It also identifies general community development challenges of housing and affordable housing, homelessness, other special needs, non-housing community development plans, environmental considerations and energy efficiency, methamphetamine labs in housing, and housing consortium goals. The greatest obstacle for overcoming these identified challenges and issues is the lack of financial resources, particularly from state and federal governments. The plan outlines a vision that includes goals with an overarching theme of education, safety, sustainability, affordability, and tax base improvements. Listed below are some key goals that best illuminate future housing desires.

- Improve overall housing stock to attract middle income buyers and young professionals to Cortland County. Promote homeownership and work with economic development to define what type of housing would attract potential businesses.
- Establish a “vision” for Cortland County and establish a clear sense of community identity, who we want to be and who we want to attract. Work to build collaboration between municipalities to establish one vision and idea moving forward that will improve Cortland County for future generations.
- Proactively work to eliminate blight and “zombie” properties. Encourage demolition of these properties to create greenspace or incentives to facilitate new construction and re-construction. Continue locally driven programs to address this issue.

Local Plans

There are 15 towns, three villages, and one city within Cortland County. Of those localities, six do not have a Comprehensive Plan. Of the remaining 11 communities' Comprehensive Plans, only four were completed or updated in the past 15 years. Available village and town plans identify the economic decline in Cortland County and the wider Upstate New York region as the biggest challenge facing their communities. Towns and Villages have seen the exodus of working-class individuals, leaving an aging population and significant decreases in younger populations, as is evidenced by K-12 school closures and consolidation throughout the County. Analysis of town and village Comprehensive Plans reveals the inspiration they received from County and regional plans, echoing many of the same goals and priority areas.

Town comprehensive plans emphasize the importance of the agrarian and rural nature of their communities, citing recent residential development pressures on historically agricultural land. Non-agricultural land uses are generally met with caution in the Comprehensive Plans, where communities articulate concerns with new developments' long-term compatibility with farming. However, the Town of Marathon's 2015 Comprehensive Plan notes that almost half of farm operators in the town listed their primary occupation as something other than farming, indicating that farming alone is unsustainable for many. Notably, the Town of Truxton states that while agriculture is important, its preservation should not be static and unreasoning, in acknowledgement that the status quo must sometimes change for the betterment of the community. Diversifying the economy is a priority for these communities, with many placing emphasis on supporting small and local business development and the development of light manufacturing.

The preservation and enhancement of natural areas, the agricultural identity, and overall aesthetics of the built environment are common themes and goals for town Comprehensive Plans. The plans also create community guidelines for future development that will allow for the development of mixed residential types and the smooth transition between land use areas. In many towns, the top two land uses by area are agriculture and residential. Over half of the land (55.4%) in the Town of Homer is classified as agricultural. In contrast, none of the land within the City of Cortland is for agricultural use. In most municipalities, agricultural land use accounts for roughly a quarter to a third of total acreage. The Town of Marathon has the highest percentage of residential land at 40.2%. The Town of Preble has the smallest share of residential land, at 10.1%. Similar to the share of agricultural land, most municipalities have roughly a quarter to a third of land for residential use.

Land Use as a Percent of Total Acreage, 2022

Municipality	Agriculture	Residential
Town of Cincinnatus	33.0%	29.2%
Town of Cortlandville	36.6%	26.4%
Town of Cuyler	27.5%	20.9%
Town of Freetown	23.2%	37.8%
Town of Harford	29.0%	24.0%
Town of Homer	55.4%	26.0%
Town of Lapeer	26.2%	31.7%
Town of Marathon	29.0%	40.2%
Town of Preble	31.2%	10.1%
Town of Scott	28.6%	32.2%
Town of Solon	25.7%	31.1%
Town of Taylor	29.0%	25.9%
Town of Truxton	31.6%	22.5%
Town of Virgil	26.7%	27.0%
Town of Willet	25.3%	31.1%
Village of Homer	6.6%	24.5%
Village of Marathon	31.8%	19.9%
Village of McGraw	10.0%	39.4%
City of Cortland	0.0%	10.5%

Source: Cortland County Real Property Assessment Data, MRB Group

In the towns, vacant land and wild, forested, conservation lands and parks constitute the largest shares of acreage after residential and agricultural uses. This again reflects the values seen in municipal comprehensive plans that place emphasis on protecting and enjoying the natural spaces that characterize their communities. However, the prevalence of wild, forested, conservation lands and parks have either remained the same or decreased in every town. This suggests that there may be a shift away from these spaces, even as communities advocate for them.

Land Use - Towns

Use Type	Town of Cincinnatus			Town of Cortlandville			Town of Cuyler			Town of Freetown			Town of Harford		
	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change
Agricultural	26.3%	33.0%	6.8%	37.9%	36.6%	-1.3%	26.7%	27.5%	0.8%	47.1%	23.2%	-23.9%	32.7%	29.0%	-3.8%
Residential	31.2%	29.2%	-1.9%	26.0%	26.4%	0.5%	20.4%	20.9%	0.5%	25.9%	37.8%	11.9%	23.0%	24.0%	1.0%
Vacant land	31.2%	26.5%	-4.7%	21.3%	21.9%	0.6%	23.9%	23.2%	-0.8%	13.5%	27.9%	14.4%	8.0%	12.6%	4.6%
Commercial	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	2.4%	2.1%	-0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Recreation & entertainment	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	2.0%	2.5%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Community services	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	2.4%	2.0%	-0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Industrial	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Public services	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	1.9%	2.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.0%
Wild, forested, conservation lands and public parks	9.6%	9.4%	-0.1%	4.3%	4.3%	0.0%	28.6%	28.2%	-0.4%	13.3%	11.0%	-2.3%	35.3%	33.5%	-1.8%
Use Type	Town of Homer			Town of Lapeer			Town of Marathon			Town of Preble			Town of Scott		
	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change
Agricultural	58.0%	55.4%	-2.6%	26.6%	26.2%	-0.4%	29.1%	29.0%	0.0%	43.8%	31.2%	-12.5%	24.5%	28.6%	4.2%
Residential	23.9%	26.0%	2.1%	29.9%	31.7%	1.8%	39.1%	40.2%	1.1%	14.5%	10.1%	-4.4%	31.6%	32.2%	0.6%
Vacant land	13.5%	14.4%	0.9%	30.4%	29.1%	-1.3%	30.2%	29.1%	-1.1%	14.2%	39.0%	24.8%	34.0%	30.4%	-3.6%
Commercial	0.8%	0.8%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	1.4%	0.2%	-1.2%
Recreation & entertainment	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	2.0%	1.5%	-0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%
Community services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Industrial	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Public services	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Wild, forested, conservation lands and public parks	2.4%	2.0%	-0.4%	11.9%	11.9%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	24.7%	17.6%	-7.1%	8.1%	8.1%	0.0%
Use Type	Town of Solon			Town of Taylor			Town of Truxton			Town of Virgil			Town of Willet		
	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change
Agricultural	26.5%	25.7%	-0.8%	35.3%	29.0%	-6.3%	31.2%	31.6%	0.4%	27.5%	26.7%	-0.8%	30.4%	25.3%	-5.0%
Residential	29.6%	31.1%	1.5%	23.3%	25.9%	2.6%	24.4%	22.5%	-1.9%	25.9%	27.0%	1.1%	28.6%	31.1%	2.5%
Vacant land	13.9%	15.4%	1.5%	15.1%	20.6%	5.4%	17.3%	18.6%	1.3%	24.1%	22.7%	-1.4%	24.9%	27.3%	2.4%
Commercial	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	-0.1%
Recreation & entertainment	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.2%	0.3%	3.7%	4.6%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Community services	1.4%	0.7%	-0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
Industrial	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Public services	2.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Wild, forested, conservation lands and public parks	26.5%	25.0%	-1.5%	26.2%	24.4%	-1.7%	25.6%	25.5%	0.0%	18.0%	18.2%	0.2%	15.3%	15.3%	0.0%

Source: Cortland County Real Property Assessment Data, MRB Group

Notable shifts have occurred in the Towns of Freetown and Preble. In the former, the share of agricultural land use has decreased by an astounding 23.9% since 2013. This stands in stark contrast to the importance many communities place on agriculture. The agricultural land was likely converted to residential use or recategorized as vacant, as these categories saw significant increases over the same period. Other significant agricultural decreases happened in the Town of Preble (12.5%), the Town of Taylor (6.3%), and the Town of Willet (5%). The Town of Preble has also seen a significant shift in vacant land, with a 24.8% increase since 2013. This shift has made the Town of Preble the municipality with the highest percentage of vacant land at 39%. It is likely that the newly defined vacant land used to be defined as wild, forested, conservation lands and parks or agricultural land, since those categories each saw significant decreases since 2013.

Village Comprehensive Plans echo many of the goals outlined by towns: agriculture remains a key part of village plans, as does the maintenance and preservation of historic character, open spaces, and local businesses. Villages constitute the more densely populated areas of the towns within the County, hence a greater emphasis on downtown revitalization and pedestrian safety. The Tioughnioga River runs beside the villages, a result of the economic benefits once associated with the river as a method of transportation between Syracuse to the north and Binghamton to the south. Village Comprehensive Plans reveal goals to recreate and reinvent the economic value of the river, with plans to create recreation opportunities that connect downtown areas to the river, stimulating downtown spending.

Land use in the three Villages and City of Cortland differs from that of the Towns in that they have smaller, though still significant, shares of agricultural and residential land uses, and substantially larger shares of other land use types, namely commercial, community services, industrial, and public services.

Land Use - Villages and City

Use Type	Village of Homer			Village of Marathon			Village of McGraw			City of Cortland		
	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change	2013	2022	Change
Agricultural	6.7%	6.6%	-0.1%	32.0%	31.8%	-0.1%	10.3%	10.0%	-0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Residential	21.3%	24.5%	3.2%	18.6%	19.9%	1.3%	35.9%	39.4%	3.5%	3.2%	10.5%	7.3%
Vacant land	29.6%	22.9%	-6.7%	19.0%	17.3%	-1.7%	33.2%	29.9%	-3.2%	25.3%	23.4%	-1.9%
Commercial	8.5%	12.4%	3.9%	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%	2.1%	2.1%	0.0%	17.0%	18.6%	1.6%
Recreation & entertainment	7.4%	7.4%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	4.7%	0.0%	6.2%	5.4%	-0.8%
Community services	19.7%	19.5%	-0.2%	16.7%	17.2%	0.5%	10.1%	10.0%	0.0%	23.8%	21.9%	-1.9%
Industrial	1.9%	1.9%	0.0%	4.3%	4.3%	0.0%	2.2%	2.0%	-0.2%	14.7%	11.5%	-3.2%
Public services	4.7%	4.7%	0.0%	3.1%	3.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.6%	0.3%	9.5%	8.4%	-1.1%
Wild, forested, conservation lands and public parks	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%

Source: Cortland County Real Property Assessment Data, MRB Group

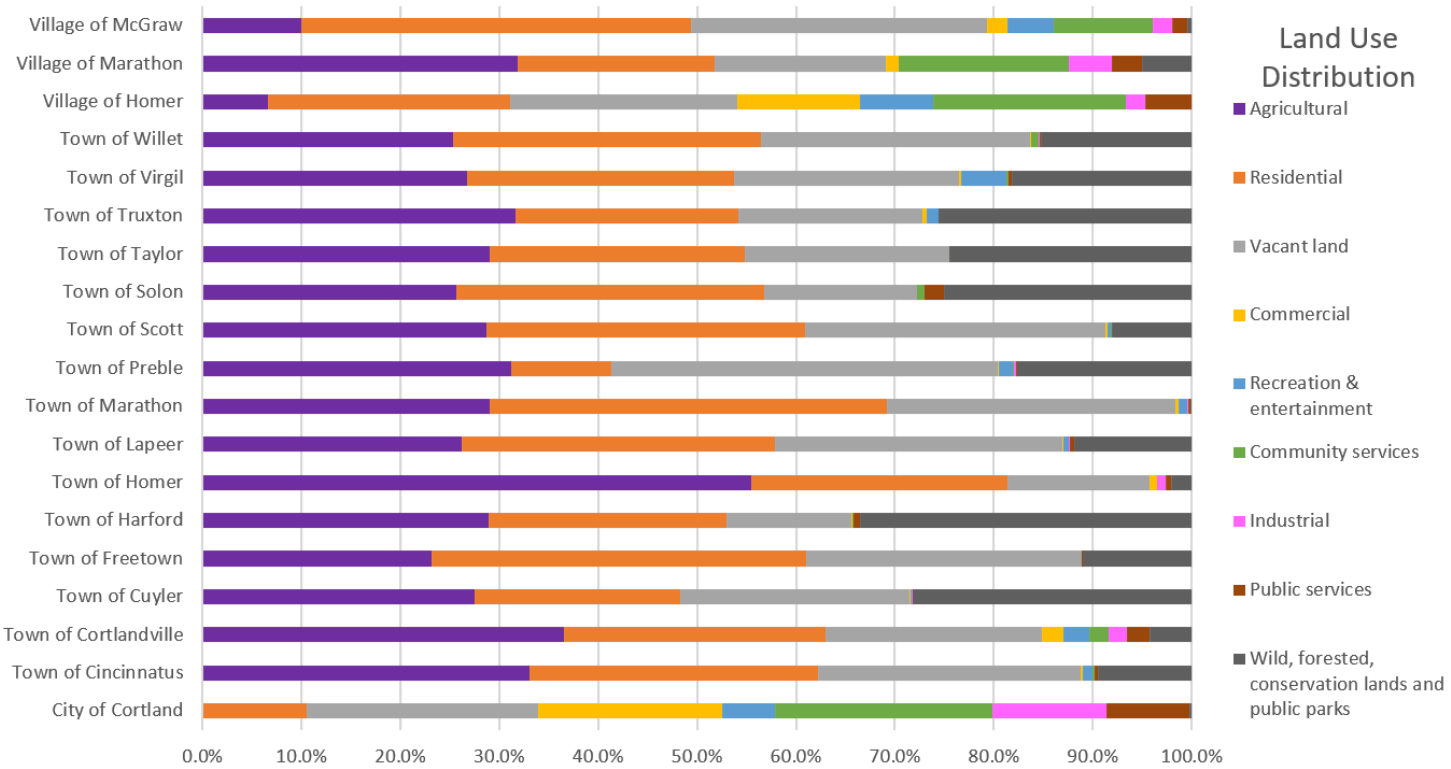
Industrial land uses are almost exclusively concentrated in the City of Cortland (11.5%), though they have decreased 3.2% since 2013, a reflection of the County's shift from a manufacturing and industrial economy to a service economy. Commercial land uses in the Village of Homer and City of Cortland have increased by 3.9% and 1.6%, respectively. This is a reflection of the growing service economy. The Village of Homer recently won a DRI and has begun reviewing and implementing projects in the downtown area, which may explain the increase in commercial land and decrease in vacant land, whether it be because of the DRI or because of Village attitudes that led to them being awarded the DRI. Residential land use has experienced some of the largest gains in each Village and the City of Cortland since 2013, increasing by 7.3% in the City alone. The largest decreases have been in vacant land, with a 6.7% decrease in the Village of Homer.

Aside from emphasis on agricultural lands and industry, village and town Plans are similar in that they include goals to protect the quality of water resources, both above and below ground. Cortland County is unique in that all water supply is provided by underground aquifers. Subsequently, the protection and responsible use of the groundwater is paramount. As the Town of Virgil's 2002 Comprehensive Plan explains, "Cumulative effects of development in the aquifer area pose a serious threat to a safe and adequate water supply serving Vigil and other areas of the County." Additionally, both types of municipalities target infrastructure improvements, especially for public transportation, housing, and municipal services and systems. Land used for community services accounts for 10% to 22% of acreage in the villages and City, with the City of Cortland having the highest percentage (21.9%) and the Village of McGraw with the lowest percentage (10%). The City also has the

highest percentage of land for public services (8.4%), though it has decreased by 1.1% since 2013. In general, the City’s land uses are the most diversified of any municipality in Cortland County. The preservation of unique local character, whether it be rural or more urban, as well as ensuring sustainable land uses, also make repeat appearances across Comprehensive Plans.

During this writing, the Town of Preble was engaged in a Comprehensive Plan update. The drafted Plan that Town officials provided reinforced existing goals and strategies, notably the protection of groundwater, responsible commercial development, and preservation of the agricultural economy and heritage. Their updated Plan also includes language about the new Micron development in Clay, NY, which is directly connected to the Town of Preble via I-81. Noting the potential to be a commuting hub for Micron, the Town highlights the need to review subdivision regulations to ensure that traditional neighborhood development patterns and the environment are preserved.

The City of Cortland’s Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2012) highlights the issue that nearly all developable properties in the City have already been developed. Because there are no remaining greenfields, the City identified brownfield development as central to the continued growth and diversification of businesses and industry within the City. Like town and village Comprehensive Plans, the City emphasizes aquifer protection, City beautification, infrastructure improvement, and the creation of an efficient and accessible public transportation system. Uniquely, the City advocates for the creation of a diverse and dense housing mix downtown, particularly for market-rate housing and rentals, to attract talent and accommodate the housing needs of school district faculty and staff. The City also voices a desire to become a leader in the adoption of sustainable technology and green building practices, which reflects the importance placed on the environment throughout the County.



Conclusion

Cortland County communities are intensely proud of their histories, agricultural heritage, blue-collar background, and potential for growth. Through the analysis of their Comprehensive Plans, it is clear that these communities care deeply for the well-being of their residents. The new Micron development offers opportunities and threats to these rural communities, making it critical to plan for its potential impacts. The preservation of the environment and rural character of their communities are central goals, as are desires for safe and efficient transportation infrastructure and lively downtown areas. Light industry and commercial land uses are cautiously encouraged by municipalities, who are aware of the need to expand beyond agriculture while simultaneously protecting and advocating for agriculture.

APPENDIX C: ECONOMIC BASE REPORT

Introduction

The following market overview presents information on the current economic conditions of Cortland County in terms of demographic, industry, and real estate trends. The data displayed throughout the market profile was collected from numerous sources, as noted below, that collectively depict current market conditions. Insights from the following analysis will provide a foundation for strategic planning purposes in later phases of the project.

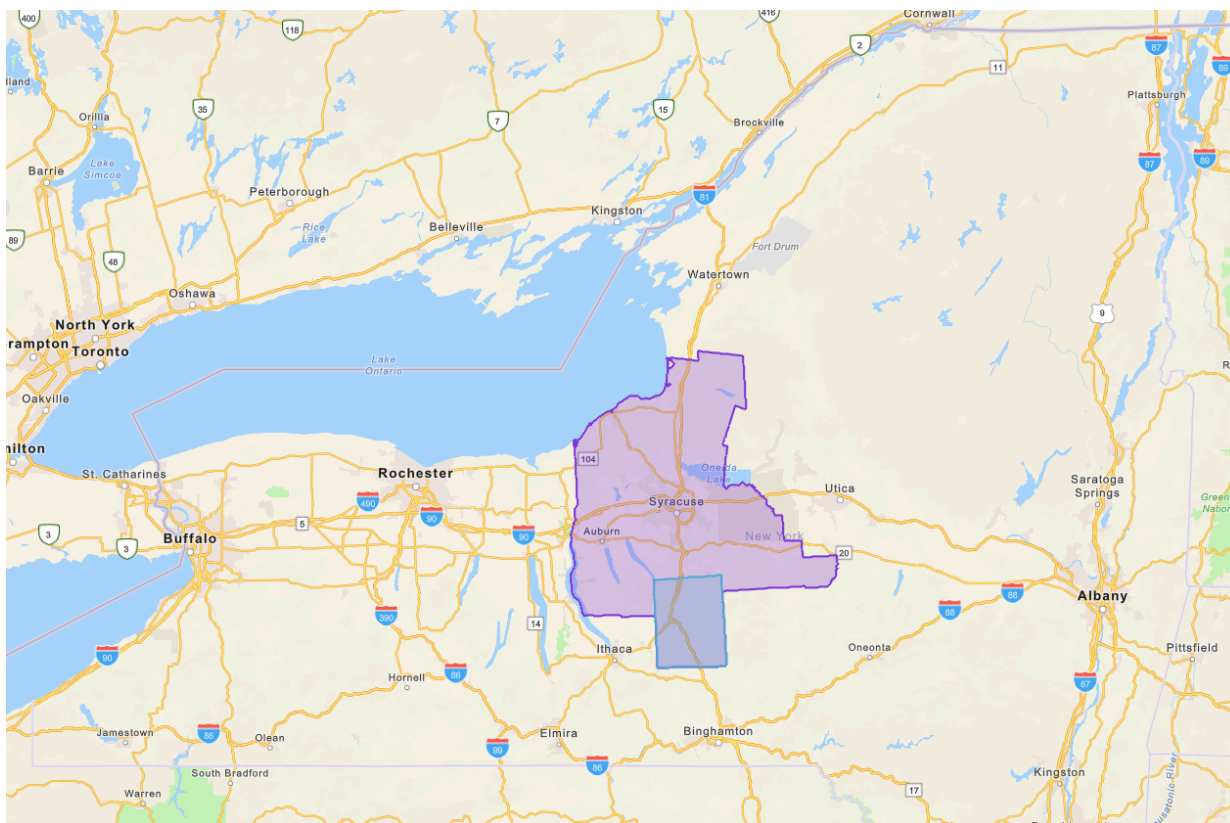
DATA NOTE

Data included in the following analysis was sourced from the American Community Survey estimates from the US Census Bureau, Esri, Lightcast, and CoStar.

MARKET AREA

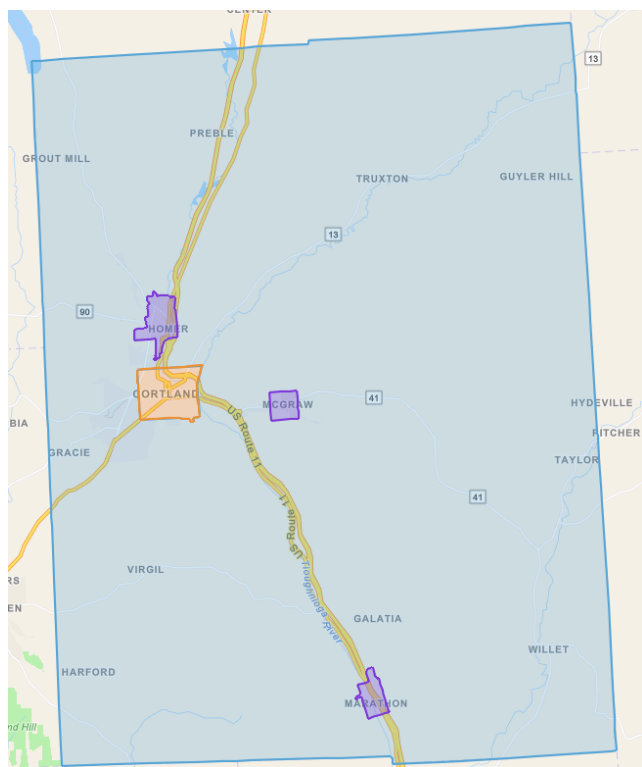
The following sections on demographic, industry, and real estate trends incorporate data covering five geographies: Cortland County, the City of Cortland, the 15 towns within the County, the three villages within the County, and the five-county Central New York (CNY) Region.

As shown on the bottom right map on the next page, the population density of Cortland County is highest in and around the City of Cortland and decreases in the mostly rural surrounding areas. This urban-rural difference impacts the economic needs and strategies of different areas throughout the County.



CNY Region (purple), Cortland County (blue)

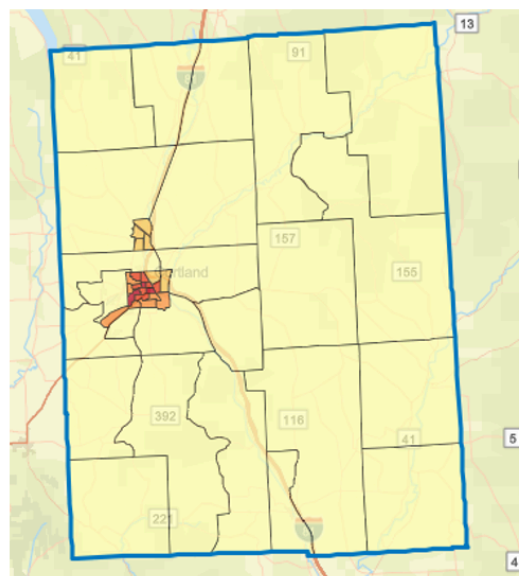
City of Cortland (orange), Villages (purple), Towns (blue)



Population Density of Cortland County

Legend

2023 Population Density



Demographics

OVERVIEW

The table shown to the right is a comparison of demographic trends for Cortland County and its component parts as defined in the Market Area section, along with the CNY Region.

- According to ACS estimates, all geographies have realized significant declines in population over the last 13 years. The City's population declined 9.7%, outpacing declines in the County, Towns, Villages, and Region.
- A similar trend exists for households. Over the past 13 years, all areas have experienced declines in households except for the Region, which increased 2.4%. The majority of household decline in the County was from the City.
- Median household incomes are expected to increase for all regions over the next 5 years, with the greatest growth in the Villages (11.4%), followed by the Region (10.5%), Towns (9.1%), the County (8.5%), and the City (5.3%).
- Similarly, median home values for all areas are expected to grow, increasing the most in the Region (8.8%), followed by the County (6.7%), Towns (6.5%), Villages (4.5%), and City (2.5%). Home values in the Towns are generally higher and growing faster than those in the City and make up a larger portion of the overall County housing. As such, the high growth rate in the County overall is largely driven by Town, while the nominal dollar increase of the median still falls between that of the City and the Towns.[1]

Demographic Fundamentals				
Population				
	2010	2023	Change	% Change
Cortland County	49,336	45,920	(3,416)	(6.9%)
City of Cortland	19,204	17,337	(1,867)	(9.7%)
Towns	30,132	28,583	(1,549)	(5.1%)
Villages	5,201	4,907	(294)	(5.7%)
CNY Region	791,939	778,684	(13,255)	(1.7%)
Population				
	2023	2028	Change	% Change
Cortland County	45,920	44,882	(1,038)	(2.3%)
City of Cortland	17,337	16,968	(369)	(2.1%)
Towns	28,583	27,914	(669)	(2.3%)
CNY Region	778,684	771,294	(7,390)	(0.9%)
Households				
	2010	2023	Change	% Change
Cortland County	18,671	18,240	(431)	(2.3%)
City of Cortland	6,946	6,597	(349)	(5.0%)
Towns	11,725	11,643	(82)	(0.7%)
Villages	2,141	2,138	(3)	(0.1%)
CNY Region	311,956	319,363	7,407	2.4%
Households				
	2023	2028	Change	% Change
Cortland County	18,240	18,073	(167)	(0.9%)
City of Cortland	6,597	6,514	(83)	(1.3%)
Towns	11,643	11,559	(84)	(0.7%)
CNY Region	319,363	322,000	2,637	0.8%
Median Household Income				
	2023	2028	Change	% Change
Cortland County	\$63,655	\$69,097	\$5,442	8.5%
City of Cortland	\$52,494	\$55,278	\$2,784	5.3%
Towns	\$71,515	\$78,050	\$6,535	9.1%
Villages	\$66,579	\$74,190	\$7,611	11.4%
CNY Region	\$64,623	\$71,379	\$6,756	10.5%
Median Home Value				
	2023	2028	Change	% Change
Cortland County	\$144,766	\$154,489	\$9,723	6.7%
City of Cortland	\$120,681	\$123,678	\$2,997	2.5%
Towns	\$161,000	\$171,479	\$10,479	6.5%
Villages	\$141,890	\$148,248	\$6,358	4.5%
CNY Region	\$187,115	\$203,549	\$16,434	8.8%

Source: Esri

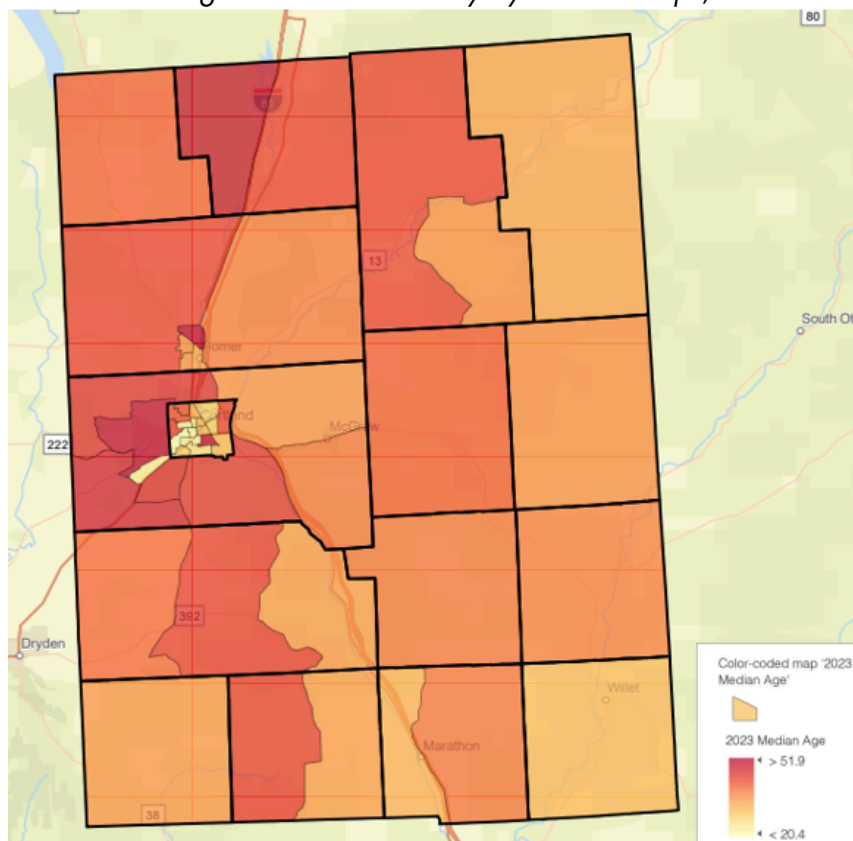
[1] The starting median for the County is lower than that of the Towns, so the strong growth in the Towns dominates the comparatively low and few values in the City causes the growth rate for the County overall to appear higher than any of the component geographies.

Median age is expected to increase by 0.9%-2.5% for most areas. However, the City's median age is expected to remain the same at 30.4 – about ten years younger than the other geographies. This age gap between the City and other areas could in part be driven by the presence of college students attending SUNY Cortland.

	Median Age			
	2023	2028	Change	% Change
Cortland County	38.2	39.1	0.9	2.4%
City of Cortland	30.4	30.4	0.0	0.0%
Towns	43.5	44.4	0.9	2.1%
Villages	43.6	44.0	0.4	0.9%
CNY Region	40.8	41.7	0.9	2.2%

Source: Esri

Median Age in Cortland County by Block Groups, 2023

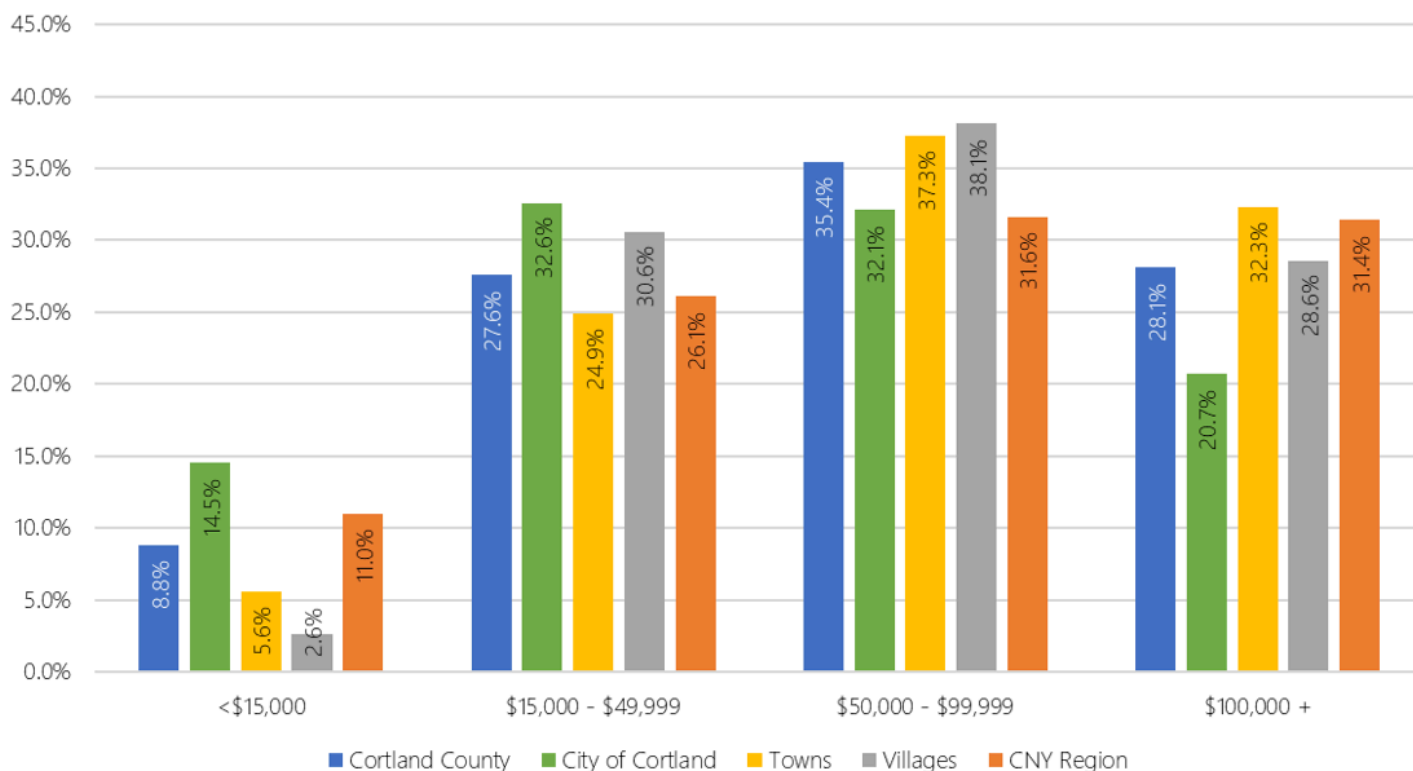


Source: Esri

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION

The figure below compares the household income distribution of the geographies. County and regional income distributions are relatively similar, with roughly equal percentages earning below \$50,000 (36.4% and 37.1% respectively) and above \$100,000 (28.1% and 31.4% respectively). The City of Cortland has the highest percentage of households earning below \$15,000 at 14.5%, and almost half of City households earn below \$50,000. In contrast, villages have the lowest percentage households making less than \$15,000 at 2.6%. Nearly a third (32.3%) of all town households earn at or above \$100,000—compared to a quarter of households in the City—and 30.5% of town households earn below \$50,000.

Household Income Distribution, 2023



Source: Esri

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The table below depicts educational attainment rates for each geography. The CNY region population is the most educated, with 33.8% of the population having earned a bachelor's degree or higher, followed by the villages. The educational attainment for each area follows a roughly similar distribution, with the majority of the population in each area having earned a high school diploma or equivalent. Interestingly, despite the City of Cortland housing SUNY Cortland, it has smaller percentages of the population with a high school diploma or equivalent and advanced degrees. This suggests that only a small number of those who are educated at SUNY Cortland—and most likely make up the 21.1% of City population with some college education—do not stay within the City after earning their degree.

Educational Attainment, 2022					
	Cortland County	City of Cortland	Towns	Villages	CNY Region
Less than 9th Grade	2.6%	4.1%	1.8%	0.5%	2.3%
9th to 12th Grade	6.1%	5.3%	6.5%	6.1%	5.7%
High School Diploma/GED	30.3%	26.9%	32.0%	28.2%	28.5%
Some College	17.4%	21.1%	15.6%	5.3%	15.7%
Associate's Degree	13.1%	11.4%	13.9%	13.4%	14.0%
Bachelor's Degree	17.3%	18.1%	17.0%	15.6%	19.0%
Graduate Degree or Higher	13.1%	13.0%	13.2%	16.5%	14.8%

Source: Esri

AT-RISK POPULATIONS

The tables below depict the at-risk populations in each region. The City of Cortland has the highest percentage of households living below the poverty level (22%), followed by the Region, the County, then Towns and Villages. The City also has the highest percentage of households with a disability (29.4%), while Towns have the lowest (25.9%). [2] More than 20% of the population in the Towns and Villages is over the age of 65, making them the oldest geography types. Comparatively, in the City only 15% of the population is over the age of 65, driven in part by the student population attending SUNY Cortland.

Given limited public transportation, the 14.6% of households in the City that do not have a vehicle are considered a vulnerable segment of the population because these households may struggle to access employment, fresh foods, recreation, healthcare, and more.

Poverty Statistics, 2022

	Cortland County	City of Cortland	Towns	Villages	CNY Region
Households Below the Poverty Level (%)	13.0%	22.0%	8.0%	4.0%	13.0%
Households Below the Poverty Level (#)	2,422	1,439	983	88	41,046

Source: Esri

At-Risk Populations, 2022

	Cortland County	City of Cortland	Towns	Villages	CNY Region
Households with Disability	27.1%	29.4%	25.9%	28.3%	26.2%
Population 65+	18.5%	15.0%	20.7%	21.2%	19.3%
Households without a Vehicle	8.1%	14.6%	4.4%	3.6%	10.3%

Source: Esri

ADDICTION

As in many Upstate communities, addiction and homelessness remain concerns. In Cortland County, there are a number of organizations dedicated to alleviating these struggles, including the Catholic Charities of Cortland County and the Guthrie-Cortland Memorial Foundation. However, the issues persist. Data from the New York State Department of Health for Cortland County's substance abuse reveals decreasing levels of opioid deaths, which are now at lower levels than the rest of the state. In 2020, the most recent year for data, Cortland County saw higher rates of drug arrests and neonatal withdrawal symptoms compared to the rest of the state, though they are significantly decreased from previous years in the County. [3]

Opioid Death Rate per 100,000 Population

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cortland	29.3	8.4	18.9	16.6
ROS	19.5	17.2	16.1	21.8

Neonatal Withdrawal Symptoms per 1,000 Newborn Discharges

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cortland	26	55.3	22.5	N/A
ROS	15.6	14.9	12.7	N/A

Drug Arrest Rates per 10,000 Population

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cortland	48.5	45.7	32.1	18.9
ROS	28.9	29.6	27.1	17

Source: NYS DOH, SUD Indicators

[2] The American Community Survey, which ESRI uses to generate the At-Risk Population report, defines disability as having serious difficulty in hearing, vision, cognition, self-care, independent living, and ambulation.

