

Town of Cortlandt

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

July, 2004



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Town of Cortlandt

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

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July, 2004

Town of Cortlandt Master Plan

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It should be noted that the following Reports and Studies are incorporated into the Comprehensive Master Plan by reference:

The Base Studies for the 2003 Master Plan
Draft Housing Action Plan
Route 202/35, BMP Sustainable Development Study
The Croton Watershed Plan
Economic Development Strategy Plan

Section A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Master Plan for the Town of Cortlandt, NY is a document which will help the Town guide growth and development while preserving and enhancing the environment, the Town's financial health, security, infrastructure, aesthetics and other quality of life issues. The 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan replaces the previous Master Plan which was adopted in 1991.

The current Master Plan effort began in 1998 with an intention to review and update the 1991 Master Plan. Since then the process has evolved into a more comprehensive analysis resulting in a full Master Plan. The effort began with the identification of the policies that have been implemented since 1991. This process included an evaluation of the reasons for various policy recommendations and how these policies relate to current conditions.

The planning process has revealed that Cortlandt is a evolving from a community which experienced significant residential expansion to one that is "maturing". i.e. a community with more limited development opportunities, and possible re-use of developed parcels transforming its character. It was decided that particular attention should be paid to the Town's environmental, architectural and visual character as part of the Comprehensive Master Plan .

The Comprehensive Master Plan represents an effort spanning over 5 years by the Master Plan Committee (MPC) and who were assisted by the Town of Cortlandt Department of Technical Services (DOTS) and the Towns Master Plan consultant Stuart Turner Associates. This Master Plan was prepared largely in-house by Town staff.

The Plan's recommendations include considerable input from various Town Boards, Committees, Associations and residents. Public participation in the planning effort was ensured by open meetings, several public information hearings, and a formal review process for approving the Master Plan. Please see the "Public Participation" Section for more information. A great deal of supporting information relating to existing conditions and recent changes is available in the "Base Studies" which was completed by Town staff in early 2003. The base studies are available for review in the Town of Cortlandt Town Hall – DOTS – Planning Division offices.

The 11 member volunteer MPC committee was created by the Town Board which was comprised of individuals with varying backgrounds and included liaisons from the Planning Board, the Conservation Advisory Council, The Zoning Board of Appeals, the Architectural Review Board, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Council, local historical societies, local and county officials and homeowners groups. During the 5 years of extensive information collection and analysis, the MPC met regularly on their own, and held several joint meetings with the Town Board to keep them up to date on the status and schedule of the work.

There are a total of 151 policies contained in the Comprehensive Master Plan . The word “policies” should not be interpreted to be more than what it is– which is - recommendations for policy changes or revisions. The policies contained in the Comprehensive Master Plan will help the Town direct and manage the decision-making process for years to come. The Master Plan is a legal tool in justifying major zoning changes, subdivision and site plan laws and other ordinances.

The “Summary of the Policies” listed below briefly summarizes all 151 policies contained in the Master Plan.

Summary of Policies

Residential Development

Cortlandt is largely a residential community with over 94% of its land currently zoned for Residential uses. This Master Plan recommends minor changes to the residential character