[3] Cortland County Substance Use Disorder Key Indicators. [June 2022] NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports. https://oasas.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/09/cortland_county_key_sud_indicators_06152022.pdf

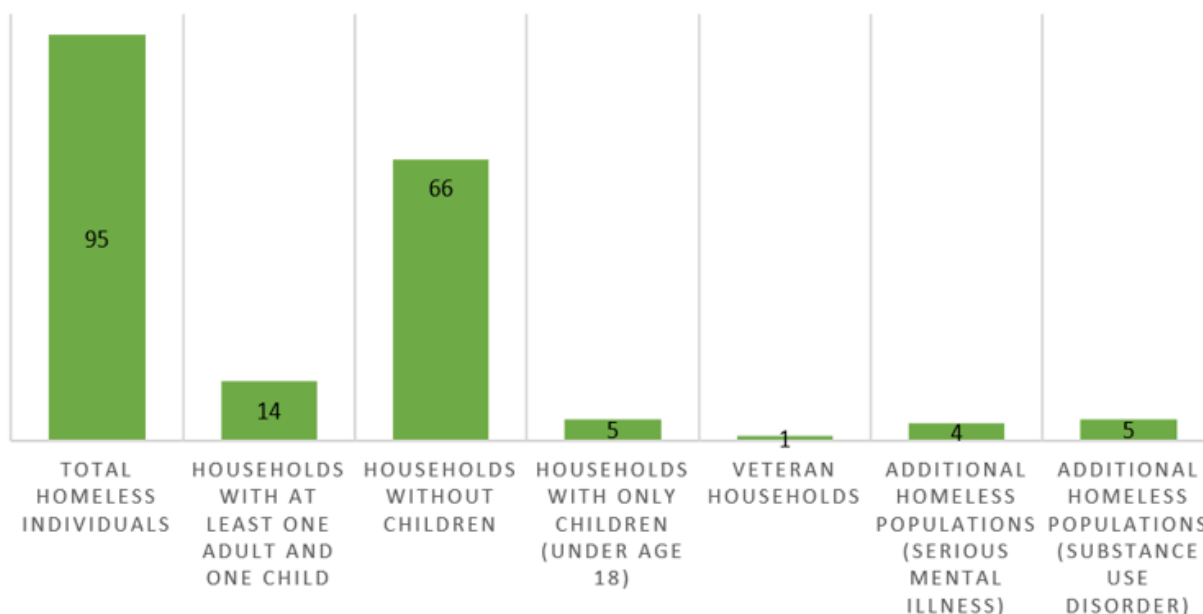
HOMELESSNESS

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses point-in-time (PIT) counts to estimate the number of homeless individuals in a given area. For Cortland County, the most recent PIT count data available was conducted the night of January 26th, 2023. The total number of homeless individuals at that count was 95, of those 66 were households without children. Community and stakeholder input indicated that homelessness is realistically much higher than this level. Affordable housing, access to healthcare, and availability of social services are of critical importance for these homeless populations.

A recent survey published in January 2024 by Cortland Area Communities That Care Coalition (CACTCC) asked respondents about the “current landscape surrounding services for unhoused individuals in Cortland County.” Responses were collected from 41 stakeholders involved in local homelessness efforts with the intent of mapping the challenges, opportunities, needs, and gaps in the County. An astounding 80% of respondents indicated that little to no shelters or housing solutions were available. Respondents also noted a lack of mental health services and a lack of resources for addressing homelessness. The majority of clients that respondents work with are considered chronically homeless. Moreover, a majority of homeless individuals experience a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or an emotional disturbance or cognitive disability. It is important to note that these conditions are correlated with homelessness, and that any particular causation should not be generally assumed.

According to the survey responses, the top three greatest needs related to homelessness work are program planning and development, outreach and engagement efforts, and data collection, evaluation, and program improvement. CACTCC noted that available local homelessness data (PIT counts, DSS and Catholic Charities data, NYS-511 data, and ALICE data) does “not capture the entire scope of homelessness in Cortland County.” They subsequently call for a centralized data system that would help agencies understand and address homelessness more comprehensively.

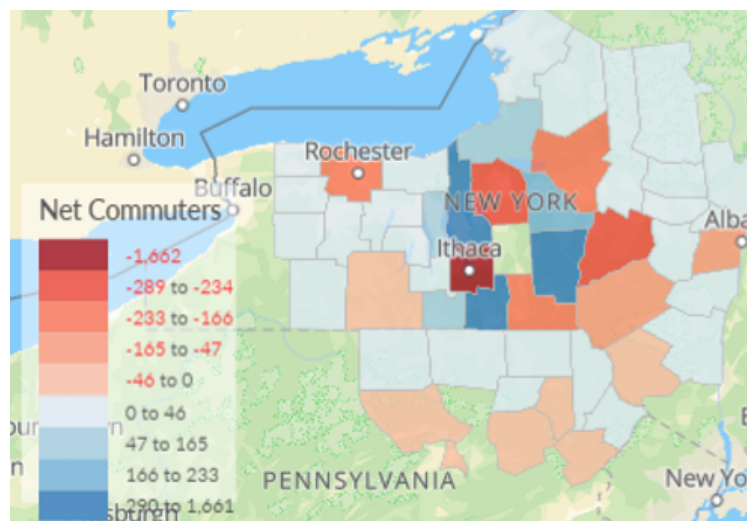
HOMELESSNESS DEMOGRAPHICS IN CORTLAND COUNTY



COMMUTING

The figure below shows the daily commuting patterns for Cortland County.[4] The County has 8,249 inbound commuters and 9,469 outbound commuters, meaning that there is a net outflow of 1,220. The majority of Cortland County residents who work elsewhere commute to Tompkins County, where the City of Ithaca is located, to the southwest. Those who commute into Cortland County for work mostly come from Onondaga County (1,725), where the City of Syracuse is located, and Tompkins County (1,471). However, Cortland County still experiences a negative net outflow of commuters to Onondaga and Tompkins counties. Chenango County has the largest net inflow of commuters, at 326.

The net commuting outflow (-234) to Otsego County appears to be driven by health care and social assistance, government, and retail trade industries. Additionally, the educational services industry may attract workers from Cortland County to Otsego County. While educational services are not one of the top-employing industries in Otsego, Hartwick College and the State University of New York have the top two job posting intensities.



Source: US Census, OnTheMap Local Employment Dynamics

[4] Commuting data captures both public and private primary jobs, but is not all-inclusive. Some federal jobs, jobs that serve as secondary sources of income, and "gig" workers are likely not captured in the data. Therefore, the important element of the data is the clear and large net-commutation pattern, rather than the absolute numbers.

Industry Analysis

INDUSTRY COMPOSITION

The table below shows the industry sector composition of Cortland County and the CNY region. The largest industry sector in the County is **Government**, accounting for 4,839 jobs, or approximately 24.3% of total jobs. **Health Care and Social Assistance** is the second largest industry sector by employment with 2,406 jobs. **Manufacturing** is the third largest, with 2,377 jobs. For the region, the top three industries (by job count) are Government, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Retail Trade.

Projected Industry Composition and Employment Trends									
	Cortland County				CNY Region				
	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	2023-2033 Change (#)	2023-2033 Change (%)	2013 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	2023-2033 Change (#)	2023-2033 Change (%)
90 - Government	4,839	5,988	1,149	24%	3,805	67,513	77,706	10,193	15%
31 - Manufacturing	2,377	2,919	542	23%	3,585	32,393	37,082	4,689	14%
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	2,189	2,693	504	23%	31,303	28,329	34,006	5,677	20%
44 - Retail Trade	2,266	2,715	449	20%	17,370	39,038	40,323	1,285	3%
81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,114	1,391	277	25%	15,518	15,511	17,908	2,397	15%
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	568	761	193	34%	14,719	6,120	7,479	1,359	22%
52 - Finance and Insurance	536	693	157	29%	3,997	10,973	10,360	(613)	(6%)
56 - Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	692	847	155	22%	10,016	17,070	19,332	2,262	13%
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	2,406	2,560	154	6%	215	51,891	60,846	8,955	17%
42 - Wholesale Trade	276	391	115	42%	2,944	13,330	14,285	955	7%
61 - Educational Services	190	282	92	48%	16,629	16,209	20,610	4,401	27%
23 - Construction	613	697	84	14%	4,887	17,190	18,928	1,738	10%
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	452	518	66	15%	17,858	4,951	6,001	1,050	21%
22 - Utilities	112	173	61	54%	5,313	4,297	5,272	975	23%
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	200	240	40	20%	14,836	4,624	4,950	326	7%
99 - Unclassified Industry	49	83	34	69%	67,278	899	1,533	634	71%
51 - Information	100	128	28	28%	28,189	4,077	4,230	153	4%
48 - Transportation and Warehousing	120	145	25	21%	48,139	14,623	17,494	2,871	20%
21 - Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	25	36	11	44%	456	186	226	40	22%
54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	694	682	(12)	(2%)	41,805	18,523	19,841	1,318	7%
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	77	59	(18)	(23%)	14,474	5,191	6,094	903	17%
Totals	19,893	24,001	4,108	21%	363,335	372,937	424,507	51,570	14%

Source: Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set. I/D = insufficient data. Government sector includes public school system employees.

SHIFT SHARE

Shift share analysis provides insights on industry-specific employment growth by distinguishing influences of local competitive advantages from national employment trends. These insights can explain why employment has grown or declined in a given local industry over a specified period of time. There are four components of shift share analysis:

1. Industrial Mix Effect is the share of regional industry trends that can be attributed to nationwide trends in the specified industry.
2. National Growth Effect is the share of regional industry growth that is explained by the growth in the national economy as a whole.
3. Expected Change is the sum of the industrial mix and national growth effects. Both the national-level industry trends and the performance of the national economy will have a measurable impact on regional industry growth. This figure reflects industry-specific and economic trends at the national level.
4. Competitive Effect indicates how much of the job change within Cortland County is the result of some unique competitive advantage. The competitive effect measures the job change that occurs within a regional industry that cannot be explained by broader trends (i.e. the National Growth Effect and the Industrial Mix Effect).

The table below displays the shift share analysis for Cortland County from 2013-2023. Assuming the County mirrored national industry and economic growth trends over the same time period, the County would have added approximately 2,147 jobs. During this period, however, the County only gained 453 jobs. Because of unique regional characteristics, the County fell short of expected job changes by 1,694.[5] Cortland County has strong competitive advantage relative to other parts of the nation in Government, Other Services (except Public Administration) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting.

Shift Share Analysis for Cortland County				
	Ind. Mix Effect	Nat'l Growth Effect	Expected Change	Competitive Effect
90 - Government	(492)	536	43	734
81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)	(110)	115	5	240
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	(39)	46	6	100
22 - Utilities	(2)	3	1	88
61 - Educational Services	(2)	16	14	57
52 - Finance and Insurance	10	56	66	44
21 - Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	(4)	1	(3)	18
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	15	22	37	(6)
99 - Unclassified Industry	27	4	30	(8)
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	12	66	78	(11)
51 - Information	3	13	16	(16)
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	9	12	21	(36)
42 - Wholesale Trade	(29)	47	18	(95)
48 - Transportation and Warehousing	76	24	100	(164)
44 - Retail Trade	(241)	317	76	(216)
23 - Construction	108	89	197	(259)
31 - Manufacturing	(102)	320	218	(265)
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	11	297	307	(368)
56 - Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	37	119	157	(369)
54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	169	118	287	(489)
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	128	344	472	(672)
Totals	(418)	2,564	2,147	(1,694)

Source: Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set. I/D = insufficient data. Government sector includes public school system employees.

[5] This is the 2013-2023 change in jobs minus the total expected changes based on national trends: $453 - (2,564 - 418) = -1,694$.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

As shown in the previous industry composition table, from 2013 to 2023 Cortland County had a net job gain of 2%, or 453 jobs, compared to a job gain of only 0.3% for the Region. While the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to significant job losses in recent years, these have mostly been recovered. The industries that have not fully recovered are: Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, Information, Management of Companies and Enterprises, and Health Care and Social Assistance. The latter two industries have continued declining after the first year of the pandemic, though at a slower rate. **Utilities, Finance and Insurance, and Educational Services** all experienced considerable growth in the first year of the pandemic and have continued to experience significant growth.

In terms of job count, employment growth from 2013 to 2023 was primarily driven by **Government, Other Services (except Public Administration), and Finance and Insurance**. Notably, the **Utilities** industry has grown in Cortland County, adding 89 jobs, and **Education Services** has grown, adding 71 jobs.

Conversely, there have been substantial job declines in Administrative and Support Services and Waste Management and Remediation Services; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance, each losing about 200 jobs over the last 10 years. These industries are losing jobs faster than the Region, which has experienced slight growth for Health Care and Social Assistance (4%) and Administrative and Support Services and Waste Management and Remediation Services (7%). Manufacturing, one of the top three employers in the County, experienced the greatest pre-pandemic declines from 2013 to 2019, with a loss of 253 jobs. Since 2020, the industry has grown by 10%, a testament to revitalized investment in manufacturing jobs in recent years.

PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Over the next ten years, the County's largest sector, **Government**, is projected to gain roughly 1,149 jobs. All except two industries listed are projected to grow at the County level in the next decade: Management of Companies and Enterprises and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. **Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade** are expected to add the greatest number of jobs after Government. Overall, the County is projected to grow at a faster rate than the region as a whole, adding 4,108 jobs by 2033 (see table on next page).

Projected Industry Composition and Employment Trends									
	Cortland County				CNY Region				
	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	2023-2033 Change (#)	2023-2033 Change (%)	2013 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	2023-2033 Change (#)	2023-2033 Change (%)
90 - Government	4,839	5,988	1,149	24%	3,805	67,513	77,706	10,193	15%
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22 - Utilities	112	173	61	54%	5,313	4,297	5,272	975	23%
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	200	240	40	20%	14,836	4,624	4,950	326	7%
99 - Unclassified Industry	49	83	34	69%	67,278	899	1,533	634	71%
51 - Information	100	128	28	28%	28,189	4,077	4,230	153	4%
48 - Transportation and Warehousing	120	145	25	21%	48,139	14,623	17,494	2,871	20%
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Totals	19,893	24,001	4,108	21%	363,335	372,937	424,507	51,570	14%

Source: Lightcast Q3 2023 Data Set. I/D = insufficient data. Government sector includes public school system employees.

SKILLS ANALYSIS

The workforce is a growing challenge across the State. Many employers struggle to find a workforce that has the skills necessary to succeed, highlighting the importance of workforce training programs. Understanding the gap between supply and demand that exists for in-demand skills is important for determining which workforce training programs would bring the most value.

In Cortland County, the most in-demand specialized skills by employers are nursing, merchandising, warehousing, emergency medicine, anesthesiology, family medicine, internal medicine, critical care, general surgery, and gastroenterology.

In Cortland County, the most in-demand specialized skills by employers are nursing, merchandising, warehousing, emergency medicine, anesthesiology, family medicine, internal medicine, critical care, general surgery, and gastroenterology.

The table below shows the frequency of these skills in job postings and job-seeker profiles from September 2020 to September 2023. The dominance of health care jobs is a reflection of four of the top ten job posters being a health care facility: Guthrie Clinic, Cortland Park Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, Cortland Regional Medical Center, and Guthrie Healthcare System. For the top health care skills, nursing and emergency medicine have the largest gap between the number of job postings that feature them and the number of job-seeker profiles that list the skill. This suggests a need for training in these professions to meet employer demand.

Excluding the Health Care and Social Assistance from the search shows the next most prominent set of in-demand specialized skills, where merchandising, warehousing, marketing, HVAC, auditing, cash register, project management, environment health and safety, forklift truck, and emergency response skills are top-ranking. Of these skills, only project management features more frequently in online job-seeker profiles than in online job postings. This suggests there is a need for training in the other specialized skills, particularly in merchandising and warehousing, where the gap is largest.

Top Specialized Skills				
Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles
Nursing	1,245	8%	85	1%
Merchandising	974	6%	135	1%
Warehousing	863	5%	73	1%
Emergency Medicine	735	5%	15	0%
Anesthesiology	664	4%	0	0%
Family Medicine	660	4%	8	0%
Internal Medicine	652	4%	0	0%
Critical Care	650	4%	24	0%
General Surgery	649	4%	0	0%
Gastroenterology	642	4%	0	0%
Excluding Health Care and Social Assistance Industry				
Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles
Merchandising	879	10%	83	2%
Warehousing	701	8%	58	1%
Marketing	508	6%	267	5%
HVAC	473	5%	37	1%
Auditing	462	5%	83	2%
Cash Register	442	5%	56	1%
Project Management	388	4%	248	5%
Environment Health And Safety	372	4%	13	0%
Forklift Truck	370	4%	30	1%
Emergency Response	364	4%	7	0%

Source: Lightcast

Blue text represents the same skills in each scenario

A similar analysis was completed for common skills. For both search results – those with and excluding the Health Care and Social Assistance industry – eight of the top ten common skills are the same, and none are sufficiently represented in job-seeker profiles. The largest gaps are in communication, customer service, management, operations, and being detail oriented. Gaps in common skills are greater than gaps for specialized skills, exemplifying the importance of workforce training that goes beyond specialized skills to address common and soft skills.

Top Common Skills				
Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles
Communication	3,769	24%	333	3%
Customer Service	3,551	22%	1,245	13%
Management	2,829	18%	804	8%
Operations	2,304	14%	482	5%
Sales	1,996	13%	952	10%
Leadership	1,834	11%	658	7%
Detail Oriented	1,362	9%	30	0%
Planning	1,360	9%	201	2%
Problem Solving	1,235	8%	111	1%
Lifting Ability	1,193	7%	4	0%
Excluding Health Care and Social Assistance Industry				
Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles
Communication	2,548	29%	211	4%
Customer Service	2,438	28%	762	14%
Management	1,982	22%	515	10%
Sales	1,723	20%	588	11%
Operations	1,513	17%	337	6%
Leadership	1,262	14%	428	8%
Detail Oriented	947	11%	23	0%
Writing	867	10%	101	2%
Research	866	10%	398	8%
Lifting Ability	807	9%	1	0%

Source: Lightcast

Red text shows differing skills in each scenario

The table on the following page shows the top specialized skills by posting count compared to the top specialized skills by profile count, effectively showing what is well-supplied versus what is in demand. When the Health Care and Social Assistance industry is excluded from the search, the top supplied and demanded skills match better, though there are still significant gaps.

Specialized Skills Supply v. Demand			
Top Demanded Skills		Top Supplied Skills	
Skills	Postings	Skills	Profiles
Nursing	1,245	Marketing	450
Merchandising	974	Project Management	383
Warehousing	863	New Product Development	187
Emergency Medicine	735	Accounting	168
Anesthesiology	664	Inventory Management	160
Family Medicine	660	Merchandising	133
Internal Medicine	652	Auditing	128
Critical Care	650	Finance	102
General Surgery	649	Billing	101
Gastroenterology	642	Selling Techniques	90
Excluding Health Care and Social Assistance Industry			
Merchandising	879	Marketing	427
Warehousing	701	Project Management	366
Marketing	508	New Product Development	180
HVAC	473	Accounting	159
Auditing	462	Purchasing	157
Cash Register	442	Inventory Management	152
Project Management	388	Data Entry	135
Environment Health And Safety	372	Merchandising	127
Forklift Truck	370	Customer Relationship Management	121
Emergency Response	364	Auditing	119

Source: Lightcast

Colored text represents a skill that is both in-demand and relatively well-supplied.

Housing Market Analysis

HOUSING TENURE

The tables below show the housing tenure statistics for the five market areas in 2023. The table indicates the percentage of housing units that are owner-occupied, renter-occupied, and vacant.

There are some notable differences between the City and County regarding housing tenure. The proportion of owner-occupied housing units in the City (41.0%) is considerably less than that of the County (58.0%) meaning that the City relies more on rental housing. Additionally, the City has the highest vacancy rate of any geography. [6] The villages have the lowest vacancy rate, even compared to the CNY region as a whole.

In the County, which follows the trends of the region, the largest share of vacant properties is classified as "Other" (36.4%). This is a catch-all category that can include vacancies due to estate settlement, repairs, personal reasons, and more. Over a quarter of the County's vacancies are generated by seasonal properties, the majority of which are located in towns, where nearly half (42%) of vacancies are due to seasonal properties. In the City, just under a third of vacancies are because of rented but unoccupied properties (likely the impact of student renters). In villages, unoccupied sold houses are the greatest share of vacancies.

Housing Tenure, 2023					
	Cortland County	City of Cortland	Towns	Villages	CNY Region
Owner-Occupied	58.0%	41.0%	67.8%	66.0%	61.2%
Renter-Occupied	29.2%	44.8%	20.1%	25.9%	28.3%
Vacant Units, Rate	12.8%	14.2%	12.0%	8.1%	10.5%
Total Housing Units	20,922	7,687	13,235	2,327	356,890

Source: Esri

Type of Vacancy					
	Cortland County	City of Cortland	Towns	Villages	CNY Region
Total vacant units	2,538	1,079	1,459	122	42,731
For rent	6.6%	10.4%	3.8%	2.5%	16.2%
Rented, not occupied	13.4%	30.5%	0.8%	0.0%	5.3%
For sale only	5.9%	8.8%	3.8%	0.0%	7.3%
Sold, not occupied	10.2%	1.7%	16.6%	43.4%	4.3%
Seasonal/occasional	27.5%	7.8%	42.0%	13.9%	31.1%
Other	36.4%	40.9%	33.0%	40.2%	35.7%

Source: Esri

[6] Important Note: the Esri definition of "Vacant Units" comes from the U. S. Census Bureau and is a much wider definition of "vacant" than the common use of the term to mean "units actively being marketed for rent/sale and unoccupied". Therefore, the vacancy rates shown here are not comparable to the Costar-reported vacancy rates. See: <https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/definitions.pdf>

HOUSING UNITS

The table below shows the distribution of housing units by structure type in all geographies. Most housing units in the areas are single-family detached homes, with the towns and villages having higher percentages, at 75.6% and 76.1%, respectively, compared to the City's 46.2%. The areas differ in their distribution of other types of housing units, with the City having a higher percentage of duplexes and multi-unit buildings. The Towns have the highest proportion of mobile homes.

Housing Units By Units In Structure, 2021					
	Cortland County	City of Cortland	Towns	Villages	CNY Region
Total Units	20,798	7,667	13,131	2,377	353,476
1, detached	64.8%	46.2%	75.6%	76.1%	65.3%
1, attached	1.8%	3.0%	1.1%	1.5%	3.2%
2	7.8%	14.8%	3.7%	6.4%	7.4%
3 or 4	7.2%	15.4%	2.5%	7.7%	4.9%
5 to 9	5.2%	9.7%	2.5%	2.5%	4.4%
10 to 19	2.3%	2.8%	2.0%	1.1%	3.4%
20 to 49	1.5%	3.2%	0.5%	1.9%	2.5%
50 or more	2.1%	4.4%	0.7%	0.0%	4.0%
Mobile home	7.4%	0.4%	11.4%	2.7%	4.9%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Esri

This table shows the percentage of housing units in each area by the year they were built. A large share of housing in the County, City, and Villages was built prior to 1939. The newest housing units in all areas, built in 2010 or later, represent a very small percentage of the total housing units.

Housing Units By Year Structure Built, 2021					
	Cortland County	City of Cortland	Towns	Villages	CNY Region
Total Units	20,798	7,667	13,131	2,377	353,476
Built 2020 or later	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Built 2010 to 2019	2.1%	1.2%	2.6%	2.9%	3.3%
Built 2000 to 2009	4.1%	0.4%	6.3%	3.9%	6.3%
Built 1990 to 1999	9.2%	7.4%	10.2%	3.8%	8.6%
Built 1980 to 1989	10.5%	6.2%	13.0%	5.6%	10.9%
Built 1970 to 1979	12.2%	5.6%	16.0%	7.2%	12.3%
Built 1960 to 1969	10.7%	10.0%	11.0%	12.1%	11.6%
Built 1950 to 1959	8.0%	9.1%	7.4%	11.8%	13.6%
Built 1940 to 1949	5.1%	8.2%	3.3%	5.5%	6.2%
Built 1939 or earlier	38.1%	51.9%	30.0%	47.4%	27.1%

Source: Esri

HOME VALUES

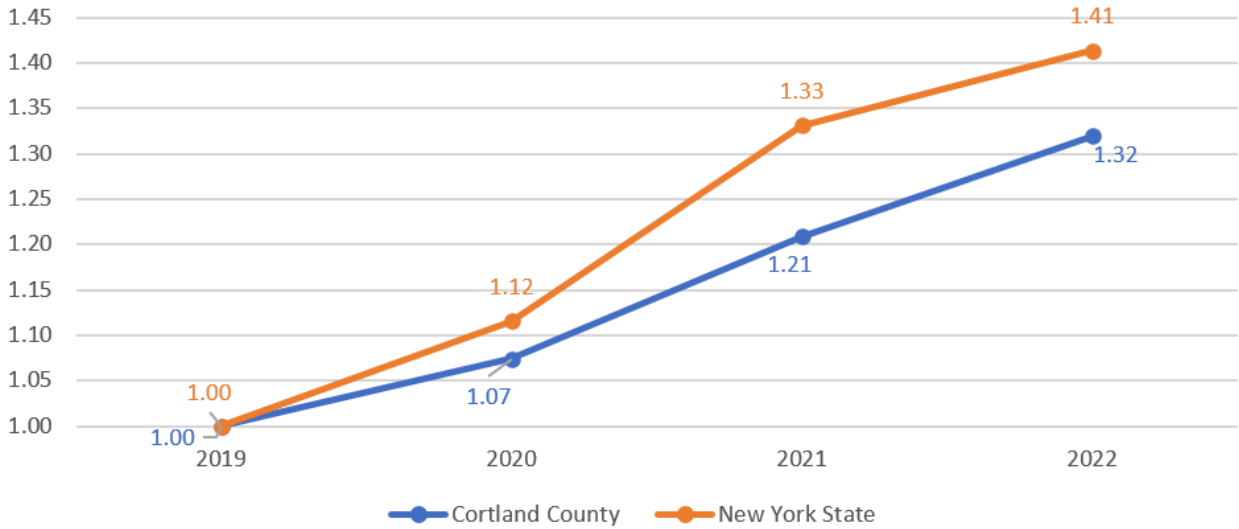
The table below shows the median and average home values for the County and region. When the average value of a dataset is higher than the median, it typically means that the distribution of the data is positively skewed. This means that there are some exceedingly high values in the dataset that are causing the average to be pulled up relative to the median. Though home values are lower in Cortland County compared to the region, average home values in both areas are significantly higher than median home value. In Cortland County, the median home value is expected to increase from \$144,766 in 2023 to \$154,489 by 2028, a growth of 6.7%. However, the Region’s median home value is anticipated to grow from \$187,115 to \$203,549 in 2028, outpacing the County growth by 2.1%.

	Home Value			
	Cortland County		CNY Region	
	2023	2028	2023	2028
Median Home Value	\$144,766	\$154,489	\$187,115	\$203,549
Average Home Value	\$194,686	\$207,334	\$233,854	\$277,788

Source: Esri

Since 2019, the median sale price for a home in the State increased by 41% and in Cortland County it increased by 32%. The largest increase in median sale prices for Cortland County happened between 2020 and 2021, when price increased from \$134,250 to \$151,060. This increase was driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw an exodus of individuals from urban areas to rural areas, increasing home prices in those areas.

Historical Median Home Prices
Index: 2019=1.00



Source: NYS Association of Realtors (NYSAR)

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The housing prices for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing are generally considered affordable compared to surrounding areas. However, public input indicated that residents are struggling to keep up with rental and sale price increases in recent years.

In Cortland County, where the median sale price is \$170,950, owning a home is more affordable than in CNY Region as a whole. An annual household income of at least \$53,960 is required to purchase a median-priced home without being cost-burdened, \$6,000 less than the income needed in the Region. In the County, 36.4% of households earn less than \$50,000 each year and are therefore cost-burdened by their housing. In the Region, this percentage is slightly greater, at 37.1%.

Housing Affordability - Owner-Occupied Housing, 2023		
	Cortland County	CNY Region
Median Sale Price - 2023	\$170,950	\$190,845
10% Down Payment	\$17,095	\$19,084
Remaining Balance	\$153,855	\$171,760
Average Mortgage @7% for 30 Years	\$1,024	\$1,143
Estimated Additional Costs*	\$325	\$354
Estimated Monthly Mortgage Costs	\$1,349	\$1,497
Household Income Threshold	\$53,960	\$59,880

*Include zillow estimated insurance, PMI, and taxes
Source: Esri; Zillow Mortgage Calculator; NYSAR; MRB Group

The costs for rental housing are lower than owning a home in Cortland County. Data indicates that median gross rent is \$811 per month, but public feedback indicated that generally rents are much higher than the data indicates. A household income of \$32,440 per year is required to afford the median gross rent, which is \$3,160 less than the required income in the Region. About a quarter (24.5%) of households in Cortland County have household income below \$35,000, placing them within the boundaries of being cost-burdened for both renting and owning.

Housing Affordability - Renter - Occupied Housing, 2023					
	Cortland County	City of Cortland	Towns	Villages	CNY Region
Median Gross Rent	\$811	\$785	\$862	\$869	\$890
Household Income Threshold	\$32,440	\$31,400	\$34,480	\$34,760	\$35,600

Source: Esri; MRB Group

Overall, these trends indicate that housing in Cortland County is relatively affordable for both renters and homeowners compared to the Region, making it an attractive location for individuals and families. However, there is still a sizeable portion of the population that is likely cost-burdened by their housing.

Real Estate Market Analysis

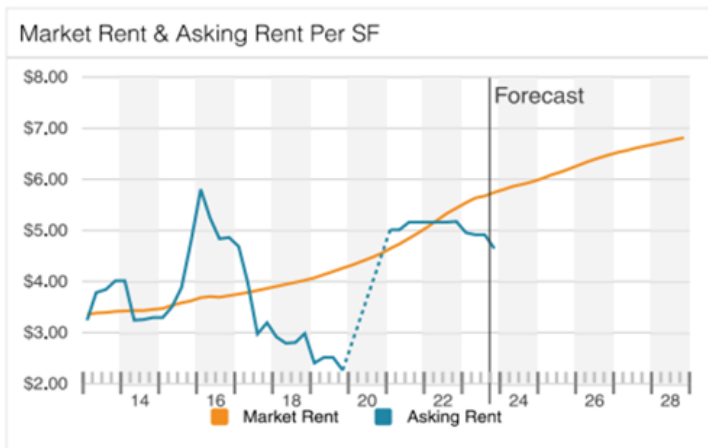
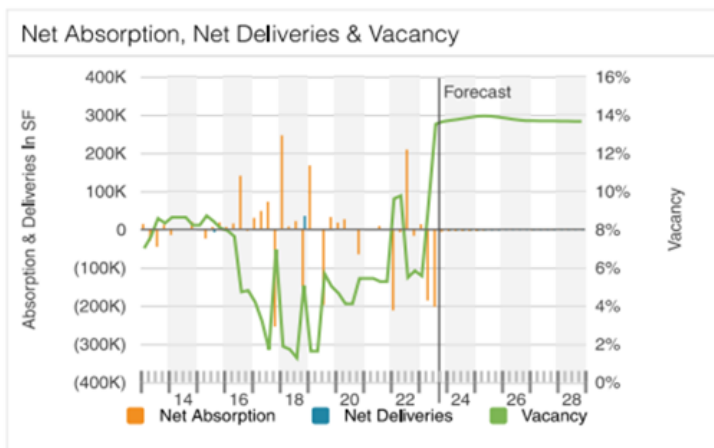
The following analysis uses CoStar data on industrial, commercial, and multi-family residential real estate trends in Cortland County.

INDUSTRIAL

There are approximately 4.9 million square feet of industrial real estate in Cortland County that is captured in the CoStar database. The County's vacancy rates have been U-shaped, with the lowest rates in 2018. The vacancy rate is currently 13.5%, the highest it has been in the past ten years, driven by the Cortland Commerce Center.[7] The Center's large size relative to the County's total industrial stock means that its leasing activity, or lack thereof, has a strong influence on vacancy rates. There has only been one delivery in the past decade, which was immediately absorbed.

Market rents have steadily grown over the past decade. Current market rent is \$5.66 per square foot, which is lower than surrounding areas. Industrial real estate in the County is old – less than 4% of the stock was built after 2000, indicating that the County lacks quality industrial properties relative to surrounding areas, keeping vacancy rates high. This is emphasized by the immediate absorption of the delivery in quarter four of 2018, since it suggests that newer, quality industrial space is in demand.

INVENTORY SF	UNDER CONSTRUCTION SF	12 MO NET ABSORPTION SF	VACANCY RATE	MARKET RENT/SF	MARKET SALE PRICE/SF	MARKET CAP RATE
4.9M +0%	0 -	(390K) -3,111.6%	13.5% +8.0%	\$5.66 +6.2%	\$81 +1.6%	8.6% +0.7%
Prior Period 4.9M	Prior Period 0	Prior Period (12.2K)	Prior Period 5.5%	Prior Period \$5.33	Prior Period \$79	Prior Period 7.9%



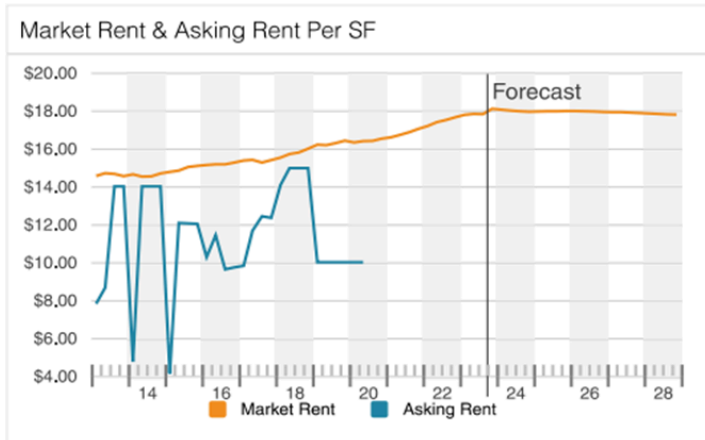
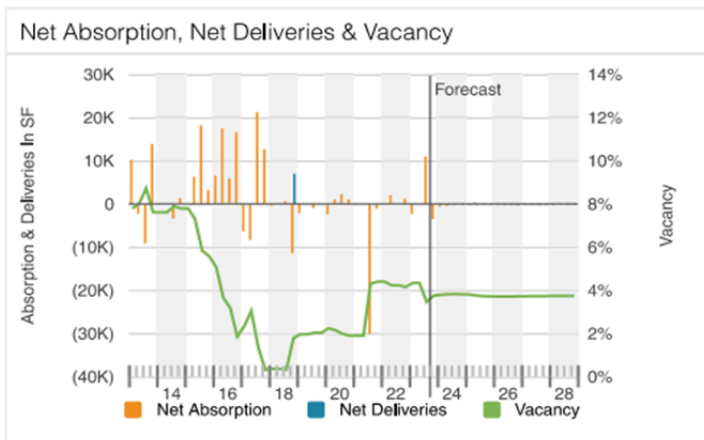
[7] In 2023, the Center has seen a total of 388,200 square feet become vacant.

OFFICE

The CoStar database includes office inventory of 1.3 million square feet of space. Vacancy rates in office space have been volatile over the last ten years, starting at a high of 8% in 2013, then dipping to a low of 1.4% in 2017, and finally increasing to 3.5% currently where it remains relatively stable. Absorptions have been generally positive over time, with the exception of one large loss in 2021 driven by the permanent closure of the Virgil Elementary School.[8] There has only been one delivery in the past ten years, in 2018.

Year-over-year market rent growth has also been volatile but trending upwards. Current market rent for office space in the County is \$17.95 per square foot.

INVENTORY SF	UNDER CONSTRUCTION SF	12 MO NET ABSORPTION SF	VACANCY RATE	MARKET RENT/SF	MARKET SALE PRICE/SF	MARKET CAP RATE
1.3M +0%	0 -	9.6K +755.5%	3.5% -0.7%	\$17.95 +2.5%	\$170 -7.3%	10.7% +0.8%
Prior Period 1.3M	Prior Period 0	Prior Period 1.1K	Prior Period 4.2%	Prior Period \$17.51	Prior Period \$184	Prior Period 9.9%



[8] The School vacated 30,163 square feet at 1208 Church St. when the Cortland Enlarged City School District reorganized schools into the F.S. Barry Primary School (serves K-2nd grade) and the F.E. Smith Intermediate School (serves grades 3 and 4).

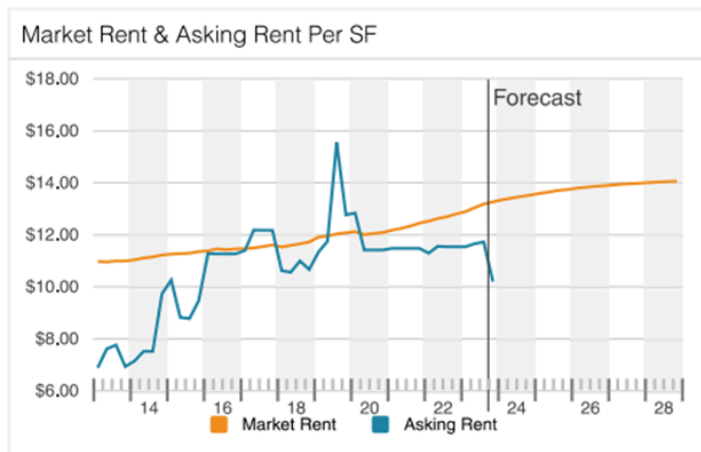
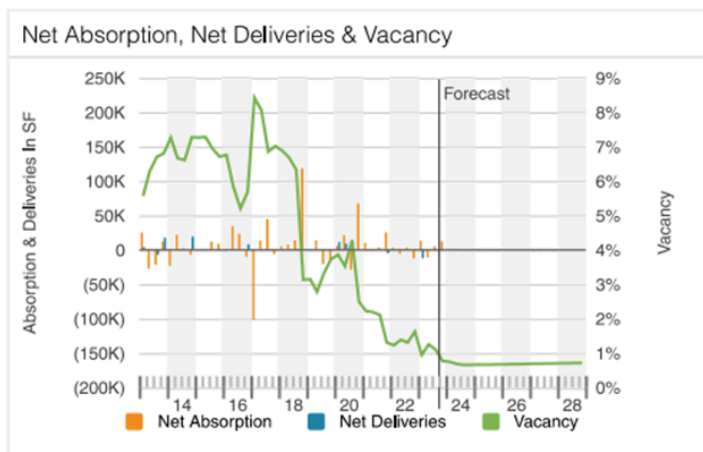
RETAIL

Cortland County's retail real estate market, as captured in the CoStar database, has shown weak but improving fundamentals over the last ten years. Vacancy rates currently sit at the extremely low level of 0.6%, a historic low for the County. There have been a few, small-scale deliveries in the last decade, which were quickly absorbed, indicating strong and persistent demand for space in the retail market. There has been only one significant period of negative absorption, driven by two properties in quarter one of 2017:

1. Homer Avenue Plaza: vacated 64,127 square feet, which was reabsorbed in quarter four of 2020.
2. 3832-3940 West Rd in Grand Union: vacated 24,084 of 77,000 square feet.[9]

Since the fourth quarter in 2021, market rents have experienced modest year-over-year growth, currently just under 4%. Current market rent prices for retail real estate in the County are \$13.14 per square foot.

INVENTORY SF	UNDER CONSTRUCTION SF	12 MO NET ABSORPTION SF	VACANCY RATE	MARKET RENT/SF	MARKET SALE PRICE/SF	MARKET CAP RATE
3.7M -0.3%	0 -	14.3K -34.0%	0.6% -0.7%	\$13.14 +3.7%	\$173 +14.6%	7.0% -0.6%
Prior Period 3.7M	Prior Period 0	Prior Period 21.6K	Prior Period 1.3%	Prior Period \$12.68	Prior Period \$151	Prior Period 7.6%



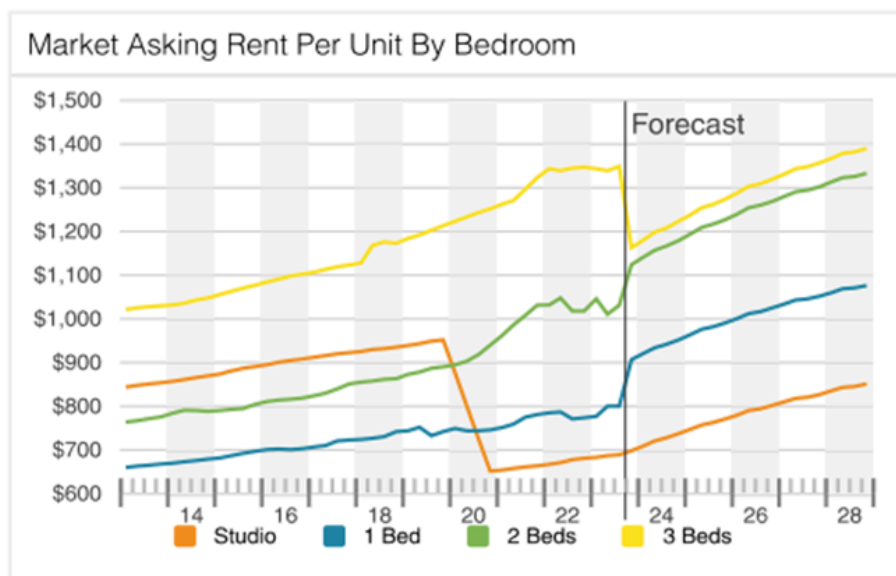
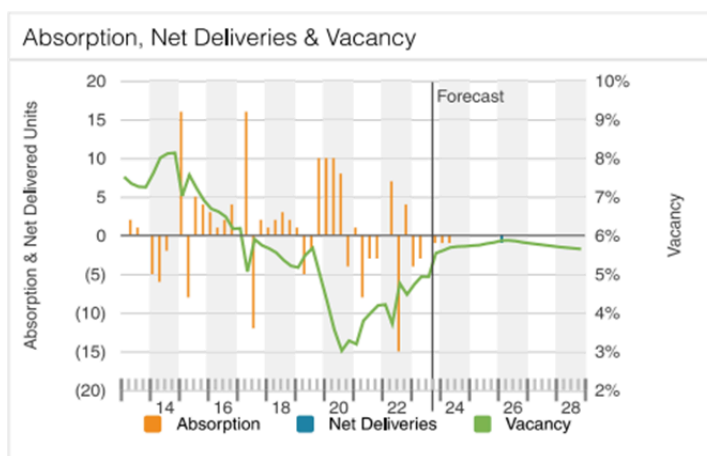
[9] The Homer Avenue Plaza address is 172-184 Homer Ave, Homer Avenue Plaza, Cortland NY, 13045. The Grand Union property appears to now be occupied by Grand Union Supermarkets.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

There are approximately 1,405 multi-family units in the CoStar database across Cortland County. Of these, 79% are one- and two-bedroom units. There have been no deliveries to the market over the last 10 years. Absorption spiked in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, decreasing the vacancy rates to a ten-year low of 3%. Significant negative absorptions characterized 2021 and 2022, increasing the vacancy rate to 4.9%. The largest negative absorption spike in 2022 follows the expiration of the pandemic-era eviction moratorium.

Multi-family per-unit asking rents have been steadily rising across all bedroom types over the last ten years (does not apply to studio apartments). The current market asking rent per unit is around \$956. Taken together, these indicators depict a multi-family residential market that meets demand relatively well.

INVENTORY UNITS	UNDER CONSTRUCTION UNITS	12 MO ABSORPTION UNITS	VACANCY RATE	MARKET RENT/UNIT	MARKET SALE PRICE/UNIT	MARKET CAP RATE
1,405	0	(3)	4.9%	\$956	\$178K	7.2%
Prior Period 1,405	Prior Period 0	Prior Period (10)	Prior Period 4.7%	Prior Period \$935	Prior Period \$195K	Prior Period 6.5%
+0%	-	+66.7%	+0.2%	+2.2%	-8.6%	+0.7%



APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

Local Municipal Leader Interviews

Outreach was conducted to all Town Supervisors, Village Mayors, and the City Mayor to engage them in the planning process and gain valuable local knowledge and feedback. Ultimately, over half of the local leaders were interviewed and asked to provide a general overview of their municipalities' current situation and discuss challenges and opportunities within their communities.

Several themes emerged during these interviews. First, and most importantly, leaders were satisfied with the current state of their municipality and optimistic about the future. Workforce attraction and talent retention are concerns throughout Cortland County, regardless of the size of the population. More childcare facilities were viewed as necessary and integral to attracting a consistent, talented workforce.

Recreation and natural resources were another source of agreement across local leaders in the County: from walking trails to parks to ball fields, outdoor recreation opportunities were viewed as important assets within their town, village, or city. Many local leaders pointed to their recreational offerings as a driving force behind resident satisfaction and an important aspect of marketing their communities. They are consistently investing in a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities to continually ensure a high quality of life for residents.

When asked about embracing new projects and growth, responses diverged and were contingent on the size of the municipality: less populous, more rural communities had different preferences than larger, more dense communities located closer to the City of Cortland.

Leaders of small municipalities indicated a strong preference for the preservation of agriculture and rural character where appropriate. These smaller places are content with being bedroom communities and they embrace their agricultural profile. In part, this is driven by tighter budgets in small communities, as well as smaller tax bases that cannot support the expansive infrastructure investment needed to entice additional housing development. Given the rural and sparsely populated nature of smaller communities, leaders expressed little concern about property maintenance, especially in comparison to the larger communities.

Leaders of larger municipalities generally indicated openness to new development and businesses. These communities are better served by infrastructure and welcome growth opportunities. Housing demand in larger communities exists across the board, from townhomes to multi-family homes and larger developments. However, with more densely populated neighborhoods came more concern with property maintenance, as indicated by supervisors and mayors. Local leaders are using everything in their arsenal (local laws, code enforcement, etc.) to minimize blight and increase the number of safe, attractive dwellings and properties.

Summary of Themes from Public Meetings

As part of the Elevate Cortland Public Engagement Plan six open house meetings were held throughout Cortland County from March to late April of 2024 including in Marathon, Truxton, Cortland/Cortlandville, Virgil, Homer, and McGraw. The purpose of each meeting was to explain the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan to community members and gather their input. Feedback from residents will help to shape the vision and strategies in the Strategic Development Plan. Meeting participants provided comments on display boards regarding the existing conditions in the county and ideas for future development.

Across these six public meetings in various areas of Cortland County, several common themes and overarching similarities emerge:

1. Economic Development Priorities

- There is a consistent emphasis on attracting and retaining businesses, particularly those that align with the community's values such as agri-tourism, eco-tourism, and sustainable industries.
- Suggestions include providing financial incentives, supporting vocational training, and fostering entrepreneurship, especially among young adults and retirees.
- The desire for job creation, especially in manufacturing and skilled trades, is prevalent across all meetings.

2. Community Services Infrastructure

- There is a strong focus on improving infrastructure, including broadband access, transportation networks, and utilities, to support economic growth and enhance quality of life.
- Community services like childcare, healthcare, housing, and recreational facilities are highlighted as essential for attracting and retaining residents.
- Concerns about homelessness, mental health services, and substance abuse support are consistent across meetings, indicating a need for comprehensive social services.

3. Sustainability and Environmental Conservation

- There is widespread support for sustainable practices, environmental stewardship, and preserving natural resources.
- Initiatives such as promoting local food markets, enhancing recreational opportunities, and investing in renewable energy are common suggestions.
- Concerns about pollution, climate change, and maintaining the rural character of the community are shared across meetings.

4. Creative Thinking and Community Engagement

- Communities express a desire for innovative solutions and community engagement in decision-making processes.
- Suggestions include promoting public art, supporting local artists and entrepreneurs, and fostering intergenerational mentorship programs.
- There's an emphasis on creating inclusive spaces and activities that cater to diverse interests and age groups within the community.

Overall, these public meetings demonstrate a shared vision for economic prosperity, social equity, environmental sustainability, and community well-being across Cortland County, with residents actively engaged in shaping the future direction of their communities.

McGraw Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: April 30, 2024

The purpose of this meeting was to explain the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan to community members and gather their input. Feedback from residents will help to shape the vision and strategies in the Strategic Development Plan. Meeting participants provided comments on the display boards regarding the existing conditions in the county and ideas for future development.

SUMMARY

In McGraw, public feedback for Cortland County reflects key themes: Economic development focuses on future-oriented businesses and agritourism, while community services prioritize family-friendly housing and broadband access. Infrastructure improvements include a circular economy mindset and expanding utilities. Sustainability concerns center on climate change and renewable energy. Creative thinking is encouraged through interactive activities and support for entrepreneurship to retain young talent and foster innovation. Individual board comments are listed under each board heading and summary below.

ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- No data reported/captured

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The public feedback on economic development emphasizes the importance of investing in future-oriented businesses, particularly those in the green economy sector. There's also a strong call for supporting businesses that promote agri-tourism and eco-tourism, leveraging the county's natural resources. Furthermore, there's a desire to attract more jobs to the area, focusing on manufacturing and small businesses to stimulate local employment opportunities and economic growth.

- Invest in businesses of the future – green economy
- Businesses that promote and support agri-tourism and eco-tourism
- Bring more jobs to the area through manufacturing and small businesses

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Public feedback for Cortland County's community services underscores priorities: family and pet-friendly housing, childcare, housing, and broadband access. Enhancing parks, transportation connections, and addressing seniors' financial challenges are crucial. Balancing the needs of an aging population with attracting younger demographics through education and outdoor activities is essential for the county's future.

- Family and pet-friendly housing
- Childcare, housing, and broadband
- Parks and connections between through programs and transportation
- Help seniors with expenses by raising the maximum amount that can be earned for housing. Many seniors have to still work in order to pay for their medical expenses and medicine, so they make too much to qualify.
- As the Cortland County Population ages, attention has to turn to opportunities to age with comfort and dignity here. But in addition, the County has to be desirable to younger people and families. Education, outdoor activities all need to be supported and encouraged.

COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE

Public feedback for Cortland County's infrastructure highlights key priorities. There's a call for adopting a circular economy mindset and investing in sustainable practices. Proposals include establishing a bike trail from Binghamton to Syracuse and creating a Blueway Trail. Updating water and sewer systems countywide is emphasized, along with expanding utilities to support future development. Broadband access is seen as vital for both living and remote work opportunities, potentially attracting new residents to the area.

- Develop a circular economy mindset
- Bike Trail from Binghamton to Syracuse
- Updated water and sewer across the entire county
- Blueway Trail
- Expanding Utilities to select areas for future development
- Broadband makes both living and working (remotely) easier, again. People will elect to relocate here

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Public feedback from McGraw on the county's sustainability and the environment highlights several key concerns. There's recognition of foreseeable impacts from development along the I-81 Corridor, alongside climate change effects potentially affecting the region's attractiveness. The state's renewable energy commitment presents new job and business opportunities. Environmental quality, focusing on water and air, is emphasized, with concerns about increased truck traffic and noise pollution. Suggestions include tree planting to mitigate these issues. Additionally, there is a desire for the county to have a robust composting program as a step towards sustainability.

- Take into account the foreseeable impacts and opportunities. Development in Syracuse as well as Cortland and Binghamton will bring people, and businesses. Development will be especially concentrated along the I-81 Corridor, with great increases in both traffic and train freight.
- The climate will be changing with new weather patterns in many places, climate change will encourage people to reconsider living in upstate New York.
- The state's commitment to renewable energy will change jobs and new businesses opportunities.
- Emphasis on environmental quality with water and air as priorities. Two challenges are: increased truck traffic and noise from 81 and at its exits. Tree planting would lessen the noise and pollution from truck traffic. Another trend already well underway is the concentration of agriculture, especially dairy CAFOs. There is a need to understand the challenges posed by the disposal of water from these operations and its impact on residential development.
- Strong composting program.

CREATIVE AND OPEN THINKING

Public feedback from McGraw on creative and open thinking emphasizes the importance of interactive activities and coaching classes to foster innovation. There's also a call to retain young talent by funding entrepreneurs and promoting bold ideas and visions within the community.

- Interactive activities and classes (coaching classes)
- Keep young people here – fund entrepreneurs, encourage bold ideas and visions

Homer Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: April 4, 2024

SUMMARY

The purpose of this meeting was to explain the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan to community members and gather their input. Feedback from residents will help to shape the vision and strategies in the Strategic Development Plan. Meeting participants provided comments on the display boards regarding the existing conditions in the county and ideas for future development. Individual board comments are listed under each board heading and summary below.

ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Public feedback on assets and opportunities identifies several key themes. Strengths include abundant farms, clean water, cultural tourism, affordable housing, and a vibrant local music scene. Weaknesses consist of concerns about tax base growth, redundancy in new restaurants and retail, and a lack of solar farms. Opportunities lie in creating housing for future employees, trendy restaurants, childcare facilities, hiking trails, and healthcare access. Threats include issues such as excessive regulation, homelessness, and resistance to migrant housing. Overall, there's a focus on enhancing community resources, economic growth, and quality of life while addressing potential challenges.

Assets and Opportunities

	WE WANT IT	WE DON'T WANT IT
WE HAVE IT	Place Labels Here STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
WE DON'T HAVE IT	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Strengths:

- Farms
- Abundant clean water
- Heritage/Cultural Tourism
- Housing (affordable) Shovel ready projects, participation of under 50 crowd
- Small local businesses focus on local strengths, values, and resources.
- Tiny Houses housing for elderly
- Historic outdoor spaces
- Park!
- More Locally owned business
- Work w/ SUNY Cortland and TC3 – keep the talent here.
- Lakes
- Local Music Scene
- Pristine Water Supply
- SUNY Cortland is an asset.
- Industrial Park Area
- County Park (Dwyer)
- Workshops/theater

Weaknesses:

- More Solar Farms
- New restaurant + retail redundancy
- Taxes/lack of tax base growth
- Chain stores
- More Coffee Shops

Opportunities:

- Housing opportunities for future micron employees
- Trendy restaurants
- Childcare
- Hiking trails/greenway
- Bail reform, prosecute criminals.
- Walking Bike 10mi trail
- Bike/hike trails.
- Childcare
- Affordable health care
- More Better Hotels
- Coordination between Cortland + Tompkins counties also municipalities like Dryden (in the middle)
- “Real Jobs” for young people
- Move childcare.
- Drug treatment facilities post treatment halfway houses (not enough)
- Housing for families and pet owners

Threats:

- Migrant Housing
- NIMBY's
- Excessive regulation
- Homeless/Shelter

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Public feedback on Economic Development emphasizes the importance of engaging with existing businesses, supporting small-scale initiatives, and promoting agriculture tourism. Suggestions include providing financial assistance to main street businesses, promoting vocational training in schools, and encouraging the development of "real" jobs to retain young people in the community. There's also an emphasis on enhancing tourism through initiatives like multi-use trails and leveraging local history, while considering renewable energy options. Additionally, there's a call to improve community infrastructure before investing heavily in tourism, reflecting a desire to prioritize local needs and quality of life.

- Support of village of Homer's proposed bronze monument to emancipation & to 3 Lincoln Men: DeVoe, Carpenter, Stoddard in Lincoln Park
- Every building on Main Street should be occupied - lots of nonprofits who need space for programs.
- More industry like we had in years past that you could get a job with a decent wage without having a \$180,000 + a year college degree.
- Revisit AG. Land protections Housing needed shovel ready project & sits needed.
- Consider lessening histories guidelines to bring in new businesses (in Homer) (for example)
- Promote bike tourism by creating - multi use trails and then connecting out of county.
- Improve what is here for the community before investing in tourism – we all deserve to love where we live.
- More workforce training with an "Earn to Learn" Model for key industries.
- High School workforce education + training
- Enhance tourism – planetarium observatory.
- Feasibility study for multi-use trail to link to Dryden Rail Trail
- Leverage for farms + traditional family – Cornell study.
- History is the fit that keeps on giving.... if promoted.
- Talk with existing businesses about their wants and needs.
- Start term rental in recreation area.
- Stay small.
- Agriculture tourism
- Businesses that promote and support agriculture and eco-tourism
- Get people to work (young)
- Steam/programs in County schools.
- More warehouse jobs - Preble
- Financially help main street businesses
- Wegmans
- Outdoor tourism like Tompkins County
- Allow ATVs to run on County roads = S (for a fee)
- Encourage the development of "real" jobs to keep young people home.
- Promote trade.
 - Plumbing
 - Electrical
 - Welding
 - They earn a great usage! Without college debt
- Renewal energy
- Need more retail tourism businesses.
- No more solar farms! Just farms!

COMMUNITY SERVICES

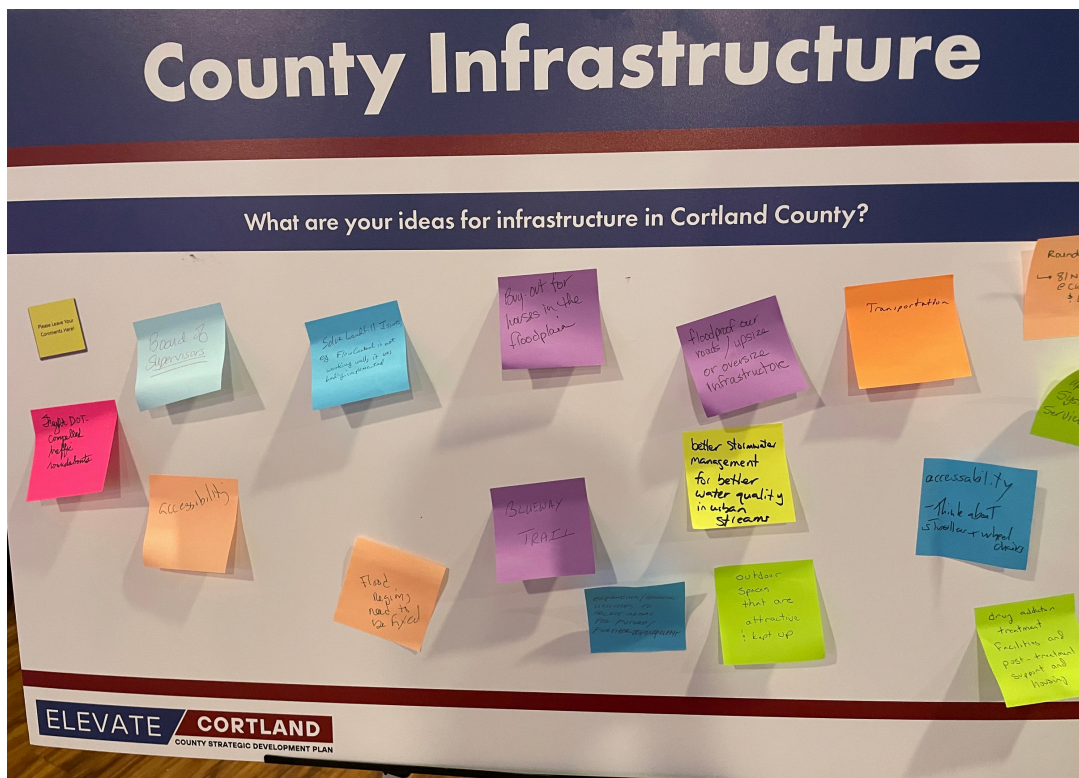
Public feedback on Community Services highlights the need for countywide initiatives such as code enforcement and assessment, as well as organized activities in public parks like Dwyer Park. Key concerns include improving cell and broadband coverage, establishing regular bus services to rural areas, and providing elder care facilities. Suggestions also include expanding affordable housing options, enhancing childcare services, and improving communication between the community and institutions like SUNY Cortland. Additionally, there's a call for proactive planning to address issues like homelessness and better support for nonprofits in the area.

- Countywide code enforcement or shared services
- Countywide assessing or shared services
- Organized activities at Dwyer Park
- Cell + Broadband coverage
- MD regular bus service to rural villages
- Countywide electrical utility system broadband network
- Business development around agriculture & environmental. Specialized support for ag
- Transported bus routes w/ designated stops. Run on weekends.
- You cannot do any of this without a larger tax (residential/business) base.
- Park Dept or SWCD manage public county owned lands.
- More support for nonprofits + making sure we work together rather than create new ones. Nonprofits are important.
- Be proactive instead of reactive – ex homelessness – should have been planned before now.
- More interaction/communication between community & SUNY Cortland
- Transportation for the Rural pool
- Broadband
- Enhance transition planning for high school students with + w/o disabilities before graduating.
- Daycare of housing for all greater level
- Childcare (x3)
- Childcare through nonprofits teaching children Activities.
- Cortland County DSS Childcare subsidy pays for me to go to child school in Trumansburg.
- State subsidies to improve pay for childcare workers
- Affordable childcare
- I drive to Trumansburg from Cortland everyday as I am a single parent and work in Ithaca. This past summer their care was in Otisco.
- Create county 'run' childcare center? As we have senior centers?
- Elder Care which includes facility for Hospice Care
- Long-term and affordable elder care
- Family & pet friendly housing
- Housing across the income range
- Addressed homeless.
- So many empty and run-down buildings that could be housing.
- Affordable housing

COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE

Public feedback on County Infrastructure underscores several key themes. There are concerns about traffic roundabouts and flood management, including issues with the landfill and flood-prone regions. Suggestions include buy-outs for houses in floodplains, improving stormwater management, and enhancing outdoor spaces. Accessibility is highlighted, emphasizing considerations for strollers and wheelchairs. Additionally, there's a call for better transportation infrastructure, expanded utilities for future development, and addressing drug addiction with treatment facilities and post-treatment support.

- Solve landfill Issues e.g., Flow Control is not working well, it was badly implemented.
- Flood regions need to be fixed.
- Buy-out for houses in the floodplain.
- Floodproof our roads/upsized or oversize infrastructure.
- Better stormwater management for better water quality in urban streams
- Drug addiction treatment facilities and post-treatment support and housing.
- Updated water systems to service industry
- Expanding/Growing utilities to select areas for future/further development.
- Board of Supervisors
- Accessibility (x2)
 - Think about stroller + Wheelchairs.
- Transportation
- Roundabouts
 - 81 N on ramp @ Clinton Ave & Locust
- Fight DOT compelled traffic roundabouts.
- Better Roads
- Blueway Trail
- Outdoor spaces that are attractive & kept up.



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

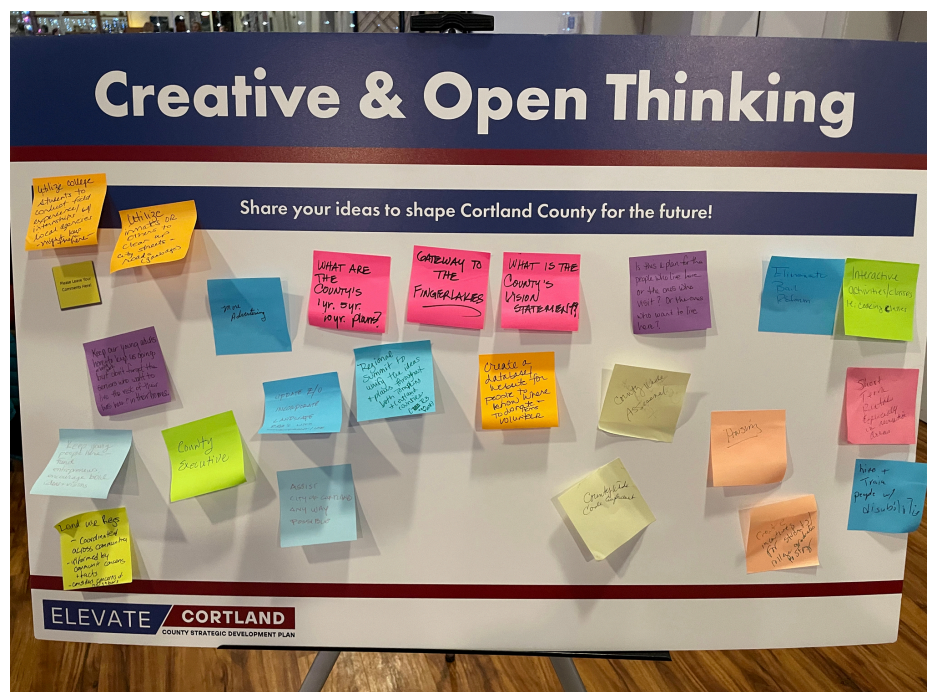
Public feedback on County Infrastructure highlights several key themes. There's a strong emphasis on preserving open spaces and farmland while promoting sustainable transportation options like public buses, bike paths, and ride-sharing. Suggestions include maintaining accessible outdoor recreational areas, protecting farmland and greenspaces from large-scale developments like solar farms, and implementing better stormwater management practices. Additionally, there's a focus on protecting the aquifer, rehabilitating urban waterways, and promoting alternative energy sources. Concerns about Amish development and the need for septic system oversight are also raised, reflecting a desire to maintain the rural lifestyle and environmental integrity of the County.

- More obviously accessible, and maintained outdoor hiking, kayaking, and biking spaces.
- County composting & soil to public from compost
- Put conservation easements on floodplains when parcels are repossessed and resold.
- Develop a countywide land use policy.
- Improve septic system oversight.
- Question the viability of solar and wind.
- Challenges with Amish development
- Protect our rural lifestyle. We do not want to be a big city.
- Better Stormwater management/public education
- Rehabilitate urban water ways/restore habitat.
- Protect the aquifer – make sure industry is not polluting.
- Promote alternative energy that does not use productive farmland.
- Move electric car chargers + Bike racks.
- Free compost bins for Cortland residents
- Avoid development on wetlands and floodplains.
- Better code enforcement
- Preserve open spaces/farmland.
- Protect farmland & food.
- Solar farms are eating up valuable farmland.
- Protect greenspace + farmland from solar installations.
- Community-based renewables not i.e., scale behemoths.
- Manure Digester
- Public Transportation
 - Buses/more routes – smaller buses?
 - Ride share.
 - Bike/walk paths.
- Bike paths.
- Bus route to town of Scott
- Water/wastewater authority
- Protect aquifer.
- Parking Lot run off.

CREATIVE AND OPEN THINK

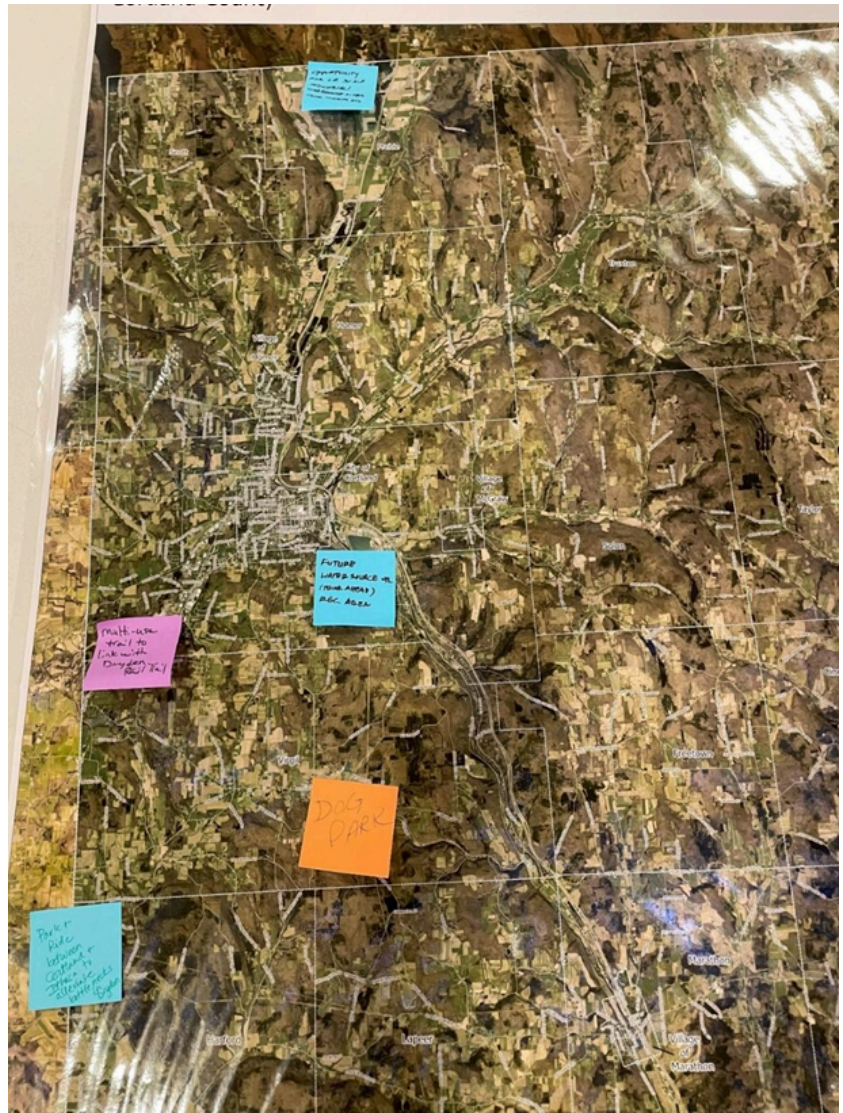
Public feedback on Creative Thinking underscores several key themes. Suggestions include utilizing college students for internships to retain talent, employing innovative solutions like inmate labor for street cleanup, and supporting young adults and entrepreneurs to stimulate local growth while considering the needs of seniors. There's an emphasis on coordinated regulations and community engagement, as well as fostering regional collaboration to unify plans between counties. Additionally, there's a call for improved communication and strategic planning, creating incentives for students to stay, and incorporating inclusivity and environmental considerations into zoning regulations and development plans.

- Utilize college students to conduct field experience/internships w/ local agencies – might keep them here.
- Utilize inmates or other clean up city streets + roads (garbage)
- Keep young adults here (or bring back) to keep us going, but do not forget the seniors who want to live the rest of their lives here in their homes.
- Keep young people here – Fund entrepreneurs, encourage bold ideas + visions.
- Regional Summit to unify the ideas + plans throughout both Tompkins + Cortland Counties (TC3 can host)
- Create a database/website for people to know where to donate items + volunteer.
- Is this a plan for the people who live love or the ones who visit? Or the ones who want to live here?
- Create incentives for students/college graduates to stay.
- Update Z/O incorporate landscape REQ's with development/Use.
- County Executive
- More Advertising
- Assist city of Cortland any way possible
- Gateway to the finger lakes
- What is the County's vision statement?
- What is the county's 1yr. 5yr. 10 yr. plans?
- Countywide assessment
- Countywide Code Enforcement
- Housing
- Hire + train people w/ disabilities.
- Lane use Regs
 - Coordinated across community.
 - Informed by community concerns + facts.
 - Considers concerns of neighbors
- Short term rental especially in recreation areas



MAP OF COUNTY

- Opportunity for LG. Scalf industrial warehouse sites microhouse sites think micron etc.
- Multi Use train to link with Dryden Rail Trail
- Future waters source on (think ahead) REC. Access)
- Dog Park
- Park + ride between Cortland + Ithaca to alleviate better necks in Dryden.



Truxton Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: April 2, 2024

SUMMARY

The purpose of this meeting was to explain the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan to community members and gather their input. Feedback from residents will help to shape the vision and strategies in the Strategic Development Plan. Meeting participants provided comments on the display boards regarding the existing conditions in the county and ideas for future development. Individual board comments are listed under each board heading and summary below:

ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths include maintaining a rural lifestyle, promoting agriculture and tourism, and enhancing local amenities like ATV trails and airports. Weaknesses involve resisting certain types of commercial development, safeguarding residential areas, and avoiding specific businesses on main streets. Opportunities include advocating for a state park, expanding childcare options, and establishing recreational facilities like a dog park and small schools. Threats encompass issues such as poorly managed low-income housing projects, potential environmental hazards from sewage sludge, and the fear of attracting homelessness from neighboring cities. Overall, the community seeks to preserve its rural character while pursuing balanced growth and development. The individual responses are listed below.

Strengths:

- ATV trails on Morgan Hill
- Maintain rural lifestyle
- Expand airport
- Farming, agriculture, ski industry
- Farmland production
- Grocery store
- 4 seasons to tout

Weaknesses:

- Dollar general
- Limit dollar stores
- Protect homeowners in residential areas from interstate developments
- No smoke or head shops on our main streets

Opportunities:

- State Park in Cortland County
- More childcare
- Dog park
- Small school
- State park

Threats:

- Limit big low-income apts. projects – NOT well managed
- Landlords have no connection to this area and they are cheap, go downhill fast. [Illegible] leave with lots of \$
- No use of sewage sludge on farms, composting projects, etc. PFAs + heavy metals are threats
- Homeless shelter (they will come from Binghamton, Ithaca + Syracuse)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic development feedback prioritizes boosting local businesses and community prosperity through initiatives like expanding childcare, supporting small-scale food producers, and reducing government regulation and taxes. Events like "Passport" programs aim to drive traffic to local businesses, while efforts focus on increasing housing options, promoting eco-tourism, and fostering cultural events. Additionally, there's a push to encourage careers in the trades and address the region's high tax burden, possibly through adjustments in property and sales taxes.

- Support for small scale food produces + processors – helping to connect them with local commerce + institutions
- Event series to increase recreation & tourism. "Passport" programs to increase traffic to local businesses
- Promote work, careers in the trades out of high school
- Support our local business so they [illegible]
- How do we bring the [illegible] 8 business back
- Lieu over all taxes. We rank #1 in the country as highest tax burden in state. Within NY, we are the highest taxed county.
- Childcare
- Childcare need more slots
- Childcare w/ in businesses
- Nice housing more housing
- Eco tourism
- More cultural & art events
- More niche restaurants
- Target
- Less gov't regulation + taxes
- Lower property tax maybe increase local sales tax
- Local ag. products go for stay in local tax funded institutions

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The public comments on community development emphasize several key areas: prioritizing senior housing options, establishing multi-use social gathering spaces, promoting farm-to-school initiatives, and expanding broadband access to rural areas. Support is also highlighted for small schools, advocating for downsizing housing options, and attracting professional and semi-professional sports events, including training camps, to the area.

- Senior Housing options
- Multi-use social-use gathering places
- Farm to school – term to Institution
- Broadband more to rural areas
- Broadband
- Support for our small school in Truxton
- Smaller housing -> downsizing, where flat
- Promotes Pro + Semi Pro sports (gets training camp)

COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE

The community infrastructure goals entail enhancing power transmission lines to support solar energy, responsibly utilizing natural resources, and implementing roundabouts for traffic management, particularly at the 81 North on-ramp.

- Improve power transmission lines so we can support solar
- Use our natural resources Drill! safe way
- Roundabouts -> 81 N on ramp @ Clinton Ave & Locust

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Public feedback received emphasized having a holistic approach to sustainability and environmental protection within a rural community. Initiatives included promoting local food markets, enhancing recreational opportunities, protecting natural resources, revitalizing riverfront areas, encouraging accessory dwelling units to limit sprawl, and investing in active transportation infrastructure such as bike lanes and electric vehicle chargers. The focus was on preserving the rural lifestyle while embracing environmentally conscious practices and maintaining community amenities like Dwyer Park.

- Help keep the rural town center vibrant and offering services such as recreation senior center, etc
- More outdoor recreational structural activities for adults/families
- Environmental protection of land, water & natural vistas (e.g. no windmills they are as tall as skyscrapers)
- Encourage ADU. – accessory dwelling units and help limit sprawl and the loss of agricultural land
- Green ways & Green belts – connect trails and conservation areas
- Active transportation infrastructure – bike lanes especially
- More bike lanes (x2)
- Electric vehicle fast chargers
- Love Dwyer Park
- River / waterfront revitalization
- Promote local food market
- Protect rural lifestyle
- Second amendment sanctuary
- Use natural resources, water and gas – drill

CREATIVE AND OPEN THINKING

The public feedback received emphasizes citizen rights, cautions against excessive government regulation, and the importance of interactive activities like cooking classes and indoor play spaces. There's a call for educational pathways in agriculture, trades, and technology, along with tax breaks for home improvements. Other points include the desire for free preschool for three-year-olds and concerns about bail reform.

- Respect self-defense -> 2nd amendment rights
- State gov't needs to realize more regulations is not better.
- Interactive activities/classes, i.e. cooking classes
- Play space for kids esp. indoors
- Elective educ. Pathways to agriculture & the trades, technology
- Tax breaks for improving look of your house
- Right to bear arms & protect our property.
- Free preschool for 3yr olds
- Eliminate bail reform



Virgil Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: March 26, 2024

SUMMARY

The purpose of this meeting was to explain the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan to community members and gather their input. Feedback from residents will help to shape the vision and strategies in the Strategic Development Plan. Meeting participants provided comments on the display boards regarding the existing conditions in the county and ideas for future development. Individual board comments are listed under each board and summary heading below.

ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The public feedback highlights several key themes regarding the Town of Virgil. Strengths include well-maintained blacktop roads and a desire to expand the airport. Weaknesses involve a desire to limit the presence of dollar stores. Opportunities identified include the need for a mountain biking trail, a small school, improved playground security, a dog park, and better promotion of recreational activities through visitor guides. Threats perceived include concerns about pollution, traffic congestion, and maintaining the rural atmosphere. Additionally, there's strong opposition to the establishment of a homeless shelter, with concerns about potential negative impacts on the community and perceptions about the effectiveness of free governmental services.

Strengths:

- Town of Virgil blacktop roads. When in agricultural clear
- Yes [points to comment above]
- Expand Airport

Opportunities:

- Mountain Biking Trail
- Yes [points to comment above]
- Small School
- Playground security
- Dog Park
- Recreation/Visitor Guide: in shopper, in stores, mail, rest stops, and Preble rest areas

Weaknesses:

- Limit Dollar Stores

Threats:

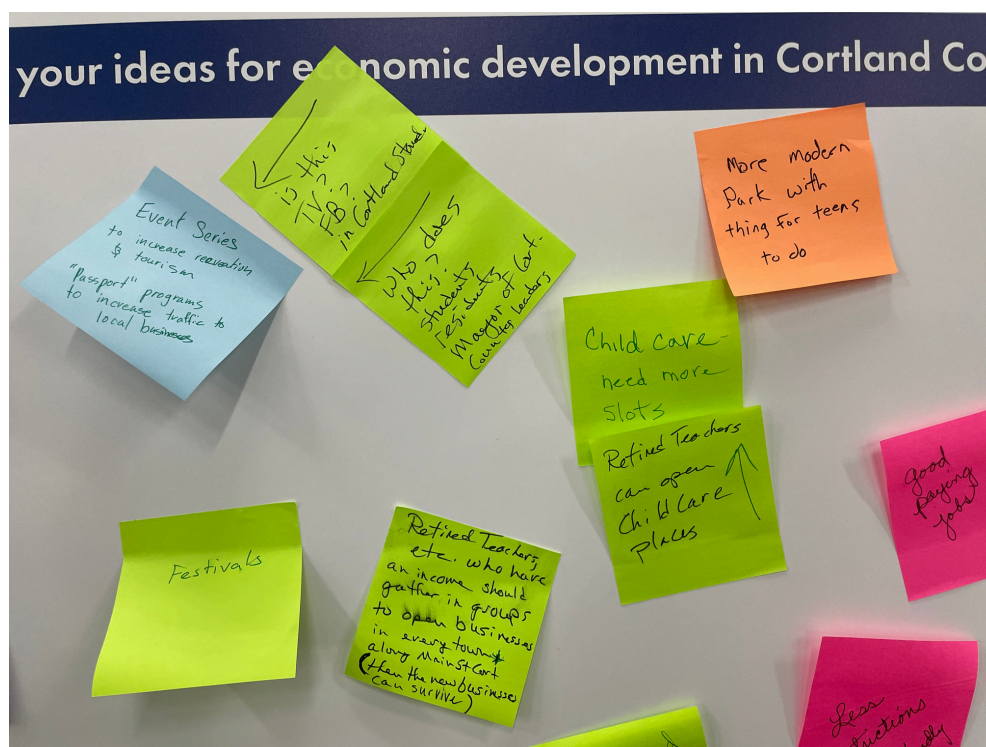
- Pollution, Traffic Congestion, Loss of rural atmosphere
- Homeless Shelter (they will come from Binghamton, Ithaca, & Syracuse)
 - Agree (x
 - Free things that have no incentive only keep people down.

Attachment: Cortland County Strategic Development Plan (12670 : Adopt the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The feedback on economic development emphasizes key suggestions for enhancing the area's economic landscape. These include addressing post-Polytron construction demands for bikes and electric scooters, developing unique tourism businesses like tandem bike shops, advocating for higher county wages and benefits, providing tax incentives for local businesses, exploring eco and agri-tourism, hosting festivals and events to boost tourism, promoting entrepreneurship among retirees, addressing childcare needs, improving rural broadband, enhancing teen recreational facilities, fostering a more welcoming business environment, creating good-paying jobs with benefits, and pursuing partnerships for joint ventures like a hockey rink/rec center. Additionally, there's a call for more cultural and art events to enrich community life.

- After Polytron is built, more people will want bikes, electric scooters so, there will be need for a bike.
- Shop that makes 2, 4-person tandem bikes for tourism.
- Event Series to increase revelation and tourism. "Passport" programs to increase traffic and local businesses.
- Retired teacher, etc. who have an income should gather in groups to open businesses in every town along Main St Cort (then the new businesses can survive)
- A more modern park with things for teens to do.
- Less instructions more friendly
- Retired teachers can open childcare places.
- Joint venture b/w Cortland County; Virgil and Greek Peak – build hockey rink/rec center. (Hockey will draw tournaments, leagues, etc. Revenue split three ways.
- The location makes it a good and rec face for summer resorts.
- Eco tourism
- More tourism
- Agri-tourism
- Festivals
- More cultural and art events
- County wage one high enough
- Higher wages for county employees
- Help business by lowering taxes.
- Increase taxes on Greek Peak.
- Childcares need more slots.
- Good paying jobs
- Need more higher wage jobs with benefits.
- Broadband for rural community
- Broadband



COMMUNITY SERVICES

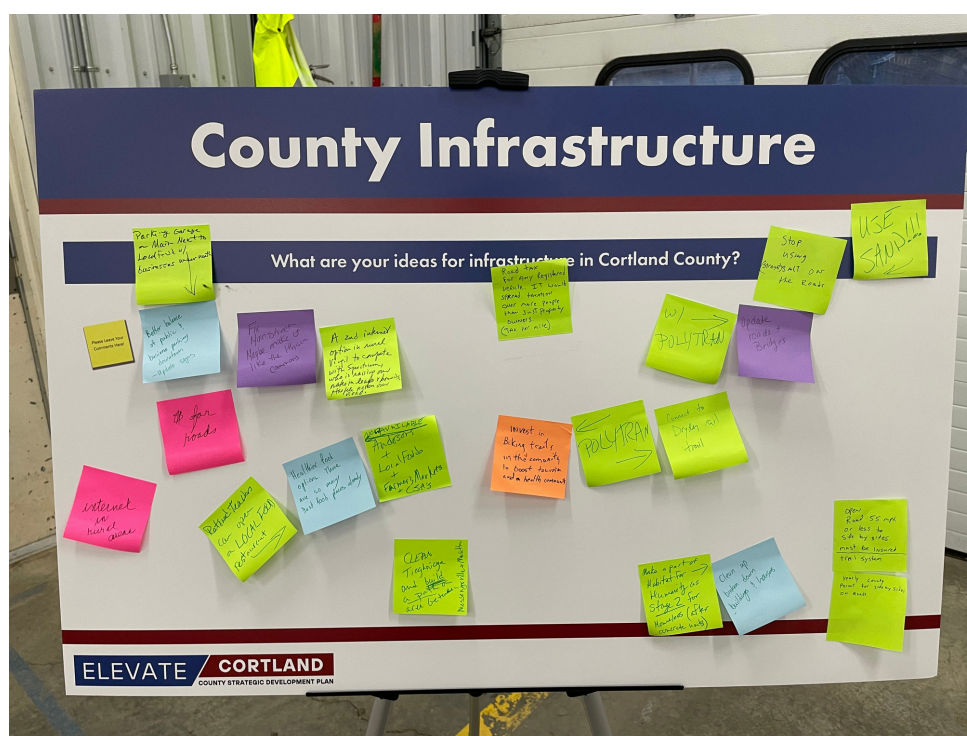
The public feedback on community services highlights key suggestions for improvement, including enhancing infrastructure like sidewalks and bike paths, establishing neighborhood grocery stores near low-income areas, improving resource awareness through targeted communication, expanding rural public transportation, supporting libraries and addressing aging population needs, prioritizing daycare and education, addressing homelessness and mental health, promoting adult education, advocating for broadband access in rural areas, supporting arts initiatives, and seeking increased state government support. Additionally, there's a call for more dog parks and mental health care services.

- Neighborhood grocery stores near low-income housing. Make life easy for others.
- Flyers to residents showing what is available in Cortland County. Most have no idea.
- Cortland County CVB site *[points at comment above]*
- More Public transportation to outskirts
- Polytron *[points to comment above]*
- More support for the library and the issue they are dealing with.
- With our aging population + tech growing so fast – they cannot keep up we need to keep them in mind when doing things and getting word out instead of telling them it is on a website.
- More robust services programs and opportunities for youth and teens supported by our community (limit cost to families). Allow for unstructured play, freedom, creativity.
- Single units for homeless, newest area to go to: AA, mental health, social service.
- Put these in port Watson Street parking by bridge *[points to comment above]*
- Or someone doubt land (yamen) *[points to comment above]*
- Less Welfare, Drug test to receive it
- Daycare
- Open school in Virgil
- Adult education programs
- Dog Parks
- Broadband in Virgil, etc.!
- Seneca Center + art Virgil school
- Childcare
- Open a school in Virgil
- More mental health care
- More support from state government
- More services to help with homelessness and addiction and mental health.
- Sidewalks yes! Better use of Tompkins Street bike path along street
- Polytron instead of one sidewalk on each street *[points at comment above]*
- Hire (electric) biker donated to homeless after they move into their concrete homes (Police)

COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE

Public feedback on county infrastructure focuses on key themes and suggestions for improvement. These include addressing rural internet access, enhancing downtown parking with a potential garage, allocating funds for road maintenance, revitalizing main streets, promoting healthier food options, investing in biking trails for tourism and health, connecting to existing trails, considering alternatives to road salt, updating roads and bridges, addressing blight, and exploring innovative solutions like Habitat for Humanity projects. Additionally, there's a call for regulations on recreational vehicle use and establishing a county permit system.

- Better balance of public and business parking downtown – update signs
- Parking garage on main next to Local feed with businesses underneath (*Points to comment above*)
- A second internet option in rural Virgil to compete with Spectrum who are raising rates in leaps and bounds. Has late notice over road.
- Clean Tioughnioga and build a path on area between Messenger Ville + marathon.
- Road tax for any registered vehicle. It would spread taxation over more people than just property owners. (tax per mile)
- Clean up broken down buildings and houses.
- Make a part of Habitat for Humanity as Stage 2 for homeless (After concrete units) (*points at comment above*)
- Open road 55mph or less to side by side must be insured. Trail system yearly county permit for side by sides on roads
- Healthier food options. There are so many fast-food places already.
- No Available endorsers + local food + farmers markets + CSA's (points to comment above)
- Retired teachers can open a local food restaurant (points to comment above)
- Internet in rural areas
- \$ for roads
- Connect to Dryden rail trail.
- Stop using (straight) salt on the roads.
- Use sand (points at comment above)
- Update roads + bridges.
- w/ Polytron (points at comment above)
- Invest in biking trails in the community to boost tourism and a health community.
- Polytron (*points at comment above*)
- Fix the main street. Maybe make it like the Ithaca Commons



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The public feedback on sustainability and the environment highlights several key themes and suggestions for action. These include promoting healthy water, art, and food initiatives, repurposing train tracks into trails to enhance outdoor recreation, increasing access to parks and nature areas through public transport or programs, advocating for active transportation infrastructure like bike lanes and electric vehicle chargers, supporting food rescue efforts and promoting recycling education in schools and county departments. Additionally, suggestions include converting state-owned forests into county parks for recreational opportunities, promoting agricultural and food tourism events, maintaining waterways, organizing environmentally friendly events like human-powered rail weekends or triathlons, and expanding greenways and farmers markets to encourage sustainable practices and community engagement with nature.

- Promote our extremes healthy water + art + food, etc.
- Train track into trail South Cortland to Lime Hollow YES!
- Public transport or programs to increase access to existing parks: nature areas.
- Convert state owned forest into county parks to allow better Rec. opportunities.
- Promote monthly agriculture/food tourism: July – Halls Blueberries; Sept: Hollenbeck's; etc.
- Tioughnioga needs to be cleared of falling trees, debris each year.
- Weekend for revolution railroad to have human powered rail!!
- Cars for drawing people to the area for Rail + River or River + Rail
- Invite river businesses: Tubing, Kayaking, River Rail
- Host a Triathlon: W/3 legs.
- Marathon to Cortland run
- Cortland to Marathon River
- Marathon to Cortland Bike
- Green ways and green belts
- Connect trails and consecution areas
- Expand Lime Hollow to other areas of the County
- More Farmers Markets
- Protecting our waterways
- Blue Lanes
- Active transportation infrastructure
- Bike lanes especially.
- Electric vehicle fast chargers
- Support food rescue.
- More recycling presentations in the schools and county departments

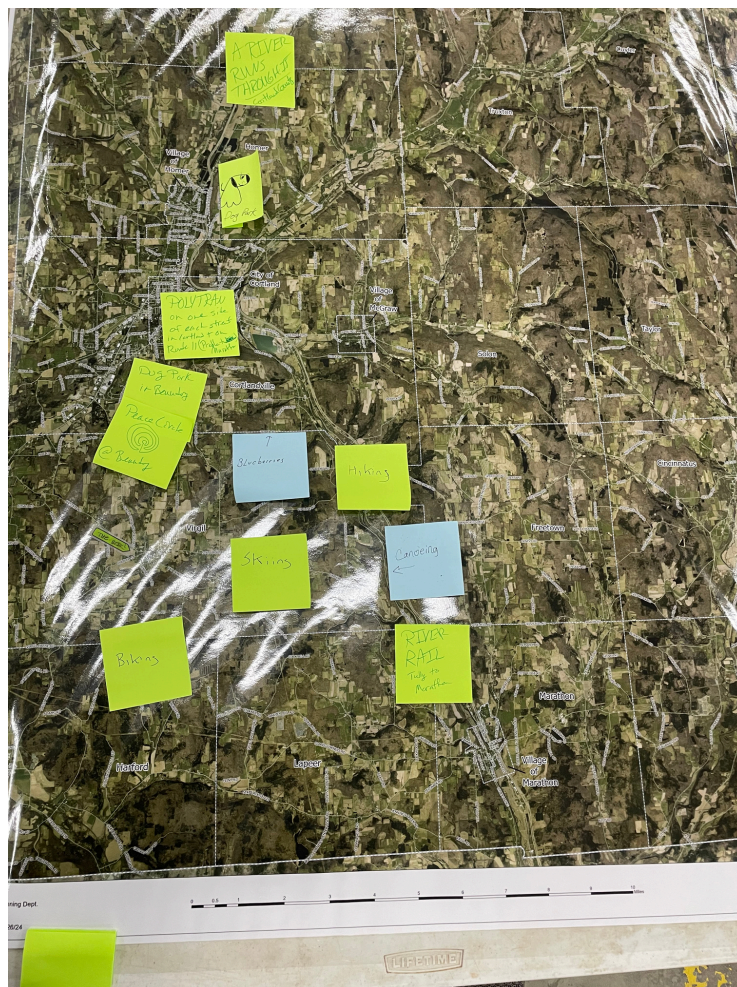
CREATIVE AND OPEN THINKING

Public feedback on creative thinking highlights key themes for fostering innovation and community engagement. These include advocating for improved collaboration among businesses and NGOs, providing activities for children and promoting the arts, welcoming migrants and asylum seekers, exploring economic development opportunities like enhancing Little York Lake and park, encouraging retired individuals to start businesses and connecting youth with elders for mentorship, promoting access to literature through small-town libraries, enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities, supporting public art initiatives, and implementing volunteer programs for children. Additionally, there's a focus on creating family-friendly spaces to strengthen community bonds.

- Improve collaboration so many businesses and NGOs are doing great work alone.
- Is there a way to economically develop Little York Lake + park? Seems like a wasted opportunity.
- Community Retired Elders Businesses: Groups of retired create businesses.
- More small-town libraries (or book depots)
- Promote and enhance outdoor opportunities: Hiking, Fishing, Hunting, Boating.
- Activities for kids
- Connect kids + Elders to create businesses.
- More arts
- Welcome migrants and asylum seekers.
- Public Art Arts commission
- Volunteer Programs for kids.
- Family friendly places for people

MAP OF COUNTY

- A river runs through it / Cortland County
- Dog Park
- Polytron on one side of each street in Cortland + on route 2 (Preble to Marathon)
- Dog park is Beaudry.
- Peace Circle at Beaudry
- Blueberries on Toward Rd
- Hiking along gorge road
- Canoeing
- Skiing
- Biking
- River Rail Tully to Marathon



Cortland/Cortlandville Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: March 25, 2024

SUMMARY

The purpose of this meeting was to explain the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan to community members and gather their input. Feedback from residents will help to shape the vision and strategies in the Strategic Development Plan. Meeting participants provided comments on the display boards regarding the existing conditions in the county and ideas for future development. Individual board comments are listed under each board heading and summary below.

ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The public feedback identifies key themes in the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Strengths include great parks and outdoor amenities, while weaknesses lie in weak code enforcement and government communication. Opportunities include improved engagement between government and residents, housing initiatives, and alternative business uses for vacant spaces. Threats involve perceived fear of marginalized populations, rising costs of living, and limited job options. Overall, there's a need for community-building efforts, housing solutions, improved communication, and inclusive economic development strategies.

Strengths

- Great parks, playgrounds, pool!
- River, schools/colleges, scenic vistas, friendly people
- Farm to table restaurant
- Natural areas/outdoor rec
- A great outside environment, plenty to do
- Go on hiking trails at Lime Hollow
- Welcoming opportunity to all. Incorporate immigrants in making decisions
- We need community building large. We have lots of little ones
- Consolidation of local governments

Opportunities:

- Sustained engagement/communication between government, local residents, community
- Housing First Model, tiny houses, shelter 24/7, wrap-around program
- Different business using vacant lot/warehouse for good
- Mountain bike trail?
- Housing Study/Plan
- Solar + Wind
- Adequate Public Transportation
- Volunteer program for kids
- Upstate College initiative model from Ithaca for justice involved folks
- Senior advocacy Information programs (Help senior understand the resources) (Medicaid, walk-ins, etc.)
- Family friendly places for people besides bars
- New housing models that foster community. Co-host [illegible] intention..
- Business Friendly Welcome to Cortland and get rid of not in my back yard
- Housing for all, especially the unhoused

Weaknesses:

- Weak code enforcement around this
- Weak government communication
- Solar & wind infrastructure
- Limit airport expansion
- No more sprawl. Making use of empty buildings

Threats:

- Fear of people who are marginalized
- DO NOT WANT. Perhaps I am wrong but I see this as increasing taxes which are difficult for long time senior residents as it.
- Too many people leaving the community
- Cost of living increasing, wages stagnant, limited job options
- + Homelessness, housing \$. -quality, choice/options
- Not wanting to welcome new businesses into the community
- Lack of transparency, citizen & engagement in local government

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The public feedback on economic development highlights several key themes and suggestions for fostering growth and opportunity. These include attracting the wine and dining industry, providing economic incentives for downtown businesses, focusing on business development without mass housing increases, supporting farm-to-table restaurants and smaller housing units for college graduates, emphasizing the importance of childcare and supporting small businesses, cooperative models, and youth entrepreneurship. Additionally, there's a call for protecting water supplies, promoting nature-based childcare and education programs, revitalizing shopping areas, supporting recreational activities beyond bars and restaurants, promoting renewable energy, repurposing empty buildings for shops and recreation, and advocating for niche services like IT repair.

- Economic incentives for businesses that move downtown
- Business only. No mass housing increase
- Farm to table restaurant. Old Red Dragon good place
- Create smaller housing units for college graduates. Partnership with developers, allow food trucks.
- Support more small business & cooperative models – helping people with barriers ([illegible], criminal history, etc.) (untapped potential) start/own business
- Shoppable stores, put stores back, less empty malls & Main Streets – all cities + towns .
- Support youth entrepreneurship, more career pathways
- Recreation. E.g. indoor year-round pickleball. Not just bars/restaurants
- Fill empty buildings with shops. Outdoor recreation (pickleball)
- Wine and dine industry to come here
- Childcare (x3)
- Subsidized childcare, incentive workers who have children set free childcare
- Nature based outdoor childcare, pre-k & homeschool programs. Lime Hollow Forest Preschool & Forest Learning College
- Houses for businesses
- Renewable energy
- State Park
- IT repair service
- BOCCE County
- Protect the water supply & envision removal of chlorine (German Model)

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Public feedback on community services underscores key themes and needs for improvement. These include enhancing communication between SUNY Cortland and the local community, providing summer activities and amenities like dog parks in partnership with colleges, addressing housing issues for all, especially the unhoused, expanding services for substance abuse, homelessness, transportation, and childcare. Additionally, there's a call for broadband access, creating bike-friendly spaces and free places for children's activities, tapping into regional resources, expanding youth business services, improving pedestrian pathways, connecting parks with trails, promoting community involvement and mutual aid, addressing mental health access, providing after-school and vacation activities for youth, and offering indoor recreation facilities for all ages. Moreover, there's a need for improved code enforcement, more childcare options, pickleball courts, safer sidewalks, and services tailored to the homeless and senior populations.

- More & better communication between SUNY Cortland and local community especially regarding student housing
- Summer activities, dog park. Partnership with college for ideas
- Substance abuse services, homeless shelter, transportation, childcare
- Broadband to those that missed it first go round
- Make it more bike friendly. Places/spaces for kids to be kids that don't cost \$
- More community involvement, mutual aid – strengthen neighborhoods. Empower citizens to help each other
- Code Enforcement in Advance. Stop those who break rules then ask for variance
- After school activities/vacation time for youth + community
- More robust services programs & opportunities for youth and teens. Supported by our community (limit cost to families) Allow for unstructured play, freedom, creativity
- Building with internet service/ sleep access / bath & bathroom facilities for homeless population
- Senior center original [illegible] provide care [illegible] bus 7 days a week
- Housing for all, especially unhoused
- Find housing for the homeless
- Childcare (x2)
- Expand youth business services throughout county
- Off road bike path, river trail
- Better pedestrian pathways
- Sidewalks – every block, trip proof. We don't have!
- Better walkways or a walking trail (indoor or outdoor)
- Connect parks with trail
- Dog park
- Hope, belonging, purpose
- Better mental health access
- Tap into regional resources accept harm reduction providers
- Senior community housing
- County Code Enforcement
- Pickleball courts
- County Community Center – indoor recreation for all ages
- Better bus/transportation services at affordable cost

COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE

Public feedback on county infrastructure highlights key themes and improvement suggestions. These include the need for more bike and multi-use trails connecting urban and rural areas, better bike lanes on busy streets and state highways, and the creation of off-road paved bike paths and river trails. Suggestions also include updating aging infrastructure, investing in rural broadband, improving bike safety, establishing countywide fire departments, creating senior communities, modernizing county office buildings, implementing city-wide snow removal, promoting complete streets, enhancing code enforcement, and ensuring rental properties meet maintenance standards. Additionally, there's a call for more county parks, family-friendly trails, registered ATV trails, and high-speed internet access in rural areas.

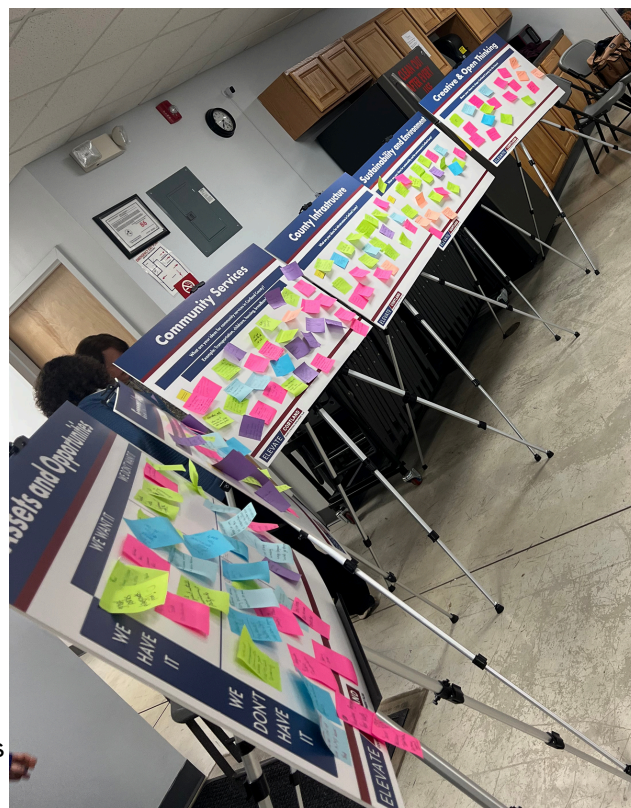
- More bike/multi-use trails in county & city, connecting city with outer towns/villages
- Better bike lanes on busy streets (state highways especially)
- More bike safety & opportunities paved paths, rail trail, kid friendly biking
- Make Tompkins St, Homer Ave, Clinton, Port Watson, more bike friendly
- Narrow, painted bike lanes not enough, need to slow cars down
- We need senior/ 55+ communities – not necessarily low income
- A county office building that is more accessible, modern (better technology) more welcoming
- Have rental properties follow code. Shoveling, mowing etc.
- County wide fire department
- Create bike lanes, trails + walking paths
- Off road paved bike path, river trail
- Trails and walking areas that are family friendly
- Complete Streets on Tompkins St. Route 31
- City-wide snow removal from sidewalks
- Paint white and yellow lines in the streets. Reflective!
- County wide Code Enforcement
- Reduce Density
- Registered ATV trails
- Another county park
- High speed internet for rural areas (x2)
- Update aging infrastructure (roads, water, sewer)



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Public feedback on sustainability and the environment underscores several key themes and suggestions for action. These include improving re-entry programs for individuals leaving jail, establishing well-supported community gardens in strategic locations, addressing water quality and habitat issues in urban waterways, implementing curbside glass recycling, preserving open space and protecting agriculture, promoting composting initiatives at both community and household levels, expanding and maintaining trails in state parks, enhancing stormwater runoff infrastructure and promoting rain gardens, increasing awareness of local parks, implementing countywide composting programs and providing access to mulch and compost, advocating for disability access improvements, expanding bike paths and planting more trees, organizing community clean-up events, and encouraging local food production and waste reduction efforts. Overall, there's a strong emphasis on sustainable practices, environmental stewardship, and community engagement in preserving natural resources.

- Compost?
- Community managed compost. Eliminate food waste from trash. (x2)
- Countywide composting program + access to mulch and compost
- Off road paved bike path, river trail
- Maintain open space
- Protect agriculture
- State park trails
- Promote the parks
- More bike paths
- More trees
- Community clean up events
- Disability access – curb repair, street caps
- Ability to recycle glass curbside in the county
- Whatever happened to Cortland Riverwalk
- Work on better re-entry for folks coming from jail.
- Community gardens that are set up well to support & encourage community building. In good location!
- More attention to water quality/habitat issues in our local urban waterways
- Better stormwater runoff infrastructure – more community awareness. Promotion of rain gardens and other innovations
- Composting bins for all households (German model)
- Annual cleaning for city + county, composting, clothing recycling
- Encourage new farmers, more small family farmers, more local food (organic)



Attachment: Cortland County Strategic Development Plan (12670 : Adopt the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan)

CREATIVE AND OPEN THINKING

Public feedback on creative thinking and open ideas suggests promoting public art and sustainable partnerships with colleges while limiting Section 8 housing expansion. Suggestions include developing adult-friendly green spaces, revitalizing main streets, and creating democratic schools. Additionally, ideas involve repurposing old rail lines, establishing music parks, fostering children's independence, and enhancing rural nonprofit hubs. There's also a call for countywide assessments and code enforcement and the creation of outdoor spaces beyond parks, potentially including a dog park. Overall, the feedback emphasizes creativity, community collaboration, and holistic urban planning.

- Partnership with College departments for sustainable ideas – involve public in developing plans
- Develop green spaces/parks for adults too, not just playgrounds. E.g. picnic spaces
- More housing first, ind. Section 8 – incentivize home improvement
- A democratic, self-directed independent school (like the circle school in Harrisburg Zena Democratic School in Kingston)
- Kids need more freedom, less monitoring, opportunity for real interaction w/ peers & community. How can we create this?
- Rural non-profit hub with modern meeting rooms, tech, encouraging collaboration
- Main street needs revitalization. More trees and rehab houses on South Main
- County wide assessment
- County wide Code Enforcement
- Public art! Too many blank spaces!
- Outdoor spaces besides parks, dog park?
- Music Park
- Safe family friendly area
- Mountain bike places needed
- Public art
- Limit expansion of section 8 housing
- Bring business to main street besides bars
- Registered ATV Trail
- Any old rail lines for rail trails/? Linear State Park
- What's so wrong with staying a "smallish" town?

MAPS OF COUNTY

- Parker school mixed-use housing, day care center, low-income, middle-income
- City-replace dead trees and add more, nut tree, fruit tree. Set up volunteer watering committee
- City parks, streetscapes, move trees for Southside / City of Cortland
- Parker School turned into affordable housing or community space
- Better stormwater management in city – promotion of rain gardens, etc.
- Move to community school model. Open up school spaces & make available, part of community
- Community garden in Suggett Park or Parker School part of redevelopment.
- More community gardens. No mow may – expand to no penalties
- Off road bike trail, recreation trail, paved, crushed gravel, river trail.
- Yes to Parker School mixed-use housing
- Parker school mixed-use housing
- Rail trail
- Urban Trees
- Underground utility lines throughout city
- Train tracks into trails. S Cortland to Lime Hollows
- Insert park trails
- Pave streets for safety
- South Main St. income-based housing med-low
- Fruit trees, Parker school make it public housing for poor
- Bike path that is protected between Homer & Cortland
- No/Never jail expansion, focus on rehab outside jail

Marathon Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: March 19, 2024

SUMMARY

The purpose of this meeting was to explain the Cortland County Strategic Development Plan to community members and gather their input. Feedback from residents will help to shape the vision and strategies in the Strategic Development Plan. Meeting participants provided comments on the display boards regarding the existing conditions in the county and ideas for future development. Individual board comments are listed under each board heading and summary below.

ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The public feedback outlines key themes regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the community. Strengths include a great living environment, proximity to colleges and transportation routes. Weaknesses are highlighted by challenges such as homelessness, drug issues, and poverty, alongside transportation limitations. Opportunities include attracting quality employers, redeveloping vacant properties, and improving childcare and outdoor recreation access. No comments were received on threats. The individual responses per category are further listed below.

Strengths:

- Great are to live, work, and enjoy the seasons.
Easy to go south to avoid the worst weather.
- Good people that want to make a difference.
- Route 81
- Colleges close by
- SUNY Cortland
- Route 81 corridor

Opportunities:

- Quality employers and employment
- Revisit county farm for homeless population
- Redevelopment of vacant properties
- Childcare to cover all ages and all shifts for workers
- An active workforce – a pool of ready workers for businesses
- More outdoor recreation areas. Accessible recreation areas
- Virgil, 2000 acres of state land, tremendous opportunity. Educate people on state land then publicize
- Expanded bus service to outlying areas
- Women's health services
- Substandard properties in need of redevelopment

Weaknesses:

- Homeless (x2)
- Drug Challenges
- Poverty
- Transportation Issues (if no car)
- Vacant Properties

Threats:

- No comments

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Public comments on Economic Development highlight several key themes. There's a call for a more robust skilled trade education, the desire for regulated dispensaries and support for manufacturing. Suggestions include developing the opera house for arts and entertainment, improving tourism infrastructure, and diversifying the culinary and retail offerings. Furthermore, there's an emphasis on supporting local businesses and attracting new industries and workforce, while also addressing regulatory challenges such as permit requirements for wells in specific areas around Cortland County.

- Develop opera house to bring arts and entertainment to the Village of Marathon
- Tourism brings money into county, Greek Peak is year-round. Plow Clute Road
- Training opportunities for people looking for higher income jobs
- Attracting new business and new workforce
- Regulations – Cortland County (Virgil specifically) requires a permit for a well
- A more robust skilled trade education
- Dispensaries – heavy regulation
- Manufacturing
- More restaurants, not fast food
- More shopping that's not dollar stores
- Indian restaurant
- Businesses that support Micron

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Public feedback on Community Services highlights key themes including the need for diversifying ethnic/cultural dining options comprehensive broadband internet access, and facilities like warming shelters and homeless shelters. Safety concerns such as safe streets and mental health training for first responders are emphasized, along with the importance of affordable housing options, childcare centers, and accessible mental health services for both youth and adults. Additionally, there's a call for funding for youth activities and reliable transportation services.

- Broadband internet access in whole county – no dead spaces
- Develop opera house in Peck Memorial Library
- More childcare centers – need drop-in services too
- More low-income housing and senior housing
- Mental health training for first responders
- Money for youth activities after school/summer
- Accessible mental health services for youth/adults
- Indian restaurant
- Warming shelters
- Safe streets
- 911 training for parents
- Paint the county dome
- Quality affordable housing
- Timely/reliable transportation services
- Homeless shelters

COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE

Public feedback on Community Infrastructure underscores the importance of repurposing vacant properties, such as converting them into low-income housing, and enhancing transportation access, like improving Clute Road for Greek Peak access. Suggestions also include revitalizing downtown areas through projects like developing the opera house, refreshing senior high-rises, and increasing parking availability. Additionally, there's a call for basic maintenance like pothole repair and tree removal on main roads, as well as attracting retail businesses to stimulate local economy.

- Develop opera house in Peck Memorial Library
- Do something useful with vacant properties, convert to low-income housing
- Improve Clute Road for better access to Greek Peak
- Attract more retail that brings shoppers to the area
- Refresh senior high-rises downtown
- More parking downtown Cortland
- Pothole repair
- Tree removal on Main Roads

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Public feedback on Sustainability and the Environment highlights key themes including the development of waterfront areas to attract visitors and revenue, promoting the use of state land for tourism, and maintaining clean neighborhoods. Suggestions also include expanding walking and biking trails, repurposing unused buildings for community centers, and improving outdoor activity spaces like tennis courts. Additionally, there's an emphasis on sustainability initiatives, willingness to support through tax increases, business involvement, and community donations, as well as advocating for waterfront cleanup and enhancement efforts.

- Development of waterfront in Marathon which would attract visitors and money
- Move community centers (unused building converted to useable space)
- Fix tennis courts and outside activity spaces
- Sustainability – tax increases are ok, businesses buy into projects, community donation
- State land education and opportunity
- Promote the use of state land for tourists to come to the county
- Clean neighborhoods
- More walking and biking trails
- Walking and biking trails
- Waterfront cleanup and expansive

CREATIVE AND OPEN THINKING

Public feedback on Creative Thinking suggests encouraging property improvement, countywide initiatives, and promoting recreational activities like pickleball and kayaking. Enhancing local attractions and attracting larger industries to Cortland County are also highlighted for economic growth.

- Encourage sub-standard property improvement by owners
- Virgil putting in bike lanes, what if everyone had pickleball
- Campground and kayaking, doing good work on river
- County small business umbrella
- Lighthouse landing
- Attract larger industry to Cortland County

MAP OF COUNTY

- City homeless and drugs
- Improve gateway messaging to get people off 81 and into villages
- River/recreation waterfront



Focus Group Overarching Themes

As part of the Elevate Cortland Public Engagement a series of focus groups were held beginning in late March or 2024 and extending through April in an effort to gather subject and community experts on a range of topics that included Quality of Life, Businesses, the Environment, and Workforce. Each session was held over a two-hour meeting where attendees were encouraged to provide feedback. Below is a summary of the public feedback captured from those meetings beginning with the most recent meeting with subsequent summaries of each meeting held up the first focus group.

The focus group meetings in Cortland County revealed a dynamic array of both opportunities and challenges across various sectors, each interconnected with the overarching goal of fostering sustainable growth and improving community well-being.

The Quality of Life Focus Group highlighted Cortland County's picturesque landscapes and collaborative community spirit as strengths, but also recognized challenges like childcare availability and transportation options. Recommendations centered on investing in local parks, improving access to outdoor recreation, and fostering a unified mindset to tackle challenges collectively.

In the Business Focus Group, participants identified Cortland County's natural beauty, agricultural industry, and proximity to urban centers as significant assets. However, challenges such as affordable housing, childcare accessibility, and workforce issues were also acknowledged. Recommendations focused on zoning updates, workforce housing initiatives, and infrastructure improvements to attract younger demographics and support economic growth.

Similarly, the Environment Focus Group emphasized the importance of preserving natural resources while addressing challenges like flooding control and climate change impacts. Recommendations included incentivizing growth near centers, engaging youth in decision-making, and prioritizing conservation efforts and eco-tourism initiatives.

Lastly, the Workforce Focus Group identified employment opportunities and collaborations with educational institutions but noted challenges such as housing affordability and transportation limitations. Recommendations focused on developing housing strategies, subsidizing childcare, and enhancing transportation options to support a vibrant workforce.

Across all groups, there was a clear recognition of the need for collaborative action to address shared challenges, whether they be related to economic development, environmental stewardship, quality of life, or workforce issues. The recommendations underscored the importance of holistic approaches that consider the interconnectedness of these factors in fostering sustainable growth and community well-being in Cortland County.

Quality of Life Focus Group

Date of Meeting: April 4, 2024

SUMMARY

The Quality of Life Focus Group identified several strengths and opportunities in Cortland County, including its picturesque landscapes, abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, strong agricultural culture, and collaborative community spirit. However, challenges such as the lack of childcare, negative perceptions, inadequate transportation options, and poverty were also highlighted. Key themes included the need for improved communication, increased support for youth services and mental health/substance abuse programs, addressing housing affordability issues, and enhancing access to outdoor recreation. Recommendations included investing in local parks and outdoor spaces, fostering agricultural and agritourism opportunities, developing forums for policy development, and improving communication and collaboration among organizations. Additionally, suggestions were made to combat negative perceptions, promote community events, and adopt a unified "we instead of me" mindset to tackle challenges collectively.

Strengths/Opportunities:

- Environment – good air, good water, soil (x3)
- Cortland area is beautiful! Super idyllic landscapes
- Local music venues – Center for Peels – Rose Hall SUNY
- Driving distance/Commutable to larger cities: their assets
- Transportation corridors
- Geographic advantages in region (x2)
- Strong will + resilience of community
- Local Agencies work well together.
- Partnership collaboration across sectors
- Great people who love where they live
- History and Local Pride
- Collaborative community
- Plentiful Outdoor Space
- Outdoor recreation (x2)
- Ski Resorts
- Outstanding natural resources for recreation
- Picturesque
- Parks
- Access to finger lakes
- Recreational opportunities
- Good restaurants
- Strong agricultural + farming culture
- Farm fresh foods
- Self-sustaining w/ our Ag community
- SUNY Cortland + TC3 (x2)
- Low crime rate

Challenges/Issues:

- Not enough to do for teens and only one movie theatre.
- More aging housing, not all income based.
- Local zoning does not encourage growth (especially in housing + business)
- Public Transportation – Limited – No after-hours weekend bus
- Need improvements on sidewalks and bikes lanes.
- Not much focus on hunting and fishing sports or support
- Lack of value or focus on agriculture as tourism or bus development opportunity.
- More local access to outdoor recreation – buses to Dryer
- Better access to outdoor recreation. I.e., More trails – boat launches
- Need to protect our resources – water supplies are vulnerable.
- Consistent main+/-investment in public parks
- Need more trendy or local food restaurants.
- Assistance for mental health + substance abuse
- Lack of infrastructure for larger events (outdoor particularly)
- More transportation types (ZipCar, Volunteer, Drive programs, etc.)
- Local perception (negativity + general pessimism)
- Public transit and pedestrian/bike infrastructure are lacking.
- Lack of communication between orgs (x2)
- Our public schools are not great.
- Youth Center in Homer
- Day Care Subsidies
- Need more childcare opportunities (x2)
- Elected officials.
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse (x2)
- Local drug treatment facility
- Negative mindset of locals
- Homelessness
- Housing
- More housing
- Affordable housing
- Lack of providers.
- Lack of funding for human services
- Poor access to healthcare (x2)
- Food insecurity
- Public transportation (x2)
- More walkable sidewalks
- Improved transportation
- More bike lanes
- Lack of transportation in rural areas
- Job creation
- Poverty
- Limited shopping opportunities
- Need more diverse restaurants.
- Politics
- Bias
- Conference Venue
- Lower average income of population

Top Challenges:

1. Lack of Childcare
2. Need to provide services for youth (I.e., teen centers)
3. Negative perceptions – Lack of identity
4. Lack of communication
 - a. Not effective communication w/ public need to get on the same page.
5. Improved transportation options
6. Need to protect open space resources.
7. Poverty – need for job creation.
8. Opportunities to capitalize on outdoor sports/hunting fishing etc.
9. Improve access to outdoor recreation.
10. Mental health/substance abuse
11. More restaurants and venues for cultural activities

Additional Challenges:

1. Housing Affordability – not age friendly.
2. Broadband affordability high speed
3. Everyone needs to do their part between orgs unified message.

More Detail on Challenges:

- Navigable waterfront area through the community
- Dwyer Park needs to be invested in
- Building out opportunities related to agriculture and ag tourism.
- Places that cater to outdoor recreation rental spots for outdoor recreation equipment
- Need to overcome opposition to change.
- Health providers for women's health are lacking - & basic problems
- Seniors need transportation to health care appointments.
- Need to encourage service and care – encourage youth to think about these opportunities – vocational training.
- Lack of volunteers – need to actively recruit potential volunteers.
- Need to develop a forum for policy development – holding them on a regular basis.
- Community leaders' meetings
- Things close down early
- Lack of hotels/lodging \$\$350/night
- Post-Covid challenges – hard to find employees – shutting down early.
- Need to be able to bring people in from other places to be successful.
- Need to get beyond a "me" mentality and work together.
- High end connections between venues & (i.e., Greek Peak Gutchess sports park) & Cortland
- Lack of Funding/Financial resources to meet the level of need.
- Could be shared service opportunities with the county.
- State & federal policies impacting the ability to address local needs there is a need for increased local/regional advocacy.
- Improved communication/education of community challenges – dealing with NIMBYISM as a barrier.
- Rural communities lack places for teens.
- Lack of places for college students
- Shopping venues/activity places where there are concentrated places for things to do.
- Free or low-cost third place where people can go.
- County connections to outdoor recreation opportunities – regional bike connections – need a countywide system – connect to the Dryden Rail Trail
- Replicate what has been done with the Erie canal – bikes bring business.
- Need a countywide complete streets policy – need dedicated bicycle infrastructure.
- Route 2 US Bike Route
- Susquehanna rail corridor/rail trail opportunities
- Finger Lakes cycling club – oldest bike race in NYS Hollenback spring classic.
- Perception of the County inside and outside affects quality of life. Need to find ways to combat these perceptions – celebrate four seasons.
- Feed winners – celebrate our "hits" leverage those successes.
- Accepting the college community – Potential for people to stay
- How do county and local planning work together?
- Use the data that we have, don't reinvent the wheel (Seven Valleys)
- Inspiration – we need to learn how to inspire ourselves and other people – build momentum through inspiration.
- There are lots of special events throughout the year – think about how to continue them and support them.
- There are a lot of incredible minds and ideas, but people don't know where to go to share them.
- We instead of Me mindset. That can take us far.

Business Focus Group

Date of Meeting: April 2, 2024

SUMMARY

The Business Focus Group identified several key opportunities and challenges for Cortland County. Opportunities include its natural beauty, robust agricultural industry, access to higher education, strong leadership, and proximity to larger population centers. Challenges encompass affordable housing, lack of services in rural communities, childcare accessibility, education reform, farm consolidation, workforce issues, and infrastructure modernization. Additionally, concerns were raised about wages, property taxation, restrictive legislation, cultural diversity, and mental health support. Recommendations include zoning updates, workforce housing initiatives, farm succession planning, education reform, and infrastructure improvements to enhance walkability and attract younger demographics. Addressing these challenges while capitalizing on opportunities will be crucial for fostering sustainable economic growth and community well-being in Cortland County.

Strengths/Opportunities:

- Plenty of public land making it easy to get outdoors.
- Access to higher education BOCES, TC3
 - Strong
 - Accessible via SUNY system
 - Multiple colleges + universities nearby
- Growth happening – hiring, positivity, spurring investment.
 - New Energy South NY, Micron North
 - I-SMART – Tech Hub
- Location to several larger population centers
- Cortland County has infrastructure like few counties have – Rt 81 running down the middle w/ 5 exits + NYS+W rail system + longest?
- Spurring new investment via building business
- Low cost of living compared to other areas (x3)
- Access to transportation corridors for products and/or people to get to and from Cortland.
- In the middle of 2 Feudal Research hubs (chips + batteries)
- Connection to larger metro areas
- Access to infrastructure
- Rt 81
- Public spaces
- housing
- Beautiful mountains
- Geography
- Robust agricultural heritage + industry
- Good/high quality/abundant land
- Space
- Water
 - Quality
 - Recreation
 - Abundant
- The hospital system is strong.
- Strong leadership and advocacy
- Hardworking community
- Tight knit community
- Connection to larger metro areas
- Access to infrastructure
- Easy access to highway and thruway
- The interstate makes it accessible.
- State authority funding.
- Small businesses opening
- Loyal customers
- Proximity many institutions
- Centrally located in the state
- 14,000 dairy cows/varies.
- Hiring @ least 300 more people

Challenges/Issues:

- Housing stock, old inefficient and ...
 - Senior housing – think about where there's viable land for this – zoning, density, utilities.
 - Conversation with SUNY Cortland about on-campus vs off-campus housing – student housing is a challenge for the City.
 - There was a conversation about a student housing overlay in the zoning. It's in the code but isn't on the map. Revisit?
 - Homes in Cortland are beautiful but have eroded. The cost of rehabbing them is enormous, and there are tax implications. Build a program to help homeowners fix up their properties. Organize homeowners for bulk buying. The tax system disincentivizes improvements. Pulling permits creates a tax liability.
 - Historic home tax abatement/tax credits
 - Jamestown collaboration prize
 - Employer assisted housing - 100 years ago, there were whole communities of houses that were co-developed with businesses to address their employment needs. This is what employers need now, particularly for entry level workers. iSpice would collaborate with other businesses to offer workforce housing. They have a full 2nd floor that they could put apartments in, but they can't because of the regulations.
 - Zoning needs to be updated to address things like clustered housing and density. Allow more density. A lot of wasted land on 2.5 acre lots that are required now. Also, can't have more than 3 unrelated people in a unit.
 - Low housing stock
 - Quality + new housing
 - Insufficient medium + low-income housing
- Childcare
 - Employers lose good employees due to childcare.
 - Could one of the closed schools be used for daycare? Like public daycare? This was discussed, but it was too expensive. Labor is hard to get in that field as well.
 - Promoted in home daycare, the regulations are getting more rigorous though. Current providers are starting to get out of it.
 - Affordability and access
- Revamp k-12 education.
- Lack of services in rural communities
- Farm consolidation
 - Taxes, labor, cost of inputs, and narrow margins are leading to dairies consolidating.
 - Milk prices set in DC.
 - This wasn't always a dairy county, there was a lot of produce at one point, but we've lost all of that. The non-dairy farms have nearly disappeared. There are lots of acres of marginal, sloped soils that would be great for other types of crops, why are we not doing that? The premier hazelnut operation is in Cortland, why aren't there other hazelnut producers?
 - Northeast benefits: has the water and climate to grow the crops that dairy needs. Proximity to 60% of the US population.
 - Farm succession – how do we think about this beyond genetics?
 - Think about value-added to increase margins.
 - NYS is the second most agriculturally diverse next to California. Bees to cherries. NYS is an ag powerhouse.

- Programming to support maintenance of farmland as farmland, rather than selling farms for other uses. Keep land in agriculture.
- Solar is a threat to farmland. Need to think about solar policies that protect prime/productive soils.
- Work force (sheer numbers)
- Soft skills education Too many unemployables
- Hard to attract + hire employees.
- Lack of jobs, lack of businesses
- Wages – jobs that are available pay low wages.
 - Think about how wages are offset by the lower cost of living.
 - Talk about how to get beyond minimum wage jobs.
 - Need to balance wages with competitiveness. I Spice needs to compete in Alabama where minimum wage is \$7.25.
- Aging work force
- Communication between funding or advisement and business
- Ways to increase value added services to increase income (accelerations? incubators? training, etc.)
- Modernize infrastructure. Broadband, electricity, water
- Lack of human-centric infrastructure
 - Everything is built for cars. Not assets that people want to walk or bike.
 - Future proofing infrastructure – what will people want and what do they need. Walkability, bikeability, parks, water access, dog parks -
 - Low wages are more attractive if you don't need a car.
 - Balance with the historic "bones"
 - Energy infrastructure - outside of the main area, you are reliant on propane. Challenging to do manufacturing/industrial.
 - Be proactive – plan for the future, what younger people want.
 - Development outside of the City. Look at other village centers. McGraw, Scott. Need full utilities. Hamlet of Virgil (because of Greek Peak) has a natural gas pipeline, electric transmission, existing sewer district. Density in the hamlet.
 - Find the places where there is already a starting point for infrastructure and some level of density existing.
- Future proofing the city
- More equitable taxing between towns or maybe its valuation
 - About 55% of properties in the county are exempt. This is more than in the past.
 - How to make sure that property taxation isn't a disincentive to property owners to rehab/invest in properties.
- Restrictive legislation
- Low-income population – not a lot of disposable income for spending "challenge"
- Diversity + culture
- Lack of jobs, lack of businesses
- Wages – jobs that are available pay low wages.
- Think about how wages are offset by the lower cost of living.
- Talk about how to get beyond minimum wage jobs.
- Need to balance wages with competitiveness. I Spice needs to compete in Alabama where minimum wage is \$7.25.
- Cultural distinction
- Low per capital income
- Mental health support

Environment Focus Group

Date of Meeting: March 26, 2024

SUMMARY

The Environment Focus Group highlighted numerous opportunities and challenges for Cortland County's natural resources and environment. Key opportunities include promoting agri-tourism, preserving agricultural land, enhancing recreational activities, and leveraging high-quality water sources for tourism. Challenges include flooding control measures, climate change impacts, declining farming population, and economic forces driving land development. Recommendations include incentivizing growth near centers, providing training for local boards on environmental issues, engaging youth in decision-making processes, protecting natural corridors, and promoting eco-tourism initiatives. Additionally, suggestions were made to establish river trail systems, secure funding for conservation efforts, prioritize broadband access, and explore opportunities for ADA accessibility. Addressing these challenges while capitalizing on opportunities will be essential for fostering sustainable development and environmental stewardship in Cortland County.



Strengths/Opportunities:

- Strong sense of farmland conservation among agriculture community
- People who need food & land to grow it.
- Water sources: Lakes, streams, aquifer (abundant, high quality water) (x2)
- Water away in rural areas – For drafting to fight rural fires.
- Fostering a balance to achieve clean energy goals.
- State/public land @ Lime Hollow, SUNY Cortland, etc.
- Proximity to major highways & cities (Ithaca, Finger lakes, Syracuse, Binghamton)
- Playground destination in the middle of NY
- Many collaborative organizations who work together keeping local products in the community
- Agri-tourism (opportunities)
- Agriculture support businesses
- Agricultural land (x2)
- Farmland – both in production + not
- Untouched beautiful land (hiking)
- Land/Tourism opportunities.
- Public Land Clean Up
- Forest Lands (Private, Industrial, Public)
- Reforestation
- Open Space Preservation (x2)
- Clean water & air (x2)
- Need state portal.
- Preserving our rural character

- Opportunity – Growing interest in youth shooting sports.
- Huge higher education research community
- County is one of two in the state without a state park – opportunity to pursue.
- Key is quality. It's been in the state's plan for 15 years, and there have been some opportunities that weren't the best. Need to make sure it's a good quality proposal.
- Finger Lakes Trail, CNY peace trail, bike trail
- Environmental education hub
- Recreational businesses
- Nexus of conservation & recreation
- Unique geographic features
- Biodiversity
- Outdoor Rec
- 4 season outdoor recreation (x2)
- Lime Hollow
- Public Green Spaces
- Water Tourism
- Streams + Fly Fishing History
- Lakes/Streams water for recreation
- Floodplain reconnection and protector

Challenges/Issues:

- Control measures for flooding (undeveloped flood plains)
- How NYS does not calculate their formulas due to the population #s.
- Lack of \$ and priority placed on NRiEnv (National Resources Inventory).
- Buying/Moving residences out of certain areas that always flood
- Demand for land – the best ag land – most productive – is also the easiest and most effective to develop.
- Sprawling development pattern (controlling/ directing/ incentivizing/guiding land development patterns)
- Reluctance to have zoning or to zone for open space.
- Decrease in farmers + farms (farmers are aging).
- Need to balance clean energy + rural character.
- There isn't necessarily the next generation of leaders focused on these issues coming up behind the current leaders.
- Less forward thinking generally, some people are just ready to sell their land and retire to FL.
- Speaking of the policy side – people that are older have different opinions about policies that impact natural resources. Generational differences in perspectives.
- Communication between organization (Need a convener; Need leaders)
- Impaired forest regulation due to deer overpopulation in some areas
- Algae blooms
- State gov't micromanaging.
- County government support
- Funding + Implementation
- Funding (x2)
- Prioritization
- Cumulative Desire
- More in tease storms/water quality issues
- Climate Changes
- Climate change impacts
- Climate change impacting Greek Peak
- Invasive species
- Timeliness
- Loss of farms in operation
- Economics
- Of farming
- Of owning land
- Market forces
- History of industrial development/land use
- Good development ideas wrong place
- Expansion of mining interests
- Aging Community/Population (x2)
- East-West highway (topography)
- Stable Population
- Leaders in preservation
- Prevention of large corporation takeover
- Increasing fragmentation of ownership

Top Challenges:

1. Funding
2. Communication and Leadership
 - a. Aging Community - future leaders
3. Interest in close mindedness active farming
4. Climate change and invasive species
5. Decline of farming
6. Sprawl-guiding land development patterns.
7. Economic/Market Forces

How the County can help address these challenges:

- Nexus of safety, water quality, recreation, ag industry, etc. - Natural resource production - Niches at the county level that align regionally (rather than at the town level).
- It's easier and cheaper to build on big open land rather than at the edges of populated areas. Need to flip the incentive structure.
 - Rural zoning is consistent. The issue is at the edges of villages.
 - Planning for open spaces.
 - Grow communities that exist.
 - There could be some zoning solutions, and incentive solutions.
 - Infrastructure as an incentive solution
- Don't value open spaces protect them through zoning and other incentives.
- Need to identify the most appropriate places to encourage energy security (i.e., Solar) to preserve farmland and open space.
- Identify natural corridors that are protected.
- Community education to bring people together about the challenges, resources, and potential solutions for protection.
- Agritourism and ecotourism – live visit attracts people from other parts of the region.
- Define a vision for the future beyond manufacturing and a bedroom community for micron.
- Lots of competition – global employment – needs to be thought of at the scale of the county.
- How do we provide incentives for encouraging growth near centers
- Cortland County Portal
- Oberlin College – smaller models for environmental protection – eco – currency – payments for eco system services how can you make that work in Cortland County.
- \$2 Billion outdoor recreation economy – need to invest in recreation infrastructure – trailheads, wayfinding, access, parking.
- Long trail – Appalachian trail – we could mimic these locally.
- The rail trail connecting Cortland to Lime Hollow – could connect to the Drayden rail trail.
- Communicating the opportunities lack information – need to spread the word – focus on engaging influences.
- Provide training for local planning and zoning board members.
- Increasing the diversity of participation on local boards
- Boards
 - Require some kind of training regarding the environment and natural resources for board members.
 - Increase diversity of boards, get younger people.
 - Young people don't feel welcome living in the community, don't have a say in how things go. They don't feel they have a space to participate. How do we get the word to younger people?

- Think about institutional barriers, like when board meetings are... if they are during the middle of the day, they can't participate.
- We need to understand what they care about.
- Youth need to be brought along with how to be involved in decision making for the future – make youth feel valued – go to them.
- Boards meeting during the day can change when they meet to involve others.
- Pathways for students to get into the workforce.
- Reversing the exodus
- "Come farm with us" – Jefferson County – Right to farm mentality.
- Protect our natural corridors streams from encroaching development.
- Develop a river trail system within the County – history of fly fishing develops in interconnected system Tioughnioga.
- Route 11 between Cortland and Marathon – Priority protection area
- Challenge balancing people making ends meet with natural resource protection.
- Large institutions can demonstrate best practices for distributed generation.
- Let's agree on the top 20% of solutions.
- Need to secure the finer lakes trail - land on hand – shake agreements – county could help local planning boards.
- What is the economic value of our natural resources - working lands - need information on the values valuing ecotourism and agritourism.
- Quality broadband
- Elementary schools
- Carbon offsets and local business
- Arts and crafts trail – Cortland County local food map
- Business incubator for environmental oriented startups
- Farmers markets – public markets focused on local products.
- Abundant high-quality water
- Signal to global companies that land is available for carbon capture – need to aggregate land.
- Hunting – shooting sports. McGraw/Homer trap and skeet teams – popular – capitalizing on outdoor sports enthusiasts' 2nd conservation.
- Look at opportunities for ADA Accessibility
- What region are we? CNY, Finger Lakes, etc. – think about our audience.
- Market to the local population
- What do we do with county owned land – establish 1 second county park?
- Zero waste – what can be done no composting – limited recycling. What is our environmental ethos- What is our environmental ethos – NYS funding? 7 valleys food rescue.

Workforce Focus Group

Date of Meeting: March 25, 2024

SUMMARY

The Workforce Focus Group in Cortland County highlighted numerous employment opportunities, including growing businesses, access to skilled workers, and collaborations with educational institutions. However, challenges such as housing affordability, transportation limitations, lack of childcare, and low pay scales were identified. Top challenges included housing, transportation, childcare, pay-scale issues, lack of awareness about job openings, and a need for vision and cohesive planning. Recommendations included developing housing strategies, updating housing codes, subsidizing childcare, addressing transportation limitations, and fostering relationships between employers and workforce development entities. Additionally, suggestions were made to convene the development community to understand housing barriers, explore sustainable funding sources for childcare, and enhance transportation options beyond the existing minimal bus system.

Strengths/Opportunities:

- Large new employment opportunities | i.e.: iSpice Guthrie
- Employees seeking skilled workers more jobs than employees.
- There are lots of agencies willing to help people obtain work.
- There are people who want to live and work in Cortland Co. and not have to go elsewhere for work.
- Located on the I-81 corridor between Syracuse + Binghamton.
- People w/ disabilities are under employed.
- People w/ disabilities stay in jobs longer than average.
- Being part of the Battery Hub research group
- There should be enough jobs that job seekers have choices.
- Positive support from educational institutions – BICES TC3
- High enrollment in CTE Classes = graduates looking for jobs soon!
- There are many jobs available in Cortland County in many fields.
- We have job opportunities for people who want them.
- Variety of businesses available for those looking for employment
- Growing Businesses needing employees
- New Employers
- Employment close to home
- Affordable cost of living
- Central location in NYS
- New perspective on the work
- Growth
- DRI's
- Rich Intern pool
- Being part of the microchip Research Hub
- Cortland very collaborative :)
- Industry growth
- Home to two colleges + 4 high schools
- SUNY Cortland
- College campus nearby
- Variety of types of jobs
- There are lots of people in this community.
- Lots of college interns cannot keep them.
- People want to stay in line here.
- Lots of capacity at the agency level public nor profit
- A community that works very well together, businesses supportive of each other

Challenges/Issues:

- Unable to pay enough to attract and retain employees.
- Sustainable pipeline of employees a human service field
- High school transition to work force and some missed opportunities.
- Lack of willingness of employed to have more people with disabilities – not creative or accommodating.
- Seems to be “acceptable” that people do not have a job although capable – “comfort level.”
- General lack of interest in Human Services employment
- Lack of public transportation after 6pm on weekends
- Reimbursement rates are low for grants or Medicaid billing thus low wages.
- Needs for financial support for contractors to rehab the old stuff.
- Available and affordable housing
- What happens as enrollment declines? Will the landlords start renting to the community?
- Housing stock creating active brick and motor.
- We often think “small” as a small rural community.
- VISION – Not sure we know what we want to be – it is not on a poster.
- Need for a cohesive plan to tackle 21st century issues.
- Competitive market outside of/ adjacent to Cortland County
- Technology focus (Micron) – landed outside of Cortland County
- High taxes (Now York in general) lead many to move out of the area/state.
- Hours from state agencies that hinder employment opportunities.
- Competition from the North and South
- More Diversity
- Lack of Employees willing to work.
- Opioids – lack of support.
- Lack of job search resources
- Nobody seems to want to work
- People want too much money
- Barriers to educational opportunities
- Work Ethic
- Aging Skilled Labor
- Transportation (x4)
 - Bus system
 - Volunteer driver
 - Dial-a-ride
- Childcare availability (x5)
- Develop more housing.
- Housing (x 3)
- Lack of housing stock (x2)
- Family housing
- Cost of housing
- Cost of rental housing
- Severe lack of affordable housing (x2)
- Quality of available housing (x2)
- Codes for visitability
- Access to Funding
- Affordability across all income levels
- Sub-minimal wage; 14-c = :(
- Living Wage
- Pay scales at non-profit.
- Lack of awareness
- Knowledge of job openings
- Lack of information
- Communication

Top Challenges:

1. Housing
2. Transportation
3. Childcare
4. Pay-Scale
5. Lack of Awareness
6. Lack of Vision
7. State Context Regional
8. Creating Relationships between employers and those readying people for work
9. Broadband

How the County can help address these challenges:

- Need resources to help workers (graduates) transition to work.
- Schools are blind to the needs of employees – loose affiliation and connections.
- Community school's liaison coordinates services between the community and the schools
- Housing
 - Lack of senior housing barrier to potential new homebuyer
 - Developing housing is expensive takes a long time + lots of dilapidated housing.
 - Competitive grants environment
 - Updating housing codes
 - Family based childcare – homes are not up to state standards – connect childcare to housing and neighborhoods.
 - SUNY Cortland students occupied many rental properties in the city (60% of students live off campus)
 - Not enough dorm rooms on campus housing costs are expensive – challenge to recent graduates.
 - Employers travelling from outside the community.
 - Student enrollment is declining.
 - Convening development community to understand barriers to housing development – look at local zoning - develop a housing strategy.
- Childcare
 - Multiple childcare centers have closed – cannot afford to pay above minimum wage – lots of turnover.
 - Funding to subsidize childcare.
 - There are hundreds of kids on the wait list.
 - There is not an abundance of quality people who can work for the wages offered. There is a lot higher turnover than there used to be. With increasing minimum wage, there isn't an offset of those costs, so fewer people are carrying the load.
 - Need additional funding to subsidize childcare. DSS is subsidizing a lot more. There is a lack of funding, but that is only one piece.
 - 92 pages of regulation
 - Lack of people wanting the level of responsibility for minimum wage.
 - Funding is great, but it has to be sustained.
 - DSS low-income program: The eligibility was vastly increased, but the allocation of funding was cut. So, more people are eligible, but there is less funding to go around. Funding runs out 3/31, and there has been no communication about allocation for next year.
 - Everyone knows the system is broken, but no one has provided a solution or any action.
 - Employers have been reluctant to support childcare.
 - Grant funding comes with strings attached regulations increase costs need to identify a sustainable funding source - eligibility increased with a decline in funding.
 - need to look at Canadian model Ontario.
 - Do not provide funding like a public school district.
- Transportation
 - minimal bus system
 - need to think about other options.
 - \$\$ hard to keep drivers.

Community Housing/Homeless Committee Meetings

Date of Meetings: February 7, March 27, and April 10, 2024

SUMMARY

In addition to the above focus groups, County staff attended three meetings of a committee consisting of housing-related agencies and organization, that is coordinated by the County's Department of Social Services. These meetings occur monthly and offer an opportunity for these entities to share information and updates.

FEBRUARY 1, 2024 MEETING

The results of the Housing and Homelessness and Cortland County report published by the Rural Health Institute and Cortland Area Communities That Care in January 2024 were reviewed at the meeting. Afterwards, meeting participants identified and/or reiterated the following gaps and challenges when it comes to housing and homelessness:

- Physically accessible housing, universal design
- Lack of workforce to help address the issues – the agencies working on these issues cannot fill all of their positions – need to get in front of this
- Proactive strategies to get ahead of homelessness and housing insecurity rather than reacting to it
- Additional affordable housing units to provide a diversity of options
 - Potential for collaboration with employers – employer assisted housing
- Age of housing stock – funding needed to reinvest in existing housing
- Length of time and cost to build new housing units are too much – streamlining and funding needed
- Broader land use strategy – think regionally about expanding infrastructure and targeting areas for development – updates to local land use regulations as needed (e.g. accessory dwelling units, density, etc.)
- Creating a day-center outside of the winter season – year-round strategy that mirrors warming centers
- Need to address lead poisoning from older housing stock – lack of remediation funding
- Family supports to provide the foundation for success – household management and independent living skills – budgeting, nutrition, financial literacy, etc.
 - ATI already received a small grant to offer these services – consider whether replication/scaling is possible
- Broadband access
- Benefits Cliff - Income caps for SSI, SSD, and other benefits programs are a barrier to rising up the income ladder
- Invisible housing insecurity/homelessness – increased youth “couch surfing” in particular
- Reduce the stigma - education about what homelessness looks like, and dispelling perceptions about correlated conditions (e.g. substance abuse, mental health, disabilities, etc.)
- Need to address immediate crisis while addressing long-term needs
- Need to define homelessness – identify and quantify who is at risk of becoming homeless
- Economics – lack of living wage jobs, student debt, expanding workforce development
 - Can workforce pathways be embedded within the housing support ecosystem?
- Lack of housing options – overpriced

MARCH 27 AND APRIL 10, 2024 MEETINGS

The group revisited the identified gaps and challenges at these meetings, focusing on better defining barriers and solutions to overcome them.

Database

- Increase data integrity
- Open/real time database
- Available stock database
- Combine services (OMH/OPWDD/OASIS)
 - Break down silos of services in each agency
- System that helps individuals know what and where services, support, and housing are available
- Identify regional and local services and support
- Build survey that connects a user directly to services (NY Connect/211)
 - College students creating a prototype?
- Real life (non-provider) input to database
- Promote/Value the “warm handoff”
 - What are the roadblocks that cause individuals drop out of the system?

Availability

- Additional housing units (need more available)
- Increase stock diversity and quantity
- Alternative housing options (e.g. tiny homes, pallet homes)
- Increase density
- Redevelop vacant properties (K-mart)
- Allowing accessory dwelling units building
- TC3 / SUNY on-campus vs off
- Existing stock survey (using CDBG – BDC/IDA)
- Land Trust / Land Bank (address zombie homes)
- Incentivizing property owners to construct non-student housing
- Taxes...
- Zoning- changes to allow more alternative housing options
- Pro-housing resolutions

Funding:

- Available funding for home repairs for renters
- More funding for new housing and associations
- Transitional
- Permanent
- Find out what other counties are doing to make the funding work for them or how they are finding the private funding
- Better understand state/federal equations in the selection process
- Alternative funding solutions?
- Private/social investors
- Functional Zero – community solutions
- \$ for helping with mortgage payments
- Homelessness prevention funding – currently ends this fall – OTDA Step Funding

The group also discussed the experience for individuals receiving housing services and support.

Transitioning in

- Get ahead of who will be homeless, be proactive in preventing homeless
- Defining categories & housing stock to match w/ recipients
- Community center – 24/7, 365
 - Low threshold? \$300,000 in Onondaga County

Placement

- Set up program or progressive planning (rent equity model?)
- Immediate/streamline program to connect individuals with services

Transitioning out

- Navigate temporary steppingstones to achieve long-term solutions
- Transitional housing

Education and support during engagement:

- Communications infrastructure / education component
- Benefits information (what's available)

Education and support after engagement:

- Financial planning and education programs
- Life skills

APPENDIX E: ADDITIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY BACKGROUND

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Reliable renewable energy is an increasingly important factor to consider for achieving NYS's Climate Act electrification goal of obtaining 70% of the state's electricity from renewable sources by 2030[1]. Renewable energy is defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) as electricity generated by fuel sources that restore themselves over a short period of time and do not diminish. Renewable technologies include solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, biogas, and hydroelectricity. Renewable energy offers a sustainable way to produce electricity without producing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to air pollution. In addition to the environmental benefits, renewable energy diversifies the energy supply and reduces dependence on imported fuels.

Cortland County is in a great geographic position to benefit from development in the renewable energy sector. The County's more rural areas provide the essential space to appropriately site renewable energy infrastructure, creating economic development opportunities in communities that have sometimes felt left behind. Cortland County has several renewable energy facilities already, including solar and geothermal infrastructure. Existing solar facilities in the County include the following:

- Cortlandville III Solar CSG - Total Net Summer Capacity: 5.0 MW
- Cortlandville I Solar CSG - Total Net Summer Capacity: 5.0 MW
- Harford Solar Farm - Total Net Summer Capacity: 2.0 MW
- Bellisario Solar 3 - Total Net Summer Capacity: 5.0 MW
- Bellisario Solar 2 - Total Net Summer Capacity: 5.0 MW
- Bellisario Solar 1 - Total Net Summer Capacity: 5.0 MW
- NY8 - Janis Solar - Total Net Summer Capacity: 20.0 MW

Supplementing the County's solar infrastructure are geothermal heat pumps (GHPs), also known as ground-source heat pumps, that produce geothermal energy used primarily to heat water and condition buildings. Cortland County currently generates its maximum economic potential for geothermal energy at 190 Megawatts Thermal (MWh). The economic potential of GHPs represents the sum of the potential GHP applications that result in positive net present value of the investment for the County.

[1] New York's Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act - New York's Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act. (n.d.). NYSEDA. <https://climate.ny.gov/>

While present projections indicate that new geothermal heating is not currently cost-effective in Cortland County, projected improvements to the technology may make this source more financially viable in the future. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory projects that with advancements in geothermal technology, Cortland County has the potential to generate an additional 76MWth in existing buildings and an additional 6.8MWth in new construction. This would go a long way to harness the energy potential from the ground and potentially lessen the need for solar infrastructure that impacts the County's viable agricultural land.

On a household basis, Cortland County residents' homes are currently heated using a variety of fuel types (Table 1). The most common source of heating fuel is utility gas, followed by fuel oil, and electricity. While renewable energy sources make up a minimal percentage of home heating fuel types, electricity is a common heating type that can be supplied from renewable sources like solar and wind. Which may become increasingly popular with the State's renewable energy goals. Additionally, the potential for geothermal home heating exists within the County but is currently dependent on technology improvements or subsidies to make it economically viable. Overall, Cortland County residents benefit from relatively affordable energy costs; the average household spends 3.54% of their income on energy costs, which is below the 6% threshold to be considered to have an energy burden.

TABLE 1: HOME HEATING TYPE

FUEL TYPE	ESTIMATE	PERCENTAGE
Utility Gas	8,718	47.1%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	2,245	12.1%
Electricity	2,539	13.7%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	2,794	15.1%
Coal or coke	423	2.3%
Wood	1,449	7.8%
Solar energy	32	0.2%
Other fuel	243	1.3%
No fuel used	71	0.4%
TOTAL	18,514	

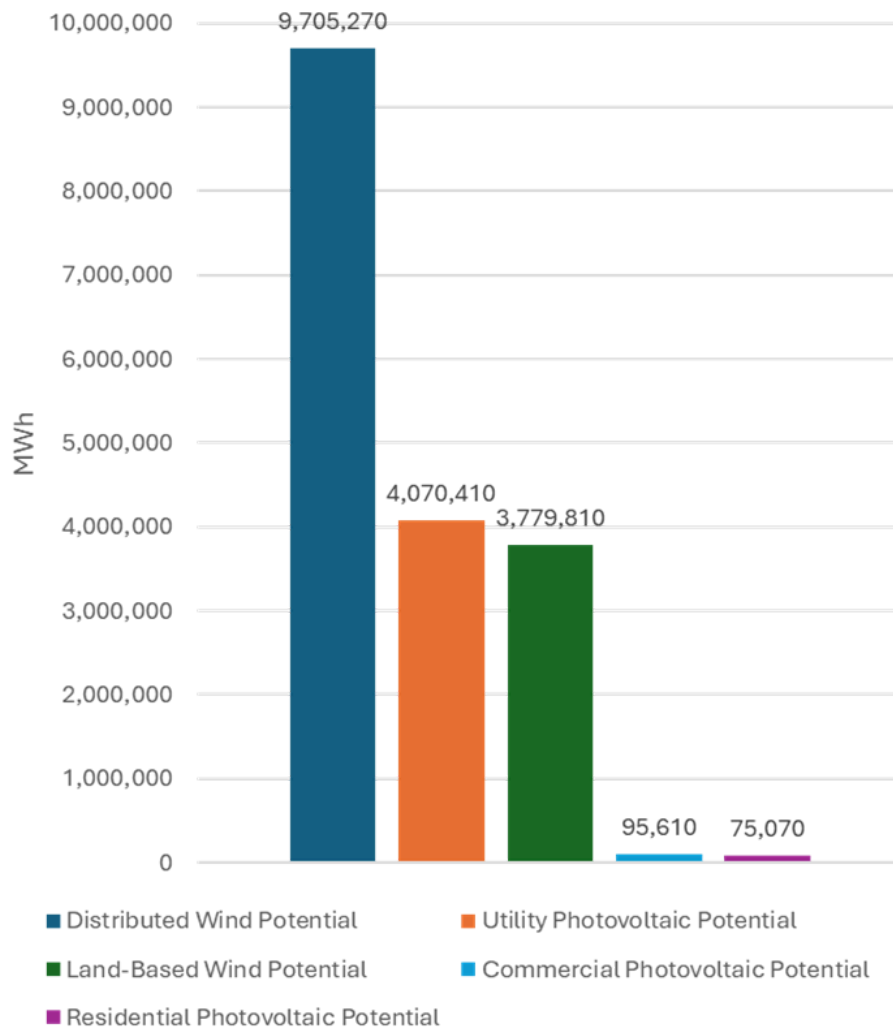
Potential for renewable energy generation in Cortland County was assessed using the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) State and Local Planning for Energy (SLOPE) tool. Table 2 provides definitions for each category of energy generation assessed in NREL's SLOPE tool.

TABLE 2: RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE DEFINITIONS

ENERGY SOURCES	DEFINITION
Land-Based Wind	Utility-scale wind energy, typically 100-kilowatts or greater per turbine, generating electricity for distribution through a utility company's grid. Land-based wind is the most mature form of renewable energy generation in the United States.
Distributed Wind	Connected at the distribution level of an electricity delivery system (or in off-grid applications) to serve on-site energy demand or support operation of local electricity distribution networks. Typically, 100-kilowatts or less per turbine, distributed wind installations can range from a less-than-1-kilowatt off-grid wind turbine powering telecommunications equipment to a 15-kilowatt wind turbine at a home or small farm or a 100-kilowatt wind turbine at a university campus or industrial facility.
Utility Photovoltaic	Solar photovoltaic projects that generate electricity for distribution through a utility company's grid rather than connecting behind a customer's meter. Utility-scale projects are usually greater than 5 Megawatts.
Commercial Photovoltaic	A form of distributed solar electricity generation intended to power businesses.
Residential Photovoltaic	A form of distributed solar electricity generation intended to power individual residences.

Renewable energy generation presents a significant opportunity for Cortland County (Figure 1). Data suggests that distributed wind is the County's greatest potential renewable energy asset, with greater MWh generation potential than utility-scale solar and wind combined. Distributed wind installations are typically small-scale systems intended to serve on-site energy demand for residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and community sites. With intentional resource development and investment, the County could be a vital resource to connect residents and businesses to technical assistance needed to harness renewable energy assets.

FIGURE 1: CORTLAND COUNTY ANNUAL TECHNICAL GENERATION POTENTIAL





On the other hand, the permitting process for larger-scale renewable energy projects is lengthy and a variety of entities must be consulted to ensure appropriate infrastructure siting. In particular, NYS has numerous programs that regulate and support utility scale renewable energy generation facility development. The NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES) has a consolidated environmental review and permitting process for renewable energy generation. Projects of 25 megawatts or larger must obtain a siting permit from ORES. ORES has the authority to issue state and local construction permits. Applicants must provide proof of consultation with the host municipalities and communities to receive a permit. Permitted projects may apply for subsidies from NYSEDA through a competitive application process. Proposals are evaluated based on benefits to Disadvantaged Communities, Agricultural Mitigation, and Economic Benefits.

While harnessing renewable energy presents opportunities for the County to spur economic development and utilize its natural assets without depleting them, the public engagement process revealed that County residents are concerned regarding the impact of utility-scale projects on the rural character of their communities. In particular, residents view the growing number of solar farms as a potential threat to the region's viable agricultural landscape. Recognizing the need to balance economic development opportunities with intentional measures to preserve Cortland's agricultural land, the County aims to find a "right-sized" approach to supporting renewable energy infrastructure development while empowering municipalities to weigh in on where and what this looks like.

While local control for utility scale projects is limited due to NYS involvement, there are various avenues that the County can take to be proactive about planning for utility-scale development to ensure the benefits of the project are concentrated locally and negative impacts are minimized. To accomplish this, the County can leverage NYS programs to develop a Cortland County Renewable Energy Strategy that promotes local energy generation at a scale that is appropriate for the community, creates jobs locally, and leverages state and federal programs to maximize local benefits of utility-scale projects. The County can also support municipalities with technical assistance and resources to help them advance renewable energy goals.

APPENDIX F: ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION BACKGROUND & DATA

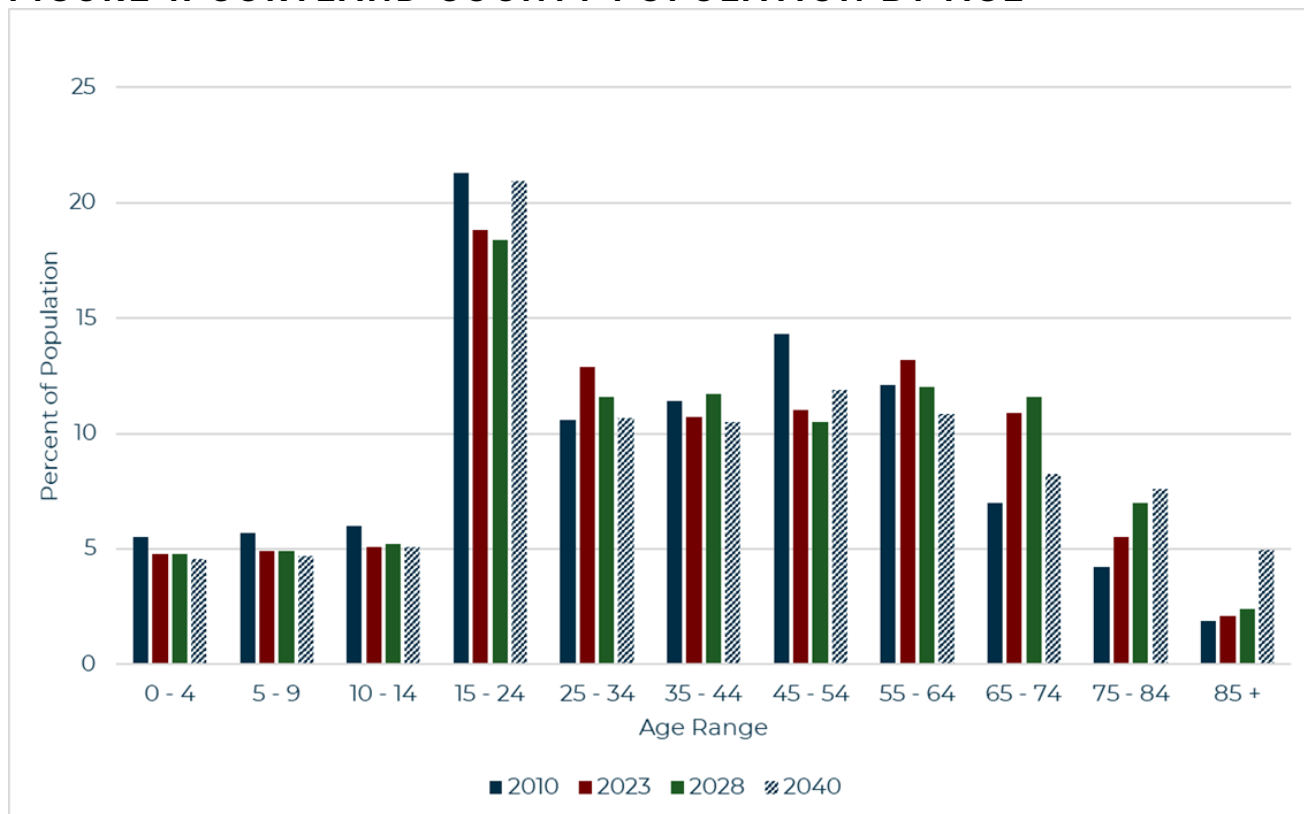
Current Context & Trends

With regard to transportation, it is often assumed that the personal vehicle is the ultimate mode of transport. However, the demand for transportation mode is as diverse as people themselves, and mode choice often relates to price – monetary and perceived. Consider that children under 16, older residents, and some disabled residents legally cannot drive but certainly should be able to independently move around their community to a friend or family's house or to a park, school, or other service. This report will evaluate transportation system as a combination of options available to residents to seek out as it best serves their diverse needs and desires. Furthermore, this report will evaluate how transportation choices subject non-users to impacts (e.g. pollution) so that policy makers can factor this into decision-making.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND RESOURCES

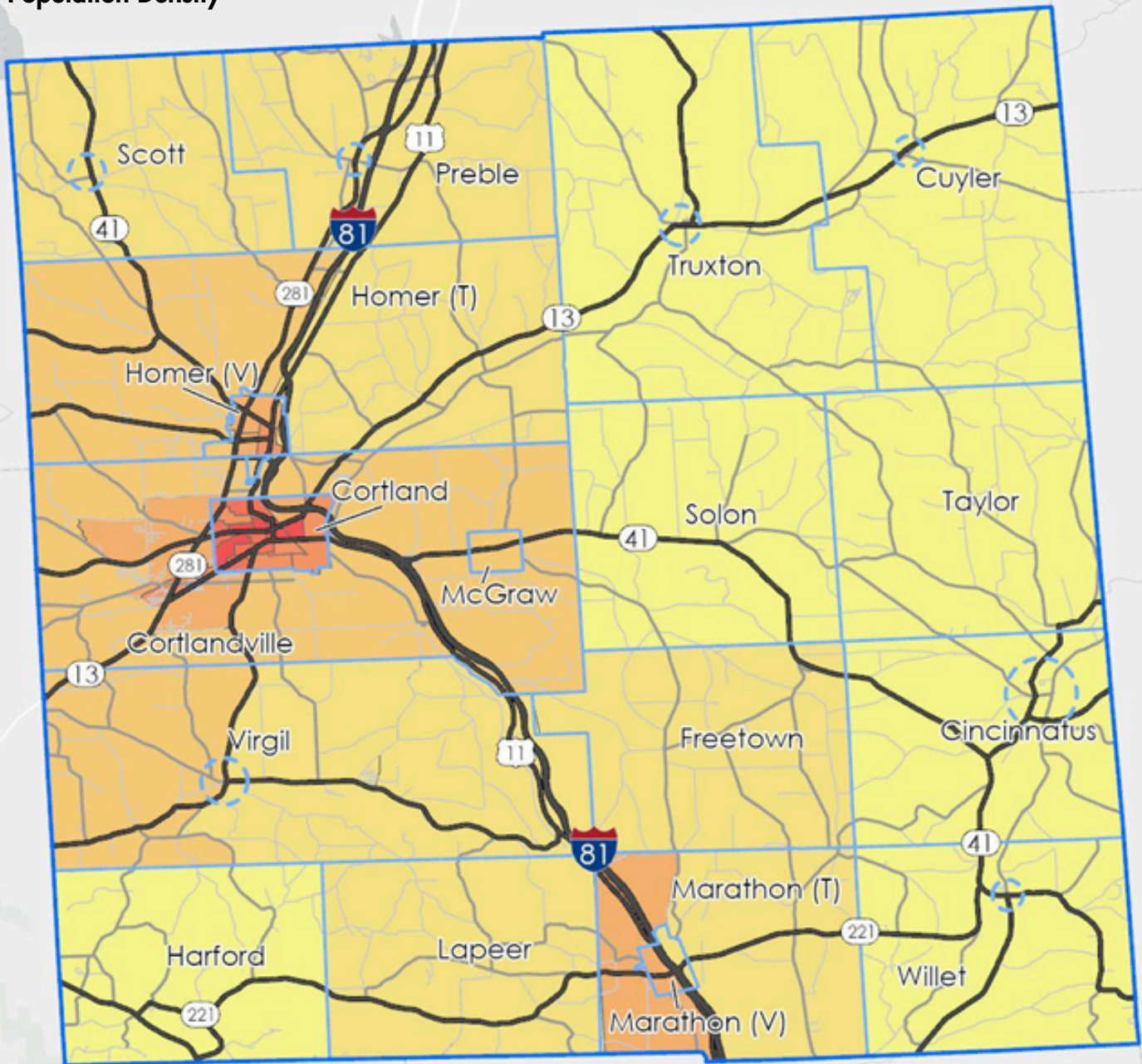
Age

Cortland County's population is projected to shrink within the planning horizon, but the population is expected to age significantly within that period (Figure 1). Ambulatory difficulties and independent living difficulties rise significantly as the population ages suggesting a need for transportation options for these residents other than personal vehicles.

FIGURE 1: CORTLAND COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE

SOURCE: ESRI FORECASTS FOR 2023 AND 2028. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 2000 AND 2010 DECENNIAL CENSUS DATA CONVERTED BY ESRI INTO 2020 GEOGRAPHY. 2040 PROJECTIONS FROM CORNELL PROGRAM AND APPLIED DEMOGRAPHICS, 2018 POPULATION PROJECTIONS.

Population Density



CI - MAP 1: POPULATION DENSITY

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

POPULATION PER ACRE

- < 0.056
- 0.057 - 0.103
- 0.103 - 0.233
- 0.233 - 4.025
- 4.025 - 5.962
- 5.962 - 9.457
- 9.457 - 16.982

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/11/2024

Source:

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial
Census Redistricting Data, Table P1,
2020.

Map
By:**MRB**

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Race

As it relates to racial diversity, the areas of the County with the greatest variation are generally within the City of Cortland and the Town of Cortlandville surrounding SUNY Cortland or the downtown area of the City of Cortland. (Map 2)

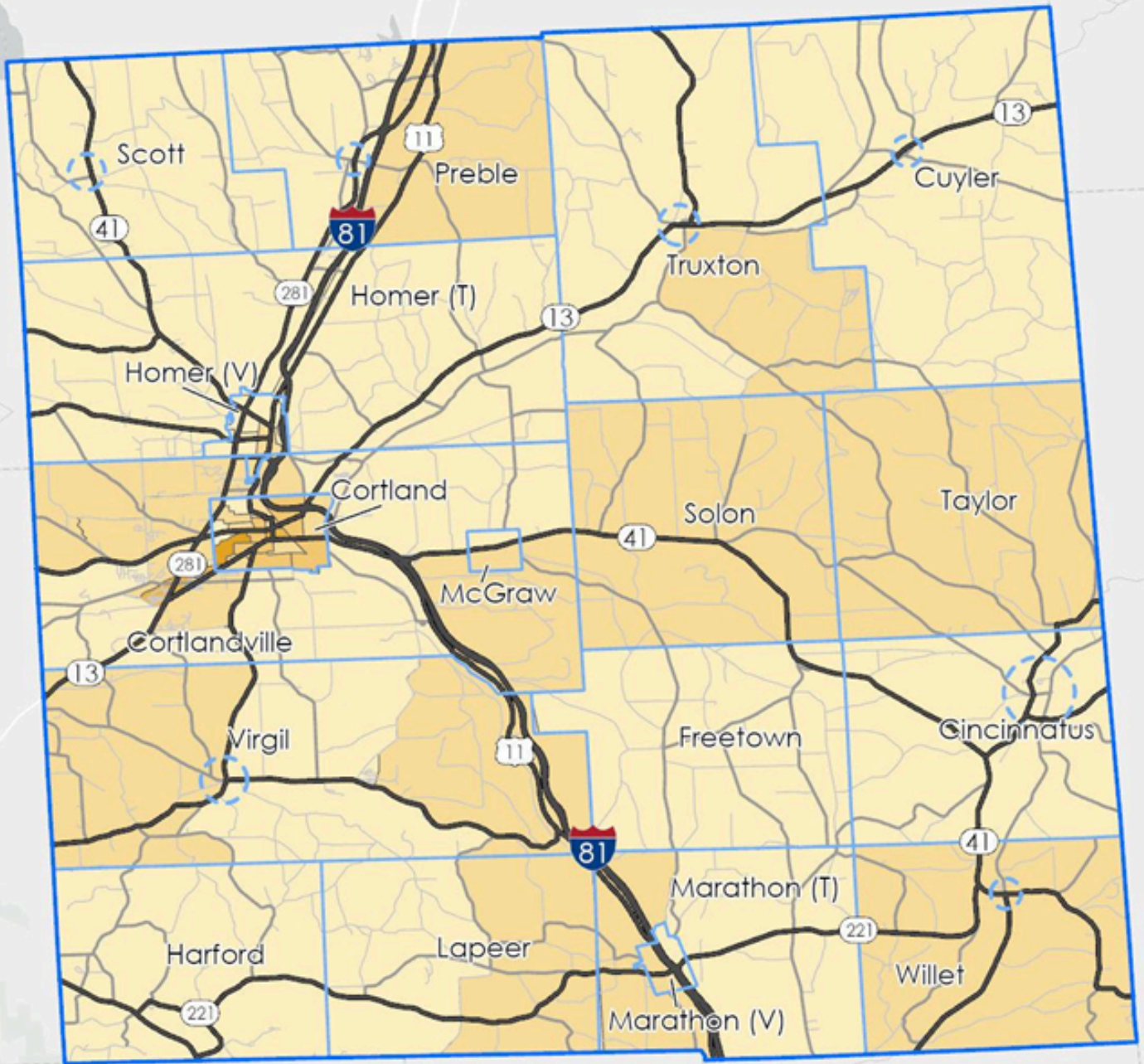
Income Below Poverty

Poverty is highest within the City of Cortland where in some areas between 25% and 50% of the population earned less than the poverty rate within the last year. Some more rural areas such as Truxton and Willet also experience substantial rates of poverty between 14% and 26%. People in poverty have less resources to dedicate to any expenditure including transportation. This likely makes them more sensitive to increased cost for vehicles, gas, transit, and other transportation costs. Housing and Transportation costs typically consume greater than 50% of household income. (Map 4)

MOBILITY**AADT**

In terms of roadway congestion, public engagement sessions and meetings with the highway superintendents revealed little concern about roadway congestion. While not strictly a measure of congestion, Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) provides an estimate of traffic volumes across all days for a year of a given section of roadway (Map 5). The highest vehicle traffic is located along Interstate 81 and other arterial routes within or near the City of Cortland such as route 13. Throughout the County though, traffic counts are generally not excessive.

As it relates to vehicles, consideration of congestion should also account for parking. If available spaces are limited, it can cause the operator to circle their destination to find a desirable parking space. This adds time to the trip, and it also causes congestion of the roadways themselves. The solution to parking issues is not always more spaces, support for alternative transportation and management strategies can encourage more effectively reduce parking demand without negative impacts to associated businesses or residences. Emergency technologies such as private autonomous vehicle companies like WAYMO and e-bikes and e-scooters may reduce parking demands in the future by relieving personal vehicle usage.



CI - MAP 2: NON-WHITE POPULATION

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION IDENTIFY AS NON-WHITE ALONE

Variation from Mean

- < -0.50 Std. Dev.
- 0.50 - 0.50 Std. Dev.
- 0.50 - 1.5 Std. Dev.
- 1.5 - 2.5 Std. Dev.
- > 2.5 Std. Dev.

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/11/2024

Source:

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial
Census Redistricting Data, Table P1,
2020.

Map
By:

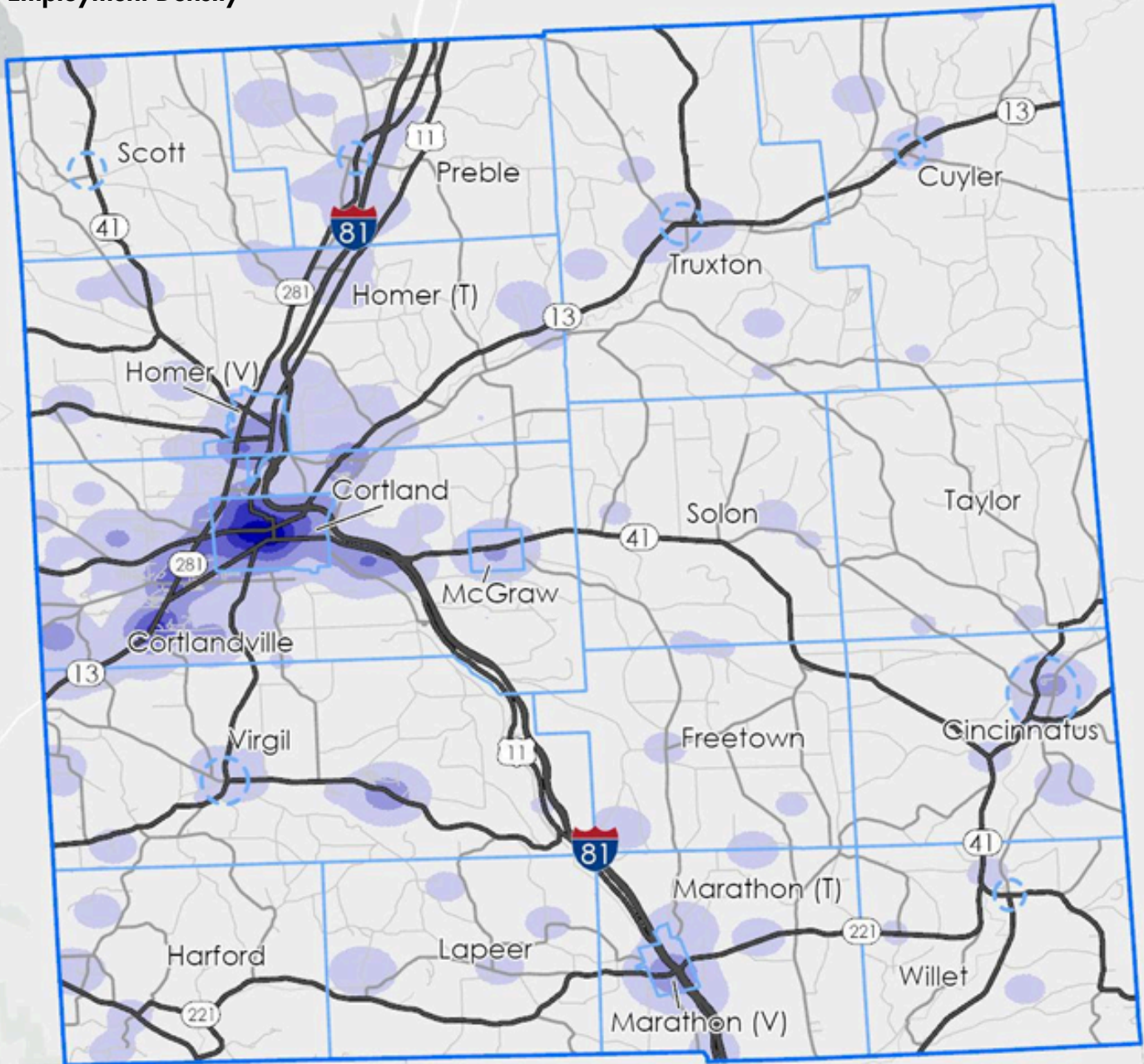


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Packet Pg. 225



Employment Density



CI - MAP 3: EMPLOYMENT DENSITY CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

JOBS / SQUARE MILE

- 5 - 265 Jobs / Sq. Mile
- 266 - 1,046 Jobs / Sq. Mile
- 1,047 - 2,347 Jobs / Sq. Mile
- 2,348 - 4,170 Jobs / Sq. Mile
- 4,171 - 6,513 Jobs / Sq. Mile

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/11/2024

Source:

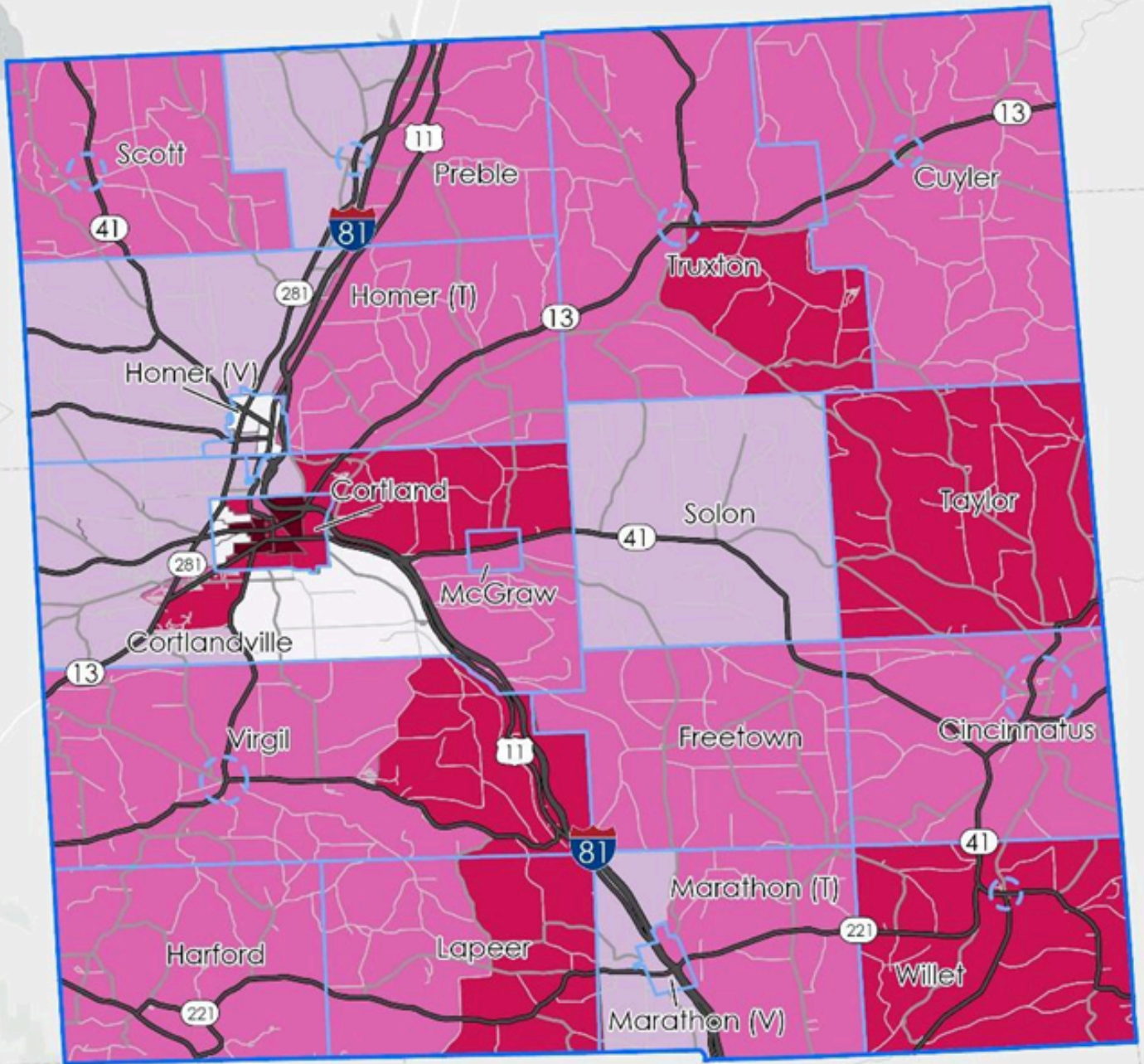
U.S. Census Bureau. LEHD
Origin-Destination
Employment Statistics (2021).

Map
By:



MRB

Packet Pg. 226



CI - MAP 4: INCOME BELOW POVERTY LEVEL CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

% OF POPULATION WITH INCOME BELOW POVERTY LEVEL IN PAST 12 MONTHS

- 0.34 - 2.1
- 2.2 - 5.7
- 5.8 - 13
- 14 - 26
- 27 - 53

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/11/2024

Source:

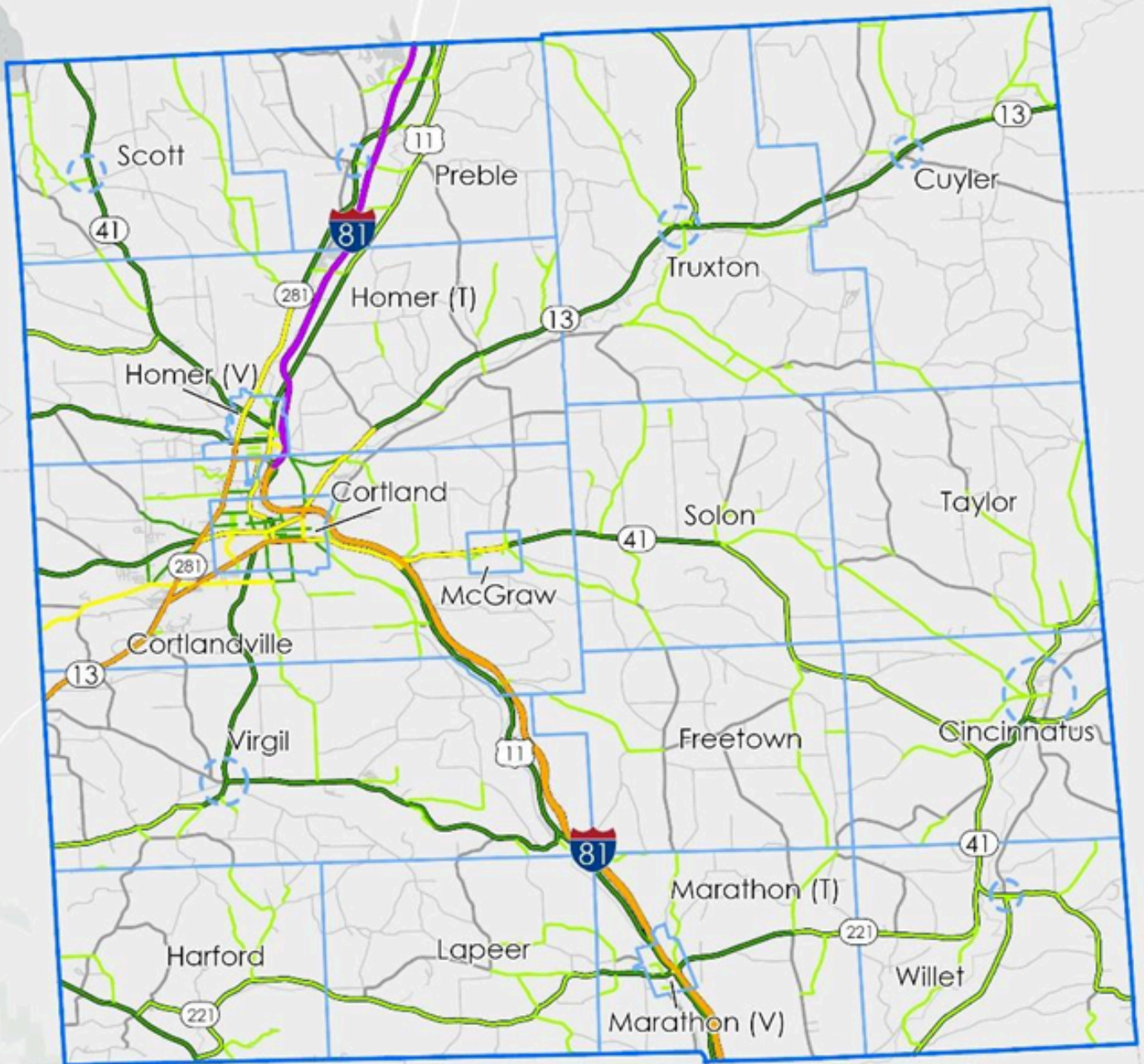
U.S. Census Bureau, "RATIO OF INCOME TO POVERTY LEVEL IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS," ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table C17002, 2021

Map
By:



MRB

Packet Pg. 227



CI - MAP 5: ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)

- 7 - 1500
- 1501 - 4000
- 4001 - 10000
- 10001 - 25000
- 25001 - 75000

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/11/2024

Source:

NYS DOT Highway Data Services,
2021

Map
By:



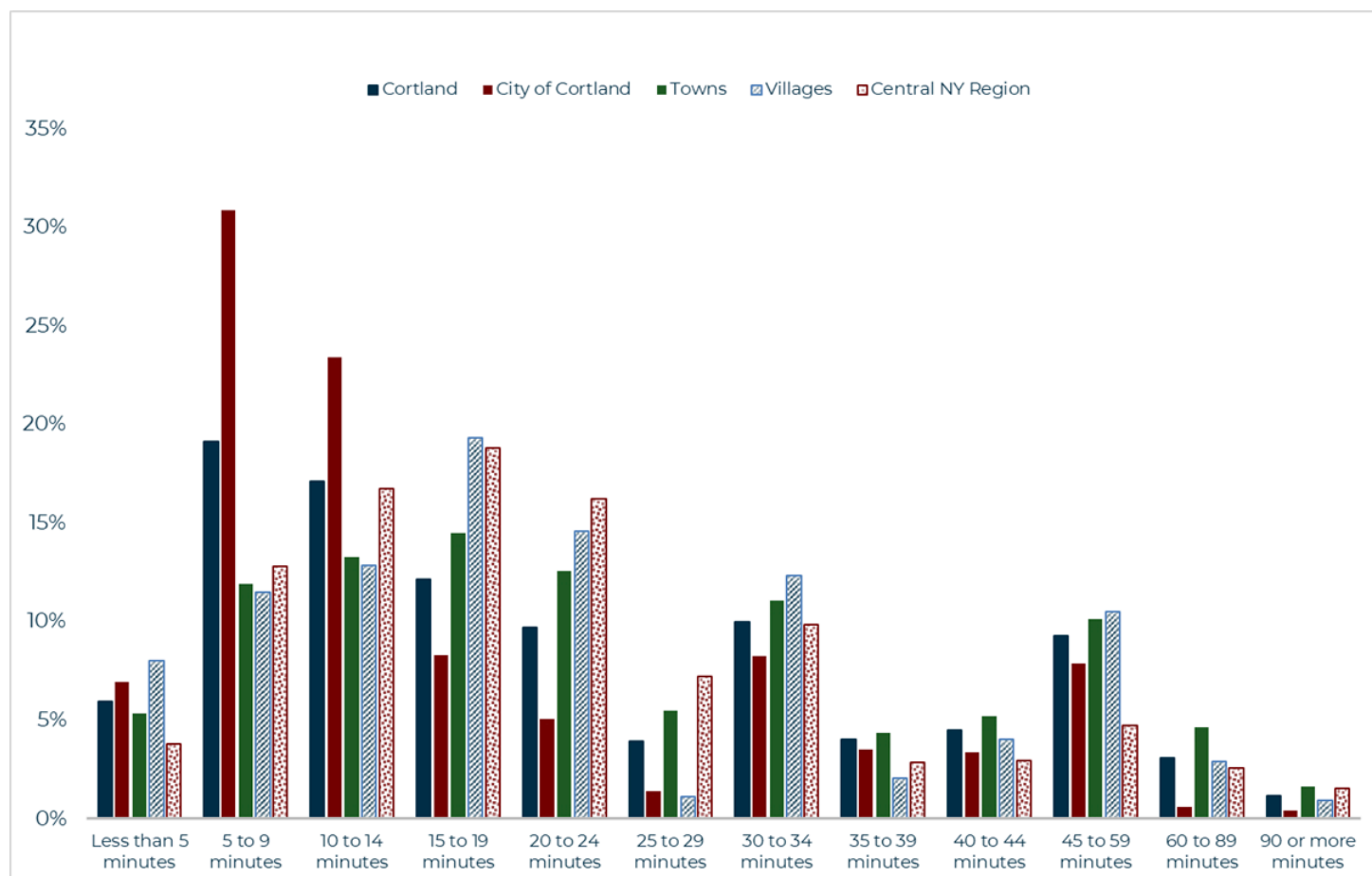
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Packet Pg. 228

Commuting Characteristics

Commute times are an important indicator of mobility and importantly influence quality of life. The average commute time in Cortland County is 21.7 minutes which is nearly identical to the Central NY region average of 21.4 minutes. Importantly though, there is significant variation in commute times throughout the County where a much higher portion of City of Cortland resident commute times are under 15 minutes. A larger portion of Cortland County residents commute for longer times – between 45-60 minutes – than the Central NY region (Figure 2). Cortland County commuting patterns show a net outflow of employees of 1,220 primarily to Tompkins County. However, a large number of employees do commute into Cortland County primarily from Onondaga County and Tompkins County.

FIGURE 2: TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU. "TRAVEL TIME TO WORK." AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES DETAILED TABLES, TABLE B08303, 2022.

Table 1

Workers Age 16+ Years By Means of Transportation										
	Cortland County		City of Cortland		Towns		Villages		CNY Region	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Row	16,971	75.3%	5,502	66.7%	11,469	80.3%	2,135	81.8%	281,279	77.6%
Row	2,526	11.2%	1,296	15.7%	1,230	8.6%	160	6.1%	28,106	7.8%
Row	261	1.2%	96	1.2%	165	1.2%	13	0.5%	6,494	1.8%
Row	98	0.4%	98	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1,043	0.3%
Row	3	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.0%	2	0.1%	349	0.1%
Row	139	0.6%	86	1.0%	53	0.4%	9	0.3%	1,028	0.3%
Row	1,052	4.7%	803	9.7%	249	1.7%	97	3.7%	13,598	3.8%
Row	129	0.6%	23	0.3%	106	0.7%	17	0.7%	3,730	1.0%
Row	1,349	6.0%	350	4.2%	999	7.0%	176	6.7%	26,806	7.4%
Total	22,528	100%	8,254	100%	14,274	100%	2,609	100%	362,433	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. "Community Characteristics by Sex." American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2022.

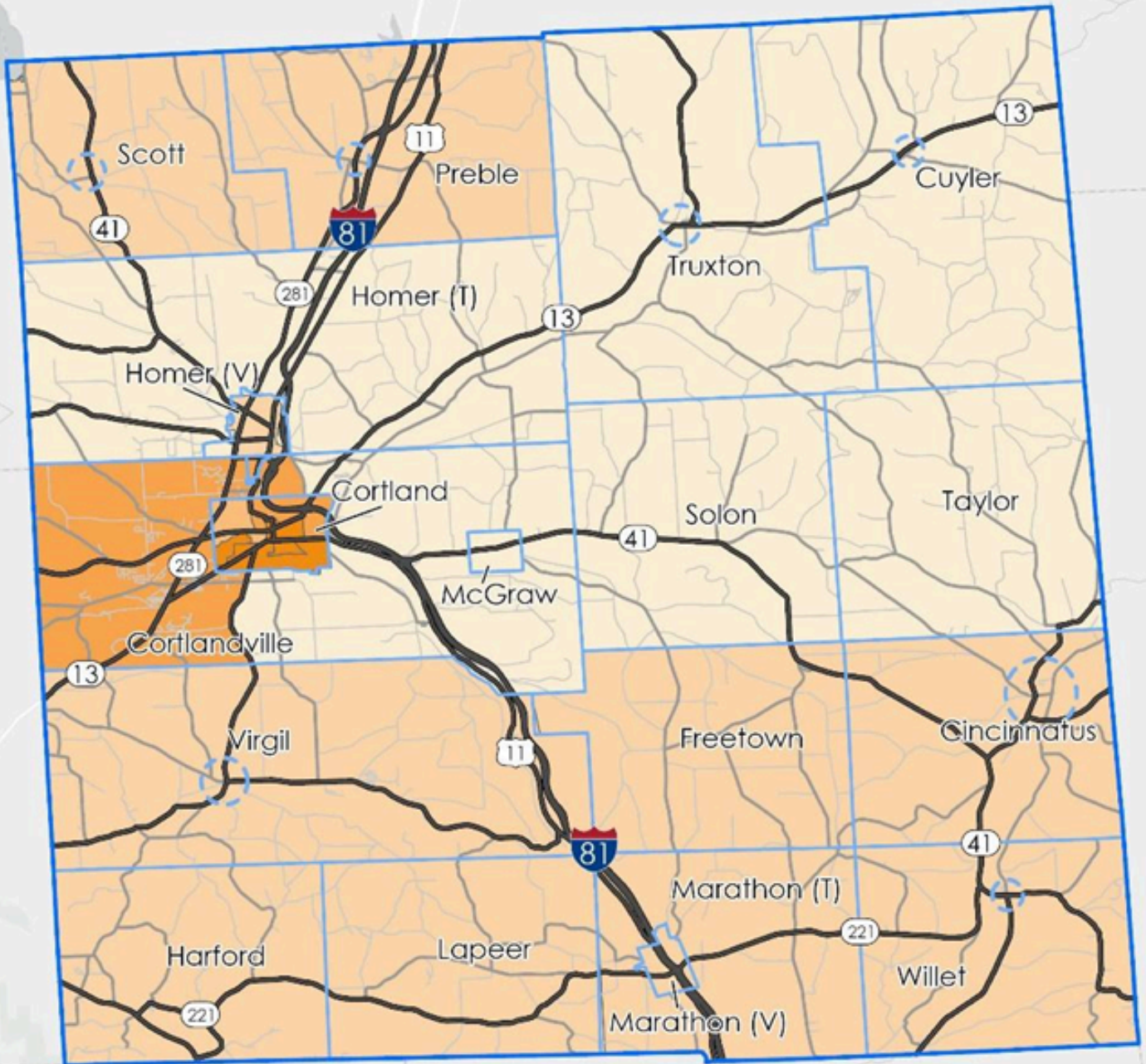
ACCESS AND COST

Accessibility refers to a traveler's ability to reach a destination or whether transportation options are available at all. We'll also consider transportation costs as this can be a major hinderance to accessibility.

Households Without Access to a Car

Throughout the County, there are households that lack access to vehicles (Map 6). The City of Cortland and the western portion of the Town of Cortlandville have the highest proportion of households lacking vehicle access. The County and SUNY Cortland also provide transit services throughout much of the county and importantly, the greatest density of service where vehicle access is most limited. The cost of vehicle ownership continues to rise. AAA estimates it costs around \$12k per year for a new car and those rising costs filter into the used car market. As it is becoming less affordable to drive – people are looking for options to cut costs and some have no other option.

In almost all of the County except for the City of Cortland and the Western part of Cortlandville, single occupancy vehicles are the predominant means of commuting. However, it is important to note that a not insignificant portion of the County uses alternative means to commute to work. The most common arrangement throughout the County is to carpool although the City of Cortland and Cortlandville sees higher percentage of walkers, bikers, and transit riders.



CI - MAP 6: VEHICLE AVAILABILITY

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO VEHICLE AVAILABLE

- 1.25 - 4.47
- 4.47 - 6.18
- 6.18 - 9.39
- 9.39 - 15.42
- 15.42 - 26.74

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/11/2024

Source:

U.S. Census Bureau, "Household Size by Vehicles Available." ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B08201, 2022

Map
By:

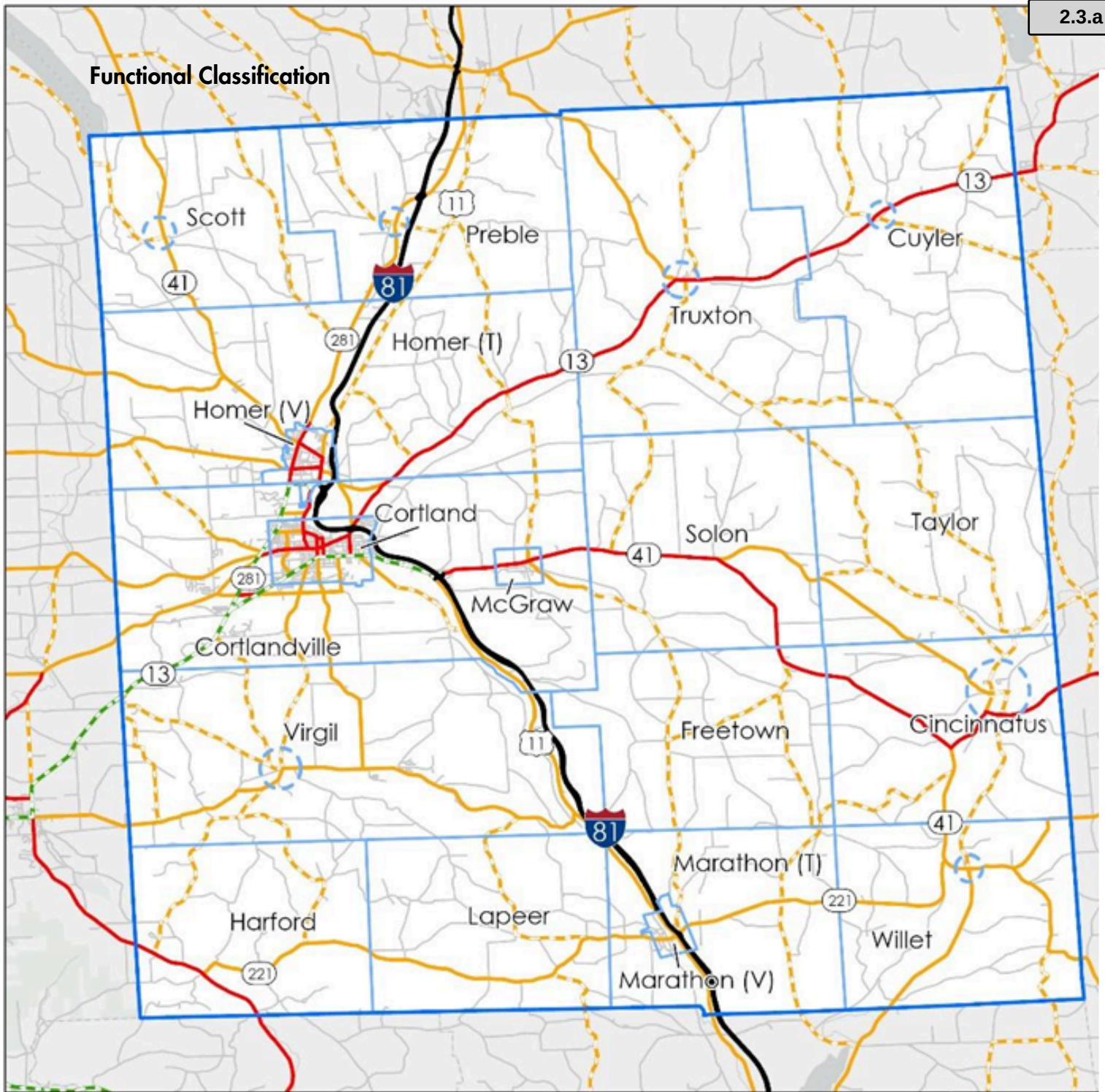


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Functional Classification



CI - MAP 7 : FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets

FHWA FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

- 1: Principle Arterial, Interstate
- 2: Principle Arterial, Other Expressway
- 3: Principle Arterial, Other
- 4: Minor Arterial
- 5: Major Collector
- 6: Minor Collector
- 7: Local

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/18/2024

Source:

2021 NYS DOT Roadway Inventory System

Map
By:**MRB**

Packet Pg. 232



Transit Coverage

Transit usage is generally impacted by gas prices, transit fare, average headway and service frequency (time between buses arriving), transit coverage (population within service distance), revenue hours (times the routes are served), and safety and comfort. The County cannot control gas prices, but it can control or influence to some degree the remaining factors. Generally, if the County can increase frequency and coverage, more people will ride as it becomes a more convenient option. Cortland County prepared a Transportation Plan in 2020 focusing on Transit, and the County joined the Central New York Transit Authority in 2024 to provide public transportation via Centro.

However, transit is not just buses. Every transit rider also needs sidewalks between their home and the bus stop and between the bus stop and their destination. When these sidewalk and crosswalk connections are missing, it makes a trip less safe and comfortable, and ultimately less appealing to use the transit system. Additionally, Cortland can be rainy, snowy, cold, or hot, and transit riders sometimes need a place to sit down especially where they might be older, younger, disabled, or carrying groceries. Transit riders just like everyone else sometimes want to be out of the elements while waiting for a bus. Ideally this could be the form of a transit shelter but is sometimes just a bench or maybe a nearby coffee shop, but these are the sorts of amenities that begin to make transit appealing to people beyond those who simply have no other option.

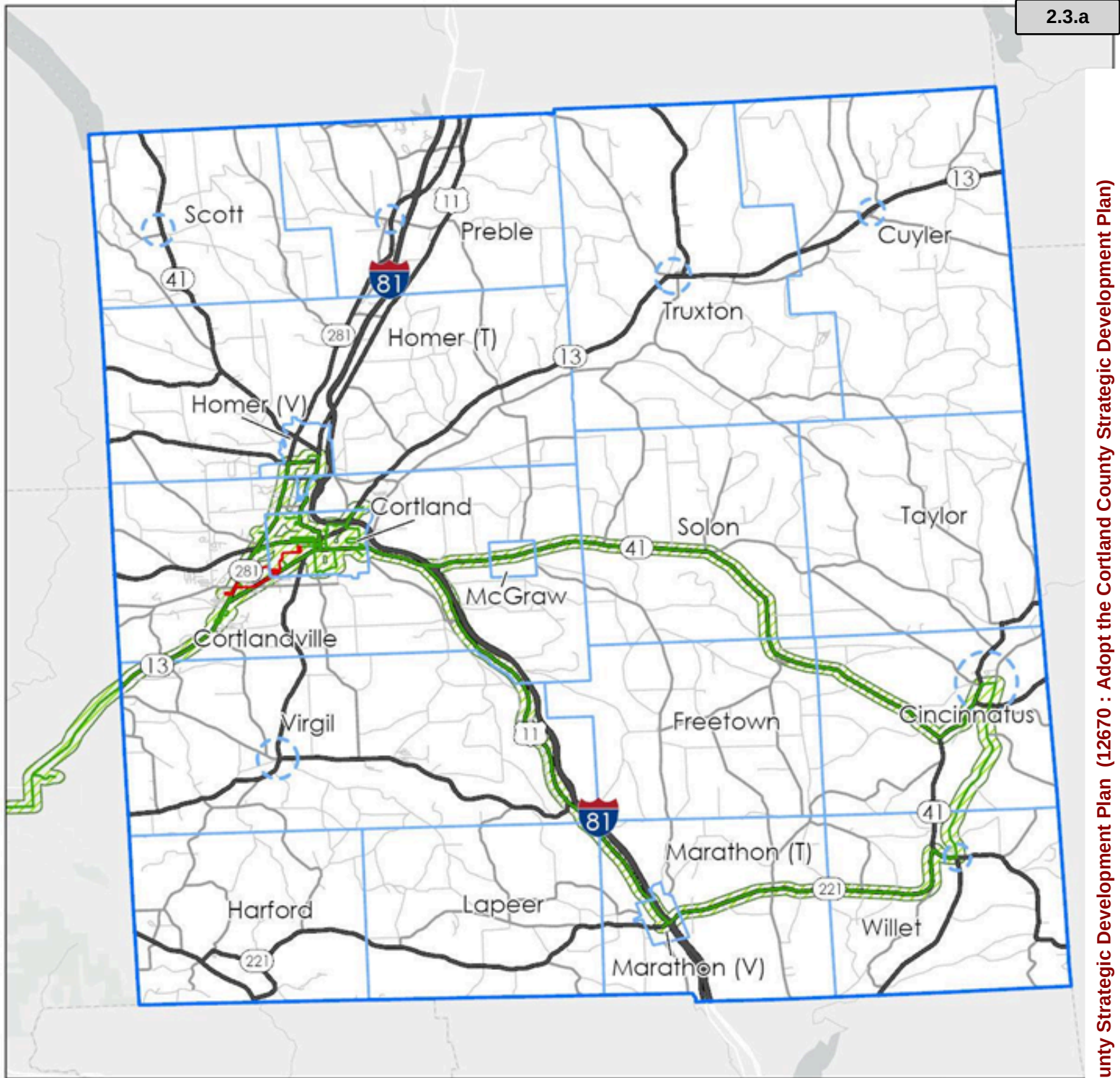
Pedestrian Infrastructure

Pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks is generally provided throughout the County within hamlets, villages, and the City of Cortland. However, these networks could be improved by completing missing sections and improving crossings. Notably, some areas where transit and other services are provided along high traffic routes do not provide complete sidewalk infrastructure. Finally, during periods of snowfall, only a patchwork of sidewalks may be cleared by abutting residents leading to limited or icy access for mobility limited residents which often induces unsafe activities like walking or operating a mobility assistance device within the roadway.

Respondents to engagement events during this planning process expressed a desire for greater multimodal transportation access to the County's numerous, quality recreation assets.

Bike Routes

There are bicycle lanes provided throughout the County (Map 9), but there are no dedicated or protected bike lanes. NYS Bicycle Route 11 is a North-South on-road bicycle facility traversing the County on US Route 11 and NYS Route 281. NYS Bicycle Route 11 extends from the Pennsylvania state line near Binghamton to Rouses Point on the New York – Quebec border. There is also a locally designated on-road bicycle route, the Millenium Trail, between Yaman Park and Lime Hollow Center for Culture and the Environment. Due to the natural amenities and terrain of the County, there is high demand for recreational cycling in Cortland County.



CI - MAP 8: TRANSIT COVERAGE

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

CORTLAND COUNTY AREA TRANSIT

- Cortland Transit
- Dragon Bus
- 1/4 Mile Transit Buffer

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/11/2024



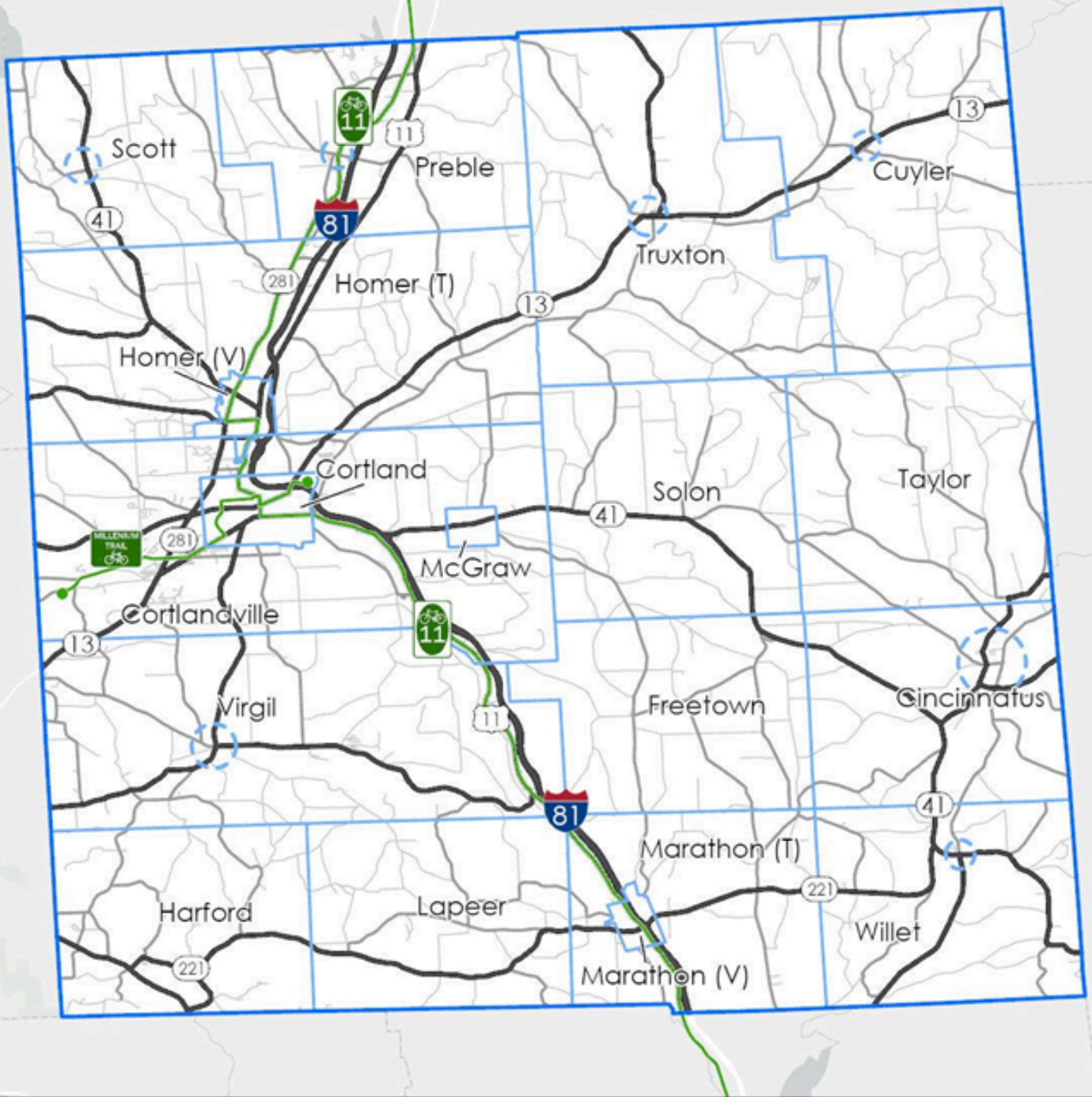
Source:

SUNY Cortland Bus Map, January 2024. Cortland Transit Schedule and Maps, January 2024.

Map
By:



MRB



CI - MAP 9: BICYCLE ROUTES

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

CORTLAND COUNTY BICYCLE ROUTES

- Bicycle Routes

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/14/2024

Source:

NYS DOT Highway Data Services,
City of Cortland



Map
By:



MRB

ROADWAY CONDITION

According to data provided by Cortland County, the average highway surface score of tracked segments is 6.25 in 2024 which has grown from 5.99 in 2018. Data provided by NYS DOT shows the average highway surface score of tracked segments of federal aid eligible highways in Cortland County to be 6.79 in 2020 and 2021. Of federal aid eligible highways, only 9 of 100 segments (9%) are categorized as poor and 13 (13%) are categorized as excellent. Of segments tracked by Cortland County, 78 of 247 segments (32%) are categorized as poor and just 1 (0.4%) are categorized as excellent.

Rating	Condition	Description
9-10(K)	Excellent	No significant surface distress
7-8	Good	Surface distress beginning to show
6	Fair	Surface distress is clearly visible
1-5	Poor	Distress is frequent and severe
U	Under Construction	Not rated due to ongoing work

The rural roadways that make up much of the mileage throughout Cortland County face significant maintenance challenges due to use by increasingly heavy agricultural vehicles. Additionally, there are 15 load posted bridges throughout Cortland County of which 9 have been closed. Bridge closures are especially disruptive to communities by generally dividing one side from another and can increase emergency response times.

Condition data was not readily available relating to bike and pedestrian transportation infrastructure.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

This section refers to transportation assets that are perhaps too specialized to easily fit in the above categories but are necessary to include and require specific considerations; this would include things like freight transportation and air travel (Map10).

Chase Airfield located in the Town of Cortlandville and one mile west of Cortland is owned and operated by Cortland County. According to data provided by the FAA, there are 38 aircraft based at the airport and there were nearly 17,000 general aviation operations for the 12 months preceding September 2021. No additional data was available to understand the impact of COVID on operations.

There are on-road freight routes that traverse the County and provide numerous options for shipping. Rail transport is available that connects to CSX railways in Syracuse or Norfolk Southern railways in Binghamton. An intermodal rail facility terminal exists in Syracuse which serves Domestic and International intermodal freight.



CI - MAP 10. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

- National Highway Freight Network
- Active Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad
- Freight Network Roadway
- ✈ Cortland County Chase Airfield

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/18/2024

Source:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Bureau of Transportation Statistics
National Transportation Atlas
Database, NYS DOT.

Map
By:



MRB

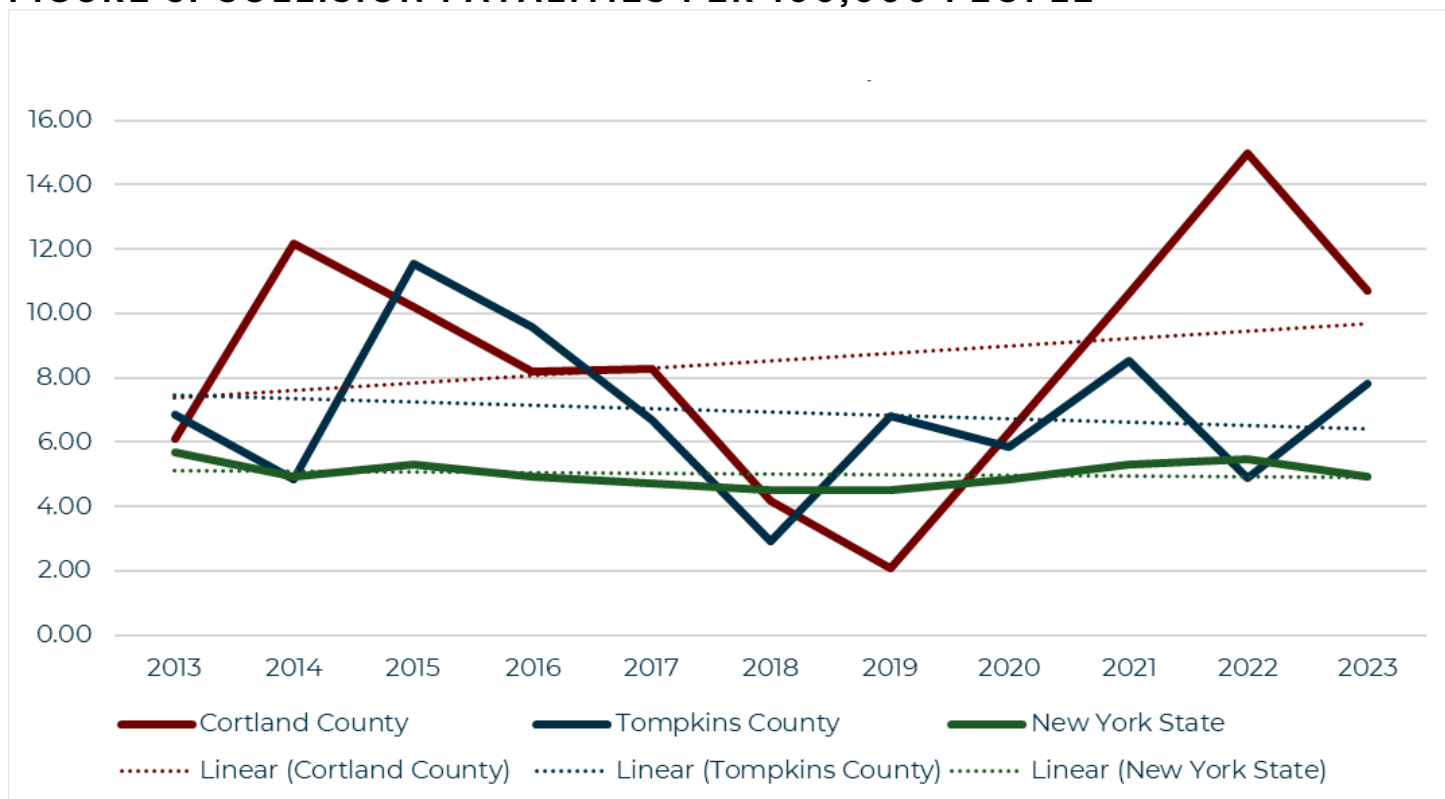
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Transportation modes generate different impacts to users and often to non-users. For instance, active transportation like cycling does not just move the user from point A to point B, it also improves physical health. This section will evaluate some of these impacts so that County decisionmakers can weigh these impacts on their program decisions.

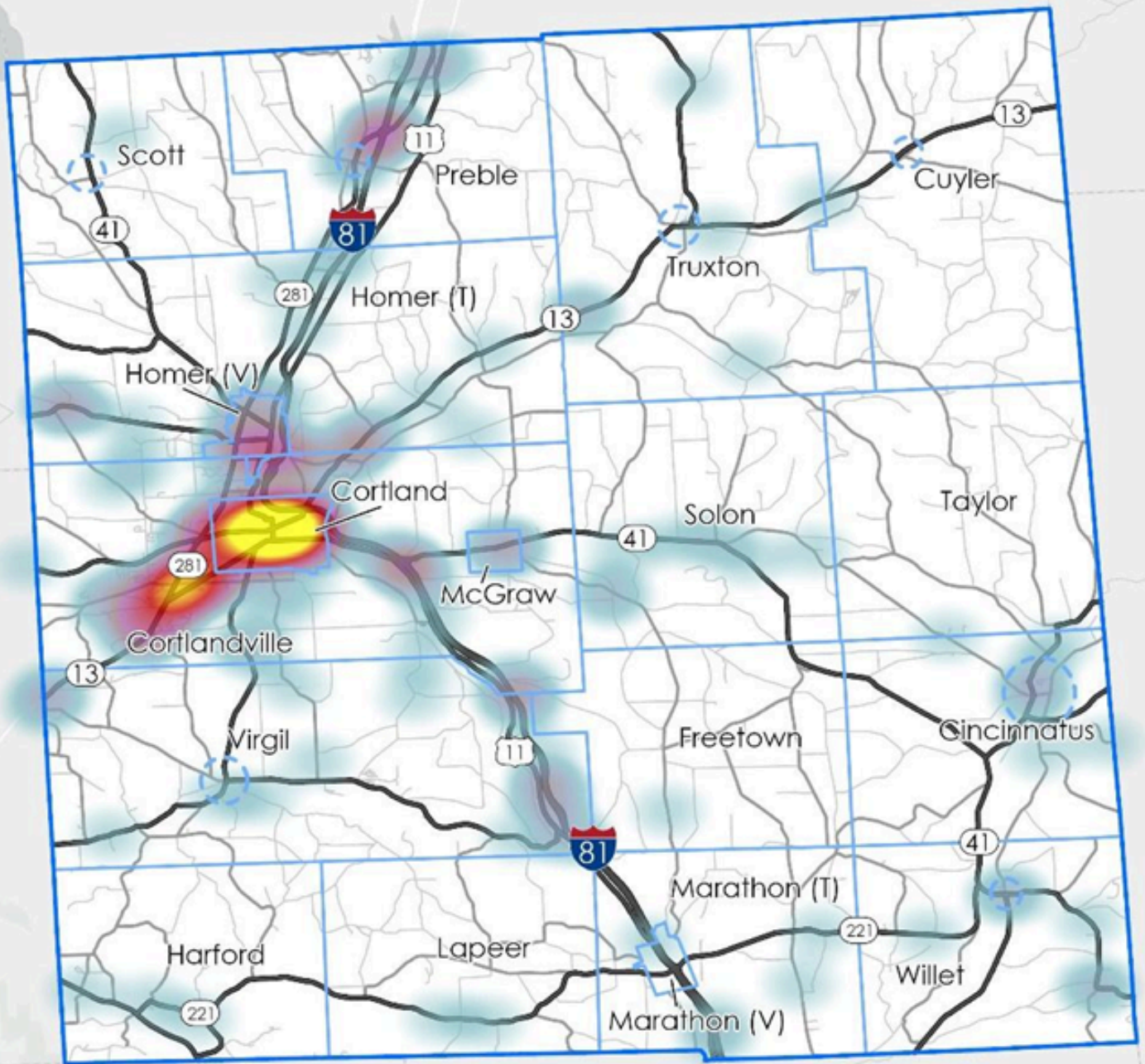
Severe Collision Hotspots

The most noticeable impact on health caused by the transportation system are dramatic instances of fatal collisions and collisions that cause severe and debilitating injury. The highest concentration of severe collisions occurs within the City of Cortland and in the Town of Cortlandville at the intersection of Routes 281 and 13 (Map 11). Collisions with vulnerable roadway users occur in the greatest density at these locations as well (Map 12). Cortland County's transportation fatality rate is consistently higher than the statewide rate and is trending higher (Figure 3). Buses are very safe from a collision perspective. In 2021, buses were involved in 9 total fatal collisions in NYS representing 0.6% of fatalities. Passenger Cars and Light Trucks represented 73%. Encouraging a shift to transit could make county transportation safer (Figure 4).

FIGURE 3: COLLISION FATALITIES PER 100,000 PEOPLE



SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY, MANAGEMENT, AND RESEARCH; AND CENSUS BUREAU AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY TABLE B01003, TOTAL POPULATION



CI - MAP 11: SEVERE COLLISIONS

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

CONCENTRATION OF COLLISIONS CAUSING SEVERE OR FATAL INJURY



SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/18/2024

Source:

NYS DOT CLEAR Crash Data Viewer,
Collisions from 1/1/2018 - 3/31/2023

Map
By:



MRB



CI - MAP 12: COLLISION TYPE

CORTLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Legend:

- Cortland County Boundary
- City, Town, or Village Boundary
- Hamlets
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Town Highway

COLLISION TYPE

- Collision with Vulnerable Road User
- 🐎 Collision with Animal
- 🚗 Collision with Motor Vehicle
- Collision - Other

SCALE

1 IN = 4 MI

DATE

07/18/2024

Source:

NYS DOT CLEAR Crash Data Viewer,
Collisions from 1/1/2020 - 3/31/2023

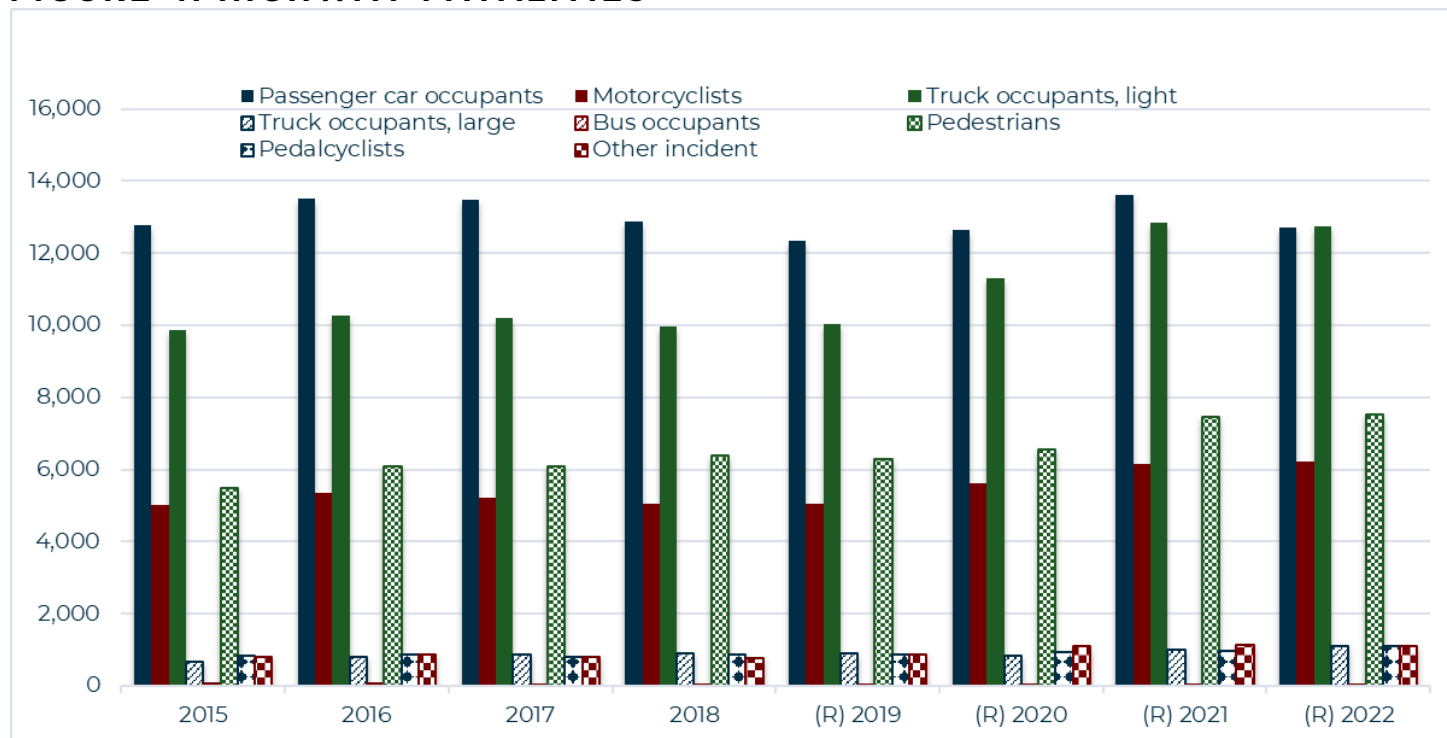
Map
By:



MRB

Packet Pg. 240

FIGURE 4: HIGHWAY FATALITIES



SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY, MANAGEMENT, AND RESEARCH; AND CENSUS BUREAU AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY TABLE B01003, TOTAL POPULATION

Public Health

Less discernable than the immediate and dramatic impacts of traffic collisions are how transportation mode influences the risk of other adverse health conditions. Some transportation options have positive health benefits like walking and biking which are associated with increased happiness and reduced risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer mortality[1]. For adolescents, active school transportation was associated with increased educational outcomes and school enjoyment. Conversely, driving—especially for long periods—is shown to increase risks of cardiovascular issues, obesity, stress, and worse mental health for drivers[2].

[1] World Health Organization, *Walking and Cycling: Latest Evidence to Support Policy-Making and Practice*, 2022. And, *Walkable Neighborhoods Linkages Between Place, Health, and Happiness in Younger and Older Adults*. Kevin M. Leyden, et al.

[2] *Driving: A Road to Unhealthy Lifestyles and Poor Health Outcomes*, Ding Ding, et al. Adverse associations of car time with markers of cardio-metabolic risk, Takemi Sugiyama, et al. (The acute physiological stress response to driving: A systematic review Antoun, Edwards, Sweeting, Ding(2017)The acute physiological stress response to driving: A systematic review. PLOS ONE 12(10): e0185517. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0185517>).

Can the mode, time, and expense of commuting to work affect our mental health? Marco Garrido-Cumbrera, et al. (Car use and cardiovascular disease risk: Systematic review and implications for transport research. Takemi Sugiyama, et al.)

Pollution

Vehicles also contribute other pollutants into the local environment such as brake dust and exhaust particulate that can contribute to adverse health effects such as asthma, pneumonia, and bronchitis. Tire wear also introduces microplastics into the air and water systems which exposes people through direct ingestion, contact, and inhalation and may affect various bodily systems such as digestive, respiratory, endocrine, reproductive, and immune systems.[3] Shifting to electric vehicles may make brake and microplastic pollution worse due to the increased weight of the vehicles. Other less appreciated forms of pollution or adverse external affects include road salt leading to watershed salination, oils and litter from the roadway infiltrating stormwater, heat islands from paved areas such as parking lots, and noise pollution. Again, a shift to other transportation modes and reducing Vehicles Miles Travelled can reduce these types of pollution. Wherever possible, heavy vehicle traffic should not be located near dense residential areas due to these adverse health impacts.

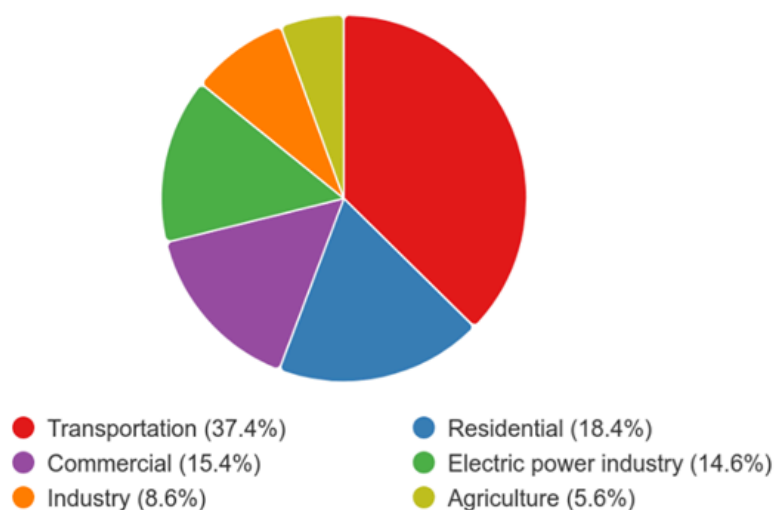
Finally, stakeholders expressed a desire to protect the rural character and sensitive environmental areas of the County. Transportation infrastructure plays a key role. When we make it faster to travel longer distances and in between undeveloped lands, we encourage development of those areas. Simply, building highways encourages housing development. To meet the transportation needs of the County without the destructive impacts on the environment, the County must encourage more location efficient transportation modes such as transit, cycling, walking, etc. Housing policy must also align with this; Coordination is needed.

Pollution

In New York State, the transportation section created 37.4% of greenhouse gas emissions – more than double the residential sector which was second at 18.4% (Figure 5). This is mostly attributable to petroleum based on-road transportation but also includes emissions from air travel. If consumers increasingly utilize electric vehicles this may reduce some emission, but the greatest benefits are created through encouraging mode shifts to more efficient modes and reducing Vehicle Miles Travelled.

FIGURE 5: NY GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY ECONOMIC SECTOR, 2021

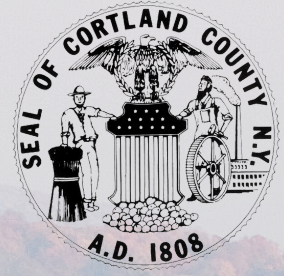
Emissions in million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent



SOURCE: US EPA'S INVENTORY OF US GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND SINKS BY STATE: 1990-2021.

[3] Health Effects of Microplastic Exposures: Current Issues and Perspectives in South Korea - PMC (nih.gov)

Cortland County, New York
60 Central Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045
www.cortlandcountyny.gov





Strategic Development Plan - Overview



Administration

Agricultural District – Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

Conservation Easements

Housing Study

- Collaborating with BDC/IDA on internship with student from Binghamton University

CNY Regional Planning Board

- Ongoing conversation in relation to NYS Municipal Infrastructure Program for middle mile broadband build out

Southern Tier 8

- IRT – DOD reviewing applications (expect to hear by late fall/early winter) – Binghamton just heard back on being selected
- Sustainability Group
- CEDS
- Opportunity Zone Collaboration
- Infrastructure Summit – November 13th – <https://southerntiersummit.com/register>

Snowmobile Grant

- 2024-2025 Snowmobile Club Meeting
 - December 10th – Contract's, & Grant 101

Education and Outreach

- DOD Grant Training Session – Syracuse
- ESF – Landscape Architecture - Community Collaboration Research & Development
- Participation in Leadership Cortland Initiative
- GML 239 Guide Book – drafting
- Major Website updates in progress

Grant Administration

- ARC Ready Local Government Grant Program
- DOS Shared Services Match Program
- ARC Grants to Grow
- Grant Training 101 in development for interested entities within the County
- Master Grant Spreadsheet in development

GIS

ESRI Online Portal

- Ongoing updates and addition
 - Link: <https://cortland-county-gis-portal-cortlandplanning.hub.arcgis.com/>

Data Projects

- Addressing spread sheets updating
- 2024 County Parcel Data – shape file available for download
- Cortlandville Assessor – Address & Parcel verification

Mapping Projects

- On-line address assignment process – testing
- Cortlandville - Environmental maps
- City of Cortland – Parking maps
- County Highway - Plow Maps
- E-911 – Wrecker Zones, CPD Sectors, NYSEG, Power & Telephone Comp., & Plow Responsibilities
- County Real Property – Roads and 3 miles outside the county map

Mobility Management

- Continuing to aid TransDev and Centro during this transition period
- Working with Centro on ridership survey
- NADTC Survey & Outreach
- Participating in Leadership Cortland Program

Cortland County Planning Board Meeting

2025 Bylaws – Amended

2025 Meeting & GML Deadline Schedule - Published

GML 239 Reviews: (4 Returned for Local Determination)

- City of Cortland – Abdulla Omar - Special Use Permit
- Village of Homer – Moxy Properties, LLC – Site Plan Review
- Town of Virgil – AK Community LLC – Site Plan Amendment Review
- Town of Preble – Local Law – Short Term Rentals

OUR TEAM:



Trisha Hiemstra, PE
Director
of Planning



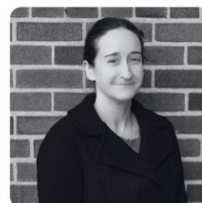
Melissa Potter, MPH
Mobility
Manager



Jessica Leet
Executive
Administrative Officer



Morgan Spaulding
Grant
Administrator



Laura Herrling
GIS
Planner



Chris Jankus
GIS
Planner

AFPB Meeting Agenda

Date : **Monday, November 2nd, 2pm**

Place : **USDA Office, Main St. Cortland**

Board Members/ Representation

Ex-Officio Members (voting)

- Laura Fox - Real Property
- Trisha Hiemstra - County Planning

- Gerald Craig - Farmer
- Rick Valnave - Farmer
- Peter Knapp - Farmer
- David Brandstand - Agribusiness
- Chelsea Jones - Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Erin Madden - USDA
- TBD - CC Soil & Water Conserv, District

Organizational Items

Review Bi-Laws

Make any necessary motions to amend the bi-laws as discussed

Membership

Discuss current and future appointments with strategic perspectives in mind. Nominate Chair of AFPB. Vote on Chair and appoint vice-chair in first organizational meeting of 2025.

Action Items

Amend Bi-Laws, Nominate Chair

Operational Items

Current Conservation Easements

5 Conservation Easements currently managed by Cortland County – Transfer to NYALT – Total Cost Estimate of \$166,342.00 provided from NYALT (attached)

Agricultural District

Review inclusion period process and applications received. Vote on resolution to accept/deny applications, discuss SEQR

Notices

- Notice of Intent (NOI) - Clark Bros Farm - 31.9 Acre Solar Project
- Notice of Issuance of Sound - Preble Hill Farm

Pre-Application Process

Update on Conservation Easement Pre-Application Process

Action Items

approval/denial of ag inclusion applications, produce formal comment on NOI if deemed appropriate

Wrapping Up

Discuss

- Dates/Times/Topics of future meetings
- NYALT Progress, Pre-App Process

Notes



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM *You*



**SCAN HERE TO
TAKE SURVEY**



Mobility and Accessibility Plan

Help us identify the needs and gaps in transportation services for Older Adults and Individuals with disabilities, including their families and caregivers.



Mobility and Accessibility Transportation Survey

Instructions: Please answer ALL questions on the front and back of this survey. This survey is also available at www.way2gocortland.org. Thank you for your participation.

☐ Select only one answer; ☐ Select all that apply

1. Are you currently able to drive?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. If you are able to drive, to which of the following local destinations do you drive? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Shopping, Grocery Store, Bank
- ☐ Medical/Dental Appointments
- ☐ Social Outings (To See Friends or Family, restaurant, golf, etc.)
- ☐ School/Classes
- ☐ Work
- ☐ Religious Services
- ☐ I don't drive to any destinations

3. If you are able to drive yourself, what challenges have you experienced during the past 3 months? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Unreliable car/truck; needs repairs
- ☐ Cost of gas
- ☐ Don't like driving at night
- ☐ No driver's license or license suspended
- ☐ Cannot afford/No car insurance
- ☐ Disability or other physical/cognitive limitation that restricts driving
- ☐ Don't own a car/truck
- ☐ Don't like driving at any time
- ☐ No difficulties in driving myself
- ☐ Other (Please Explain): _____

4. During the past 3 months, were you unable to travel to any of the following destinations because you did not have access to transportation (either your own vehicle or a ride)? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Grocery Shopping | ☐ Other Shopping | ☐ Pharmacy |
| ☐ Bank | ☐ Medical Appointments | ☐ Other Appointments |
| ☐ Religious Service | ☐ School or Classes | ☐ To see family/friends |
| ☐ Other (Please Explain): _____ | | |
| ☐ None, I always have a way to get where I need to go | | |

5. During the past 3 months, how often are you unable to get where you need to go because of not having a way to get there?

- ☐ Rarely or Infrequently
- ☐ Several times in the past 3 months
- ☐ About once a month
- ☐ More than once a month
- ☐ Once a week or more often

6. What type of transportation have you used in the past 3 months? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ I use my own vehicle ☐ Medicaid Transportation ☐ Public Transit ☐ Office for Aging Bus
☐ CAPCO's Volunteer Driver Program ☐ Walk ☐ Bicycle ☐ Taxi
☐ Lyft/Uber ☐ Rides from Friends or Family ☐ Other (Please Explain): _____

7. Do you know what the CAPCO's Volunteer Driver Program is?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. During the past 3 months, what barriers to reliable transportation do you experience? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Cost of public transit ☐ Public transportation not accessible
☐ Cost of taxi/private transportation ☐ Don't feel safe using public transportation
☐ No driver's license or license suspended ☐ Don't know how to use public transportation
☐ Lack of access to a vehicle ☐ Cost of gas
☐ Not comfortable driving/cannot drive ☐ Don't have someone to drive me
☐ Cannot afford/No car insurance ☐ Unable to afford car repairs
☐ Disability or other physical/cognitive limitation that restricts driving
☐ Canceled trips through Medicaid
☐ Other (Please Explain): _____
☐ None, I haven't experienced any barriers during the past 3 months.

9. If you experience transportation barriers, how do these affect you? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Limits my ability to work outside the home ☐ Limits my ability to shop for household needs
☐ Limits my ability to shop for food ☐ Limits my ability to go to school
☐ Can't do errands when I need to ☐ Can't go to social outings
☐ Can't attend church, other religious services ☐ Skip or don't schedule medical appointments
☐ Isolation/Feel alone or sad ☐ Do not have any transportation obstacles
☐ Other (Please Explain): _____

10. Have you had difficulty finding a ride to a medical appointment in the past 3 months? If yes, please select all reasons that apply:

- ☐ I need a wheelchair accessible vehicle ☐ I don't have enough money for public transit fare
☐ I don't know who to call to request a ride ☐ My friends and family are not available to take me
☐ There are no rides available when I call ☐ I can't get a ride at the time I need to go
☐ I have to wait too long for a ride back home after my appointment
☐ Other (Please Explain): _____

11. How many times in the last 3 months have you had to cancel a medical appointment due to lack of transportation?

- ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 or more

12. What prevents you from using public transportation in your area? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Language Barrier | ☐ Not within walking distance |
| ☐ Cost/Too Expensive | ☐ None available to me or in my area |
| ☐ It doesn't go where I need to go | ☐ Bad customer service |
| ☐ Often it is not on time | ☐ I would be too embarrassed |
| ☐ Too confusing to use | ☐ No benches/shelter at the bus stop |
| ☐ I don't feel safe | ☐ None, I use public transportation |
| ☐ Other (Please Explain): _____ | |

13. If you depend on others for any of your trips, who do you depend on? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Spouse
☐ Children/Other relatives
☐ Friends/Neighbors
☐ Private Services, such as taxis
☐ Public Transportation System (Cortland Transit)
☐ Medicaid Transportation
☐ CAPCO's Volunteer Driver Program
☐ Office for Aging Bus
☐ Volunteers (from churches or non-profit organizations)
☐ Other (Please Explain): _____

14. Over the past 3 months, how much did you rely on others for transportation?

- ☐ Rarely or Infrequently
☐ Several times in the past 3 months
☐ About once a month
☐ More than once a month
☐ Once a week or more often

15. Who lives with you? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☐ Spouse/partner/significant other | ☐ Children under age of 18 | ☐ Adult Children 18 years or older |
| ☐ Parent(s) and/or parent(s)-in-law | ☐ Another adult family member | ☐ Roommate/unrelated adult |
| ☐ Live alone | | |
| ☐ Other (Please Explain): _____ | | |

16. Do you identify as a person with a disability or other physical or cognitive/intellectual limitation?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

17. Does anyone who lives with you identify as a person with a disability or other physical or cognitive/intellectual limitation that affects their ability to drive?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

18. How many motor vehicles (cars, vans, trucks, motorcycles) are available in your household?

- ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 or more

19. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Non-binary ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to respond

20. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-59 ☐ 60-64 ☐ 65+

21. What is your annual total household income?

- ☐ Under \$15,000 ☐ \$15,000-\$24,999 ☐ \$25,000-\$29,999 ☐ \$30,000-\$34,999
☐ \$35,000-\$39,999 ☐ \$40,000-\$49,999 ☐ \$50,000 and Over ☐ Prefer not to say

22. What zip code do you live in? _____

23. Please use this space for comments or service suggestions:

ON THE MOTION OF: Kim Cameron
Donnell Boyden

RESOLUTION NO. 24-39

Recommend Adoption of the
Strategic Development Plan

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Planning Board has reviewed the proposed Elevate Cortland County Strategic Development Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Elevate Cortland County Strategic Development Plan has been developed through an inclusive process involving stakeholders, community members, and industry experts, aligning with the mission of Cortland County; and

WHEREAS, the Cortland County Planning Board believes that adopting this plan will provide a clear roadmap to guide decision-making, allocate resources effectively, and enhance partnerships across sectors; and

WHEREAS, adopting the plan will support the objectives of long-term community growth and economic development in accordance with the municipalities' goals;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cortland County Planning Board recommends the adoption of the Elevate Cortland County Strategic Development Plan by the County Legislature and commits to supporting the implementation of the plan's objectives.

Charles R Feiszli, Chair
[Charles R Feiszli, Chair \(Dec 2, 2024 10:27 EST\)](#)

Chuck Feiszli, Chair
Cortland County Planning Board
November 22, 2024
Ayes: 9
Nays: 0
Absent: 2

Cornell Cooperative Extension | South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program

3rd Quarterly Highlights

July—September 2024



Team Events Provide Educational Opportunities for the Public on Dairy

Betsy Hicks, Area Dairy Management Specialist



The summer offers many opportunities for the team to interact with the public and offer learning opportunities about farming, crop production and dairy production. County fairs within the region, the NYS Fair, Sundae on the Farm and school programs like Agstravaganza and EZ Acres 5th Grade Dairy Farm Tour are all occasions that the team participates in to answer questions.

This year, Janice and Betsy included butter making across many public events they tabled at this quarter. A simple activity that allows children and adults alike to make their own butter from a splash of heavy cream, butter making gives the team an opportunity to talk about dairy production in the few minutes that participants are shaking their container. After hearing the familiar butterball rattle around in the container, many people are thrilled with the magic they just shook with their hands and eager to taste their efforts with a piece of bread or a cracker. People often say, they “didn’t know it was so easy to make butter”, and ask how to make a greater amount at home. The interaction gives a positive spin to dairy products and the farmers that produce milk, encouraging people to ask questions and learn more about dairy in their community. Butter making occurred at several county fairs this year, along with at Tioga County Sundae on the Farm, and we estimate that nearly 1000 people made butter with the team.

Dairy farm tours are another way the team is able to interact with the public. At Riverside Dairy, over 100 youth from Broome County toured the farm learning about cows, milking facilities, and how calves are raised. At EZ Acres, over 150 Cortland County 5th graders got a full day of touring the dairy and learning about the maternity barn, cow comfort, manure management, crop production, hoof trimming and more. At Lawton’s Jersey Farm, 30 Newark Valley Junior FFA students were able to learn more about tiestalls, calf care and heifers. Teaming up with farmers and the local extension office to put on these open-farm tours are one of the best ways to share about dairy farming and answer questions directly.

While the public is not the team’s number one audience, they still are an important part of the outreach efforts we work on. Whether it’s setting up a table with information on different crops that farmers grow, different feeds that cattle eat, or making butter out of heavy cream, the team is happy to be a part of county efforts to reach the public, and eager to be on farm the day that a dairy farm opens up to the public to help out.

Team Outreach Highlights

Community Events:

- Participated in county fairs, NYS Fair, Sundae on the Farm, and school programs like Agstravaganza and EZ Acres Dairy Farm Tour.

Butter-Making Activity:

- 900 participants learned to make butter.
- Hands-on demos sparked interest in dairy and encouraged questions.

Dairy Farm Tours:

- **Riverside Dairy:** 100+ Broome County youth explored cows, milking, and calf care.
- **EZ Acres:** 150 Cortland 5th graders toured barns, manure management, and crop production.
- **Lawton’s Jersey Farm:** 30 Newark Valley FFA students learned about calf care and heifers.

Educational Displays

- Shared info on crops, cattle feed, and dairy production at public events.

Community Collaboration:

- Partnered with farmers and extension offices for open-farm tours.



Unlocking Dairy Potential Through Superior Silage Strategies *Janice Degni, CCE Field Crop Specialist*



Helping our farmers attain optimum **forage quality** is a priority of our outreach. We focus on the timing of the first cutting hay crop and corn silage harvest at the end of season. The energy and digestibility of the crop are directly correlated with the variety of corn, maturity of the crop and its percent moisture at harvest, which is reported in terms of dry matter.

The whole corn plant chopped into small pieces, preserved through fermentation, and contained in a storage unit is a primary ingredient of home-grown feed for our dairy herds. Corn silage typically makes up 40-60% of the forages in the dairy cow's diet. Corn silage is a unique forage because it is made of both the plant fodder, stems and leaves, as well as grain from the ear. The starch contained in the grain makes a significant contribution to the energy needs of the dairy cow. Home grown feeds can make up 50 -80% of the cow's diet. Purchased grains supplement the protein and energy needs in small quantities to assure a balanced ration. On average purchased feed costs for herds account for 60% of overall expenses. Optimizing the harvest and preservation of the corn silage and haylage crop can have a beneficial impact to a dairy's bottom line.

This fall Janice used a **growing degree day tracking tool** along with corn staging to predict dates for silage harvest. We partnered with CCE Cayuga and a host farm in Port Byron for a clinic on September 4 and Ward and Van Scoy in Newark Valley on September 6. Farms bring samples of stalks from their fields to be chipped and tested for DM. The clinic invites connection with neighbors, a chance to compare notes on the growing season, guidelines for crop preservation and a dry matter result for developing a targeted harvest plan.

With a known dry matter determined at the clinic we can predict date to begin harvest based on standard dry down expectations of a daily decrease of one-half point of dry matter per day under average fall weather conditions. Harvesting within the prescribed dry matter range for the storage unit used on the farm contributes to better preservation through a thorough fermentation of the crop.

Highlights

Timely corn silage harvest ensures a quality feed that sets up the farm's success for the coming year.

- 35 fields, 2000 ac tested across our region
- 63,577 Acres of corn silage in the region

Starch and fiber provide most of the energy in corn silage-based diets for dairy cows.

Better digestion of these nutrients can:

- Boost milk production
- Lower feed costs by improving feed efficiency

Cost to establish an acre of corn (estimated at \$500/ac) equates to \$3.2 million dollars invested in the 63,577 acres in the region. (includes: seed, tillage, planting, fertilization, plant protection, harvest)

Optimizing forage quality is a priority for dairy farmers, especially regarding the first cutting of hay and corn silage harvest.

Losses of silage leachate to the environment are minimized when the crop is harvested at the recommended moisture.

Corn Silage Clinics provide farmers with resources to test dry matter, plan optimal harvest dates, and exchange knowledge about crop management.

Timely harvest and preservation of corn silage can have a significant positive impact on the farm's bottom line by reducing the need for costly purchased feeds.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Cortland County

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Cornell Cooperative Extension
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Fax: 607-391-2680

Office Hours: Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
<http://cortland.cce.cornell.edu>



I pledge my HEAD to clearer thinking
My HEART to greater loyalty,
My HANDS to larger service, and
My HEALTH to better living,
for my club, my community, my country and my world.



New York
SAVE TIME. SAVE MONEY. EAT HEALTHY.



Cornell Cooperative Extension
South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program

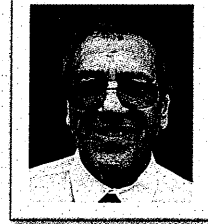
Our Mission:

Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being.

We bring local experience and research based solutions together, helping New York State Families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

Director's Message

Welcome to the 2024 Cornell Cooperative Extension Annual Meeting. It seems that "change" is standard for Cooperative Extension, as it should be.



The seed that created Cooperative Extension was planted in 1862, when President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, which created the Land Grant University System. Land was given to each state to create colleges and universities dedicated to research and development in the areas of Agriculture and Mechanics – Texas A & M University. These colleges and universities were responsible for disseminating this research to farmers to increase and improve food to the population of the United States. In 1914, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act to establish the Cooperative Extension Service, which is a state-by-state network of educators who extend land grant university knowledge to people throughout the country. In New York, Cornell University is our land grant university and the reason why our association is attached to Cornell.

At Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County, we work with our advisory councils for 4-H and Agriculture to connect with the public and combine their needs and expertise with the research and development coming from Cornell University to increase the knowledge of the community and improves the lives of our constituents. This happens in our 4-H clubs, in workshops and direct support of farmers, at our 4-H Camp Owahta with county youth, and at our Cortland County Jr. Youth Fair and the Great New York State Fair.

We count on a staff of dedicated and passionate community educators and also with the many people who grew up on farms in 4-H and attend 4-H Camp Owahta and volunteer countless times in their lives to support our work. We could not do this work without all of you. Thank you so much for all you do for our association.

David C. Rutherford – Executive Director

4-H GROWS HERE

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:



Rebecca Ireland-Perry, 4-H Team Leader

- Generosity • Community Service**
- Leadership • Hands-on • Belonging**
- Life Skills • Communication**
- Citizenship Mastery**
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Math**
- Public Speaking**
- Agriculture Healthy Lifestyles**
- Career Exploration • Independence**

The primary goal of 4-H is to develop citizenship, leadership and life skills in youth through experiential learning opportunities and a positive youth development approach. Today's 4-H program has three primary initiatives:

- **Citizenship**
- **Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math**
- **Healthy Living**

4-H Clubs: 4-H clubs are the traditional method of youth development, with a diverse offering of projects to develop or enhance necessary life skills. There were 12 active 4-H clubs in Cortland County, and a total 4-H enrollment of 222 youth.

4-H Events: Highlights of the year...

➤ 4-H Livestock and Market Animal program has continued to increased participation in these programs and entries at fair. Additionally, there was a statewide initiative to start a 4-H Livestock Skillathon contest at the regional level, to provide the opportunity for youth participation at the contest at State Fair. This regional contest

joins the already established contests of dairy quiz bowl, horse quiz bowl, and hippology.

➤ October was the kickoff for our annual 4-H Local Products fundraiser. This fundraiser is an important component of our 4-H program, both in our budget and for the 4-H clubs as a fundraising opportunity for them.

➤ We continued the 4-H Needle Arts group, designed to explore all the various needlework areas with a needle arts "camp" during the February school break.

➤ The Tractor Safety and Certification course remains one of our strong yearly programs with 12 participants in 2024.

➤ Youth programs targeted Cortland County Kindergarten through 6th grade students with programs such as Ag Literacy, Ag Stravaganza, EZ Acres Farm Tour, and Conservation Field Days.

Cortland County Jr. Fair:



2024 Fair Queen
Katelyn Cummings

Fair Queen & Court:

Left to Right:
Reaghan Flanagan
Katelyn Cummings
Viviana Petrella

A strong component of the 4-H Youth Development program, the 4-H Fair serves as the culmination of a year's worth of 4-H club activities. 4-H members showcase their projects, animals, and the valuable leadership skills they have developed during the past year. Participating in the fair provides great opportunities for teaching youth responsibility and decision-making skills, as well as providing an educational experience for the general public.

All our youth exhibitors and 4-H exhibits made this year's fair a success. 4-H participation at the NY State Fair was up this year, and many projects were chosen which did very well on their evaluations.



Cortland Jr. Youth Fair

4-H Youth Development provides a unique learn-by-doing model teaches our youth essential and transferrable skills that they'll use throughout their lives, such as communicating, problem solving, decision making, coping, and responding to the needs of others. In addition to mastering a variety of important life skills, 4-H members connect with caring adults in their community and make friendships that last a lifetime.



Looking forward, our focus remains on continuing a 4-H program that can meet the needs of our 4-H youth, support our 4-H leaders, and grow.



Cortland Junior Youth Fair 2024

4-H CAMP OWAHTA **SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM**



Kara McQuaid, Director and
Geoff Peterson, Assistant Director

We had a very successful 2024 summer season at 4-H Camp Owahta this year. This was made possible with the help of our amazing staff members and volunteers, who worked with a purpose throughout all of our seven busy weeks. We would especially like to attribute our success to James (our camp cook volunteer), Bobby (our camp nurse), Ashley (our camp nurse for the final two weeks), and Geoff (our brand new assistant director). Gaining new team members in these fields posed many unique challenges this summer, but these challenges were met

head-on with brilliant ideas and positive attitudes.

We were able to reach the lives of over 450 campers this year, coming to us from other counties, other states, and even other countries! Our diverse group of campers was able to experience many activities that challenged them to think, share, play, and grow.



Each camper was able to explore new places, try new things, and share their talents with new friends. The community that was created this summer was truly exceptional and created an environment that we believe will last many of our campers and team members a lifetime.

One thing that took us pleasantly by surprise this year was how many new families we were able to reach this year. One of our goals for 2024 was to reach a wider audience, and there were many new names on the roster this year! We found that we can attribute this to an improved social media presence and better advertising than in our previous year.



However, perhaps most importantly, we can attribute this to the many campers who have talked about 4-H Camp Owahta to their friends, teammates, and classmates over the last year. Many parents came to us with news of how a friend of their child's had inspired

them to sign up for camp this year. It was amazing news to hear that the magic of camp was spoken of throughout the year.

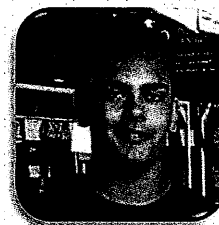
We have heard many great compliments through the grapevine following our 2024 season as well and we look forward to what next summer will bring us. Thank you, thank you, and THANK YOU to our community, camp volunteers, and fantastic staff for bringing camp to life this summer! We could not succeed without the help of everyone around us doing their part to spread the word about the amazing opportunities that our camp works so hard to bring to our campers every year.



4H Camp Owahta Staff

Thank you to all and see you next summer!

NATURAL RESOURCES:



Justin Graham, 4-H Educator

In 2024, the Natural Resources Program focused on youth and adult education, community outreach, and providing recommended solutions to natural resource and agriculture questions.

Youth Programs - A variety of educational workshops have been offered including topics such as wildlife tracks and pelts,

wolf communication, wildlife habitats, tree identification, forest ecology, the water cycle, wetland ecology, wastewater treatment, biomonitoring and benthic macroinvertebrates, and water quality monitoring. I was also a presenter at Camp Owahta and Conservation Field Days, where I was able to educate Cortland County youth about many different natural resource topics. In June, I was a presenter at Ag Stravaganza where I educated about dairy and meat goats.



Outreach - In September, I participated at the Marathon Ag Fair where I was able to talk to youth and their families about 4-H opportunities available with CCE Cortland. I have also begun updating the natural resources section of the CCE Cortland website which is a vital part of community outreach.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM



Chelsea Jones, Agriculture Team Leader

The CCE Cortland Agriculture Program had an exciting 2024. The program was successful in implementing the revitalization of many beloved community programs for the first time since the pandemic. These programs reached communities across the county, including non-farming and farming

communities. The CCE Agriculture Program currently consists of Team Leader, Chelsea Jones, and 4-H/Ag Educator, Justin Graham. We were sad to lose Horticulture Educator, Lisa Woodruff, in September, but are excited for her as she starts her next chapter at Cornell and thank her for her dedication to CCE Cortland.

General Agriculture - For guidance on developing relative agriculture programming, Chelsea works with the Agriculture Advisory Committee. This committee consists of members who have a high interest and dedication to agriculture in Cortland County. The current members are Ben Brooks, Jen Doty, Carly Dougherty, Rachel Murray Brown, and Jacob Newton. In 2024, the advisory committee has met once on March 12th and will meet again in December.

Chelsea has been busy meeting with local agriculture services including Cortland County Business Development Corporation, Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Farm Credit, and Seven Valleys Health Coalition. One large project Chelsea was influential in is post-pandemic revitalization of the Cortland County Agriculture Celebration Dinner. She worked closely with the local agriculture organizations listed and others to host the dinner in 2024 at Tinelli's Hathaway House in Solon. The dinner was a great success and enjoyed by all who attended. This group of organizations is working together to have another dinner in 2025, in addition to an educational Agriculture Summit for Cortland County farmers and industry professionals to participate in. The group will also work together to host a countywide Cortland County Legislator Tour.

Producer-to-Consumer Projects - In 2022, the CCE Cortland Agriculture Program Promotion Program Grant (FMPP) for \$248,698.74. The FMPP project is a three-year project with the intention to build sustainable and resilient direct producer-to-consumer markets in the local area. The CCE Cortland Agriculture Program is

looking to hire a Direct Market Educator to fulfill the mission of this grant.

4-H Youth Development Agriculture Programming - Cortland County's 4-H Livestock Program is growing in popularity amongst youth. This program provides youth a year-long project where they learn how to raise, finish, show, and market their animals. The end of the project is the 4-H Market Animal Sale at the Cortland County Jr. Fair. Youth are responsible for finding buyers and receiving a check for their project. The 2024 sale was held on Friday, July 12th. There were 15 youth participants, who sold 9 market turkeys, 1 market lamb, 7 market broiler pens (3 birds/pen), and 8 market hogs. Each family is responsible for donating and item to be auctioned off and cakes from the decorated cake contest are also sold.



This year's sale total was \$9,939.73. This total includes all animals, cakes, and donated items. The 4-H Livestock Show Superintendents, Chelsea, and Justin (4-H/Ag Educator) met on September 10th to discuss the 2024 fair's successes, and what improvements can be made for future years. Thank you to all those who make this sale possible!

Lastly, the 4-H Livestock Program received \$2,000 from the Cortland County Community Service Club as a result of Chelsea submitting a grant request. These funds were used to buy new corral panels and gate. These gates allowed youth and adult volunteers to access the beef and swine showring more efficiently and safely. The corral panels allow us to utilize the whole show ring, allowing the youth to better showcase their animals and will allow us to

increase show number entries in project areas that are growing in popularity. We would like to say "thank you" to the club for these funds!

Apart from the Cortland County 4-H Livestock Program, the Ag Team works together to provide agricultural education to all Cortland County youth. One of 2024's greatest successes were the revitalization of AgStravaganza and McMahon's EZ-Acres Dairy Farm tour, in addition to Ag Literacy week. These three programs resulted in us reaching over 1,000 youth and their teachers.



Ag Literacy Week saw another successful year for Cortland County. This year's book was *I LOVE Strawberries* by Shannon Anderson. We had 5 school districts participate including Cincinnatus, Homer, Marathon, St. Mary's, and Truxton Academy Charter school. Volunteers including adults and local FFA Chapter Members read to 16 classrooms; reaching 420 total students and 17 teachers.

AgStravaganza was held June 5-6th at the Cortland County Fairgrounds. This is a field trip for 4th grade students to show them how agriculture impacts their daily lives, and to give them an appreciation of the work that must be done to get farm products to the stores. In 2024, there were 11 stations that focused on the areas of animal agriculture, natural resources, field crops, and agro-forestry. We had 3 schools participate including Cortland, Homer, and McGraw; with a total of 14 classrooms and 337 students and 31 Teachers.

McMahon's EZ-Acres Farm Tour was held June 12-13th in Homer, NY. There were 9 stations that students rotated through and

learned from professionals in the areas of milking, animal health, cow comfort, maternity, calf raising, feed storage, environmental stewardship, and record keeping. We had 4 schools participate including Cincinnatus, Cortland, Homer, and McGraw; with a total of 351 students and 21 Teachers.



2024 Ag Trivia Program hosted by Farm Bureau and Co of Cortland Ag. Corporation

Ag Looking to the future... We are looking forward to the future of the CCE Cortland Agriculture Program and are always looking for new ideas to bring to Cortland County. Please reach out to Chelsea at cjj44@cornell.edu, or 607-391-2664 with any as well as questions or concerns.

HORTICULTURE



Dee Lisa Woodruff, Horticulture Educator

HORTICULTURE PROGRAM AND MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS

This was a great year for connecting with the community about plants and leading gardening programs. In March, we held a 3-part workshop called 'Think Spring!' where professors and professionals from Cornell came and taught members of the Cortland Community about the dynamic life of soils, the ins and outs of vegetable gardening and the benefits of growing native plants. In

May, the Master Gardener Volunteers held a Garden 101 session at the local Country Max, talking about everything from seed packets to container gardening to soils to gardening tricks and tips. In addition to community outreach, the Master Gardeners partnered with the Grace Brown House for a 5-week training program we called 'How to Grow a Garden', wherein we taught residents all the essentials to start, maintain and harvest a vegetable garden.



After taking the training, the group independently created the first container garden at the Grace Brown House, and at summer's end reported their gardening experience a success and are already looking forward and making lists of what to plant next year.

In the coming year, the Master Gardeners will continue to follow their vision of creating accessible garden-based programming and access to healthy foods for county residents. This year really showed us how eager the community is for horticulture programming and makes us excited for the year to come.

HUMAN ECOLOGY PROGRAM



Cortland County is served by the regional SNAP-Ed program who includes Whitney Kmetz, Community Health & Nutrition Supervisor; Carrie Forward, SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator; and Carol Lyons, SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator. SNAP-Ed teaches individuals from 1st grade all the way to older adults how to shop and cook healthy meals when life's tight! Our goal is to give

participants the tools, tips, and tricks to help them make nutritious food choices and choose a physically active lifestyle. Our programs are designed for individuals, families with children, older adults, and all those in between.

We provide our programs for FREE in lots of different community spaces, schools, and on-line. SNAP-Ed has created wonderful community partnerships to create positive change with nutrition and wellness to several sites: Age Well Center, Liberty Resources, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, F. E. Smith Intermediate School, and YMCA of Cortland County.

We look forward to this coming year with many more new partnerships! With all of our lessons we like to incorporate a food demo reinforcing the specific topic covered. For several years now we have been awarded a full season sponsored share of vegetables from Common Thread CSA in Madison County. A full season standard delivered share saves our program \$1014.42 this year. This was about 15 pounds of produce weekly, which was about 330 pounds for 22 weeks. We are so grateful for their continued support. *We look forward to another successful year with SNAP-Ed!*

PARENTS APART PROGRAM 2024

The Parents Apart program is offered annually and has been taught by David Rutherford. The program provides 6 hours of parenting education with a focus on meeting the needs of the children involved while lowering the level of conflict in the home.

Participants may choose to attend either two–3-hour sessions held in the evening on two consecutive Thursdays, or an all-day session held on a Saturday. Participants are referred to the program through the court system, DSS, the Public Defender's office and may also self- refer to the program. Participants who complete the full 6 hours of the class are issued a certificate of completion.

Upon request, CCE-Cortland Co. staff will provide documentation of completion of the classes to the courts for any participants who require one. Surveys completed at the end of the classes indicate participants are using what they have learned to make the situation better for their children. Surveys completed by of the program have indicated they have the program worthwhile and would recommend it to other parents.

South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops



Janice Degni Betsy Hicks Donette Griffith



Cornell Cooperative Extension

South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program

WHAT VALUE DOES YOUR REGIONAL DAIRY AND FIELD CROPS TEAM BRING TO ITS STAKEHOLDERS?

Program Knowledge and Expertise:

CCE Regional Ag Team specialists are professionals who possess extensive expertise in various agricultural areas, including dairy herd and business management and crop production. Extension specialists regularly update on the latest research and best practices, providing

farmers with accurate and reliable information.



Educational Programs and Workshops: Specialists organize educational programs, workshops, and training sessions tailored to the needs of local farmers and agricultural professionals.

These programs cover a wide range of topics from sustainability to business management to emerging trends. Participants gain knowledge and new skills that can improve their farming practices and management.

Problem-solving and Troubleshooting: The team offers on-site farm visits and consultations to help identify and address specific challenges they may be facing. They assist in troubleshooting issues related to compliance and regulation, pest infestations, nutrient management, and others. Their expertise can save farmers time, money, and resources by providing practical solutions and guidance.

Research and Innovation: CCE Regional Ag Teams collaborate with Cornell faculty, staff, and graduate students to conduct applied research and evaluate new farming techniques or technologies. This enables them to offer farmers evidence-based recommendations and insights into practices that can enhance productivity, sustainability, and profitability.



Networking and Collaboration: producers and a broader network researchers, and industry collaboration and knowledge-them to learn from one another's collectively address common



Regional teams are connected to of agricultural professionals, stakeholders. This facilitates sharing among farmers, allowing experiences, share successes, and challenges.



Access to Grants and Funding Opportunities: CCE Regional specialists have knowledge about grant programs and funding opportunities available to support farmers and agricultural initiatives. They can provide guidance on eligibility criteria, and application processes to help farmers access financial resources to implement projects, adopt new technologies, or improve their farm operations.

Localized Support: Regional have a good understanding of the local agricultural including the climate, soil conditions, market demands, regulatory requirements specific to their region. This support enables them to provide tailored advice and aligns with the unique needs and characteristics of the community. They also collaborate with the county staff.

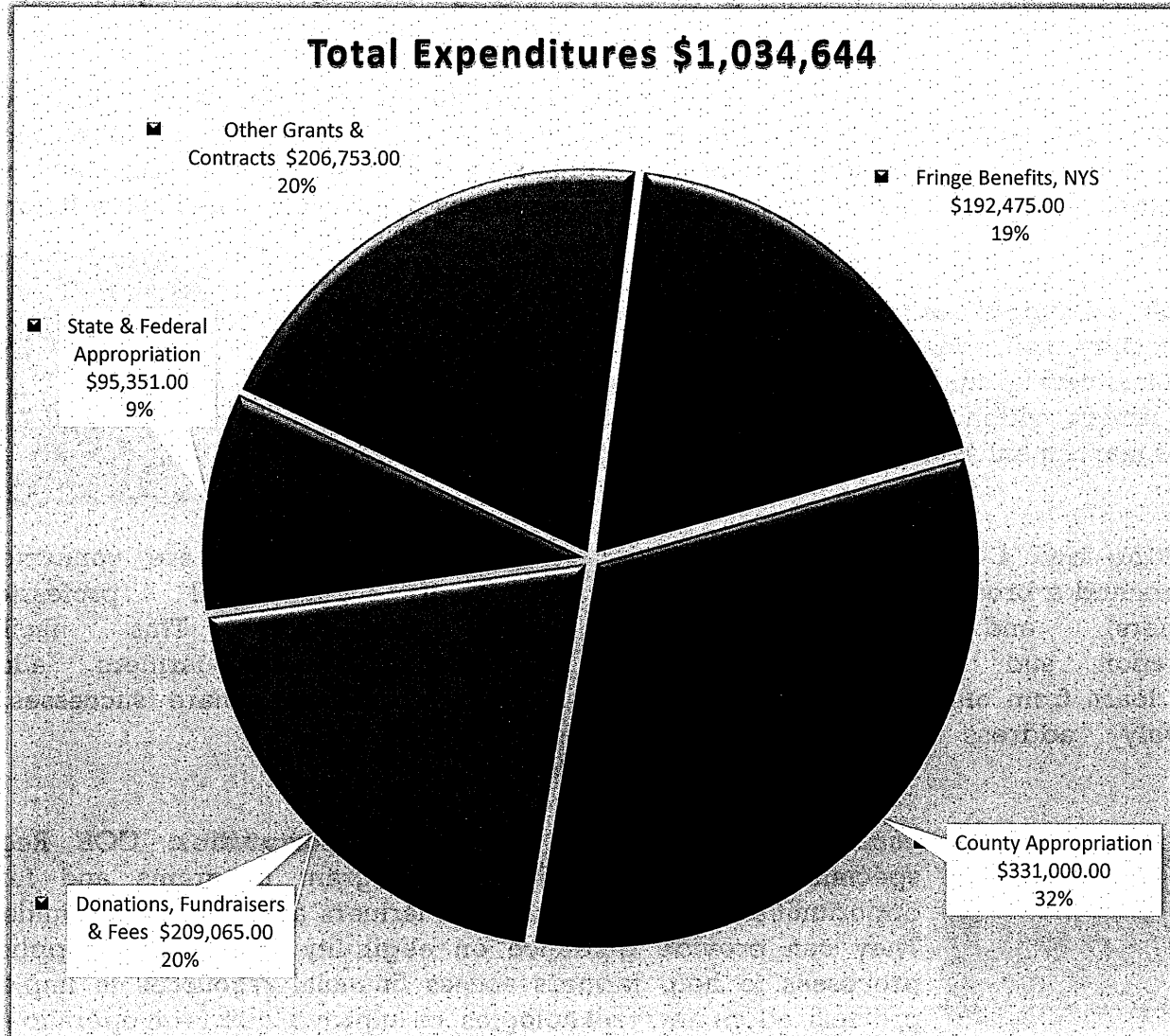


specialists landscape, and localized assistance that local farming association ag



Community Engagement: Regional specialists actively engage with the local community, promoting agriculture, and fostering connections between farmers and consumers. They participate in educational programs for students, and other outreach activities to raise awareness about the importance of agriculture for the community.

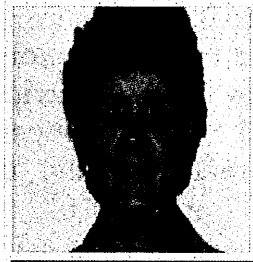
CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF CORTLAND COUNTY 2024 EXPENDITURES



CCE Support Staff:

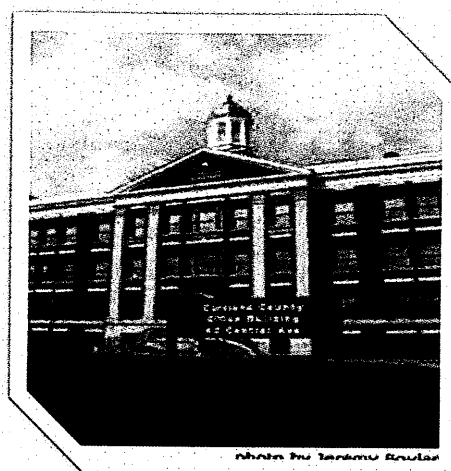


Catheryn Heller, Finance



Jackie Hartnett, Admin

2024 CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF CORTLAND COUNTY



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CORTLAND COUNTY LEGISLATORS CORNELL STATE EXT. SPECIALIST

Beau Harbin & Mitch Eccleston
Renee Smith Mooneyhan

SCNY DAIRY AND FIELD CROPS

Janice Degni - Small Dairy Extension Specialist/Team Leader/Area Field Crops
Donette Griffith - SCDFC Admin. Assistant II
Betsy Hicks - Area Dairy Management Specialist

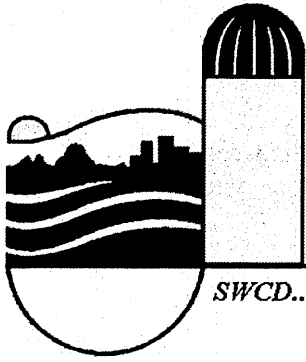
PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Matt Sharpe Syd McEvoy Joel Riehlman JoEllen Roehrig Jean Sutton Olivia Hersey
Linda Helms Pat Twentymen, Shirley Marshall, Mary Mackey Yvonne Moore Eric Law,
Laura Rath Brown, DVM Brandon Brown, Neal Helms

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CCE Cortland County – Facebook and Website: cortland.cce.cornell.edu

“Building Strong & Vibrant New York Communities”

Cornell Cooperative extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO. Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.



Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District

100 Grange Place, Room 202, Cortland, NY 13045

Phone: (607) 756-5991 Fax: (607) 756-0029

www.cortlandswcd.org

SWCD...established to promote the conservation and wise use of our county's natural resources

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MONTHLY REPORT - DECEMBER

From: Amanda Barber, SWCD Manager

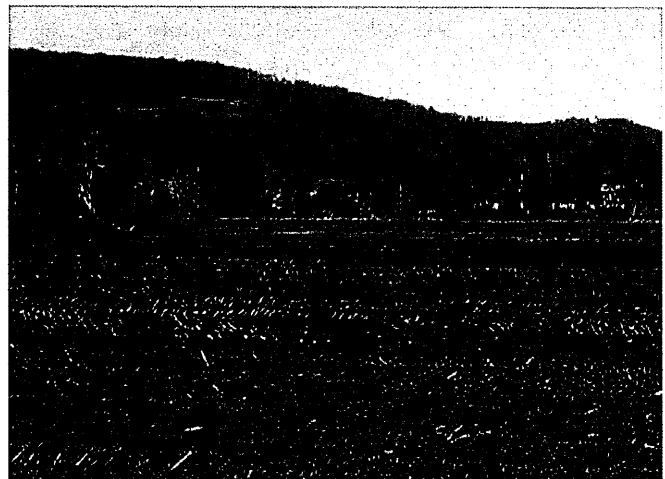
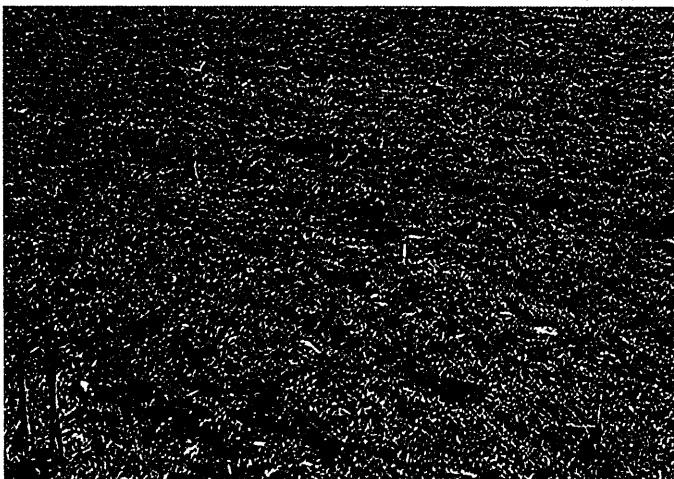
December 5, 2024

AGRICULTURE AND PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION

Agricultural Nonpoint Abatement and Control Program (AGNP) – We continue engineering design work for grants funded in Round 28 and 29. Construction oversight of the Round 28 project that includes a covered barnyard continues with regular on-site field inspections. They are hoping to finish soon. The Round 30 RFP was released today and responses are due February 24th. Funding is for nonpoint source abatement and control projects that plan (AEM Tier III) or implement (AEM Tier IV) Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems on farms. All projects must consist of activities that will reduce, abate, control, or prevent nonpoint source pollution originating from agricultural sources. Interested landowners should contact SWCD as soon as possible.

Climate Resilient Farming – As a clarification from my report last month, we had three small projects funded in Round 8 with about \$55,000 in state funding awarded. We are now developing a plan of work for each grant. Executed Round 7 contracts are starting to come back from the state.

Cover crops – Field work is complete and reports with requests for payment have been prepared and/or submitted. We had a total of 15 landowners plant 3,527 acres of cover crops. 3,167 acres are in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and 360 acres are in the Finger Lakes watershed. A combination of funds from two sources totaling over \$114,000 will be used to support cover cropping. Staff are working with farms to complete all required paperwork so payments can be made once funding is received.



Cover crops in action - A cover crop is a crop of grasses, small grains, legumes or their mixtures grown between cropping seasons, primarily for the purpose of covering the ground. Cover crops are usually planted after the harvest of a main crop to improve productivity and soil health by reducing erosion and runoff losses, preventing weed incursion, and improving soil fertility. They are also used for livestock grazing or forage.

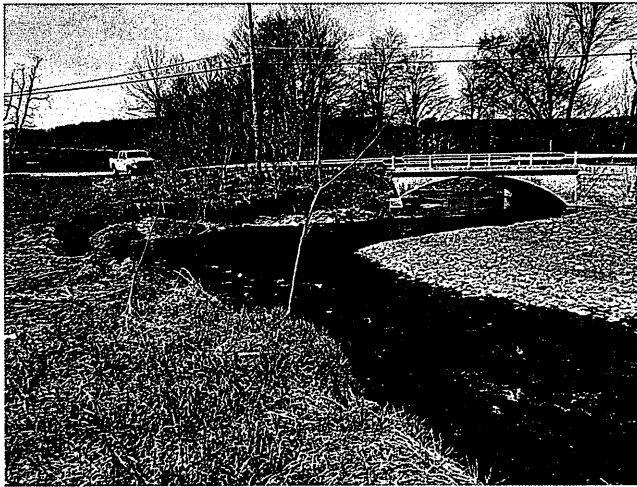
COMMUNITY NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

Little York Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District (LYLPRD) – Bids for the aquatic weed harvester will be opened Friday. An RFQ for quotes is being sent out by Little York Lake Preservation Society to treat 2 acres of variable leaf milfoil (VLM) and 3 acres of curly-leafed pondweed (CLP) during 2025.

Eastern Finger Lakes Watershed – We continue regular meetings of the Eastern Finger Lakes Coalition. A Watershed Coordinator will be hired through Cayuga County SWCD and they are contracting with NYSDEC on behalf of the Coalition. Technical assistance and cost-share funds will be made available for work in the watershed. We continue to attend and participate in the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization meetings.

Upper Susquehanna and Chesapeake Bay Watershed – The pipe has been ordered for 2025 installation at Irish Hill Rd in Freetown. The process of moving electrical lines for the project and road has been initiated and should be completed by summer. Staff completed initial data analysis for the Upper Tioughnioga culvert assessment project and presented on a Watershed Wednesday webinar November 20th. [Click to watch the presentation.](#) Meetings with municipal officials are underway to present findings and gather any other relevant data.

The Brackel Creek project in Cincinnatus was a cooperative project with county highway.



Before— Severe bank scour and gravel deposition that impeded flow at the county structure and threatened ag land.



After—Rock riprap installed to stabilize streambanks and minimize erosion. Rock barbs in the stream channel deflect flow and help control gravel.

Forestry – We planted sixteen potted trees of various species behind Wendys. The Community Forestry grant for maintenance work at Dwyer Park is planned for implementation winter 2024/spring 2025.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND PROGRAMS

Our 2025 Spring Seedling Sale will be online and available January 1, 2025.

ADMINISTRATION

Board Vice Chair Linda Jones and I attended the 2024 Conservation Districts Managers Meeting earlier this week. Staff also attended the Statewide SWCD Administrative Conference and Training on November 18th and 19th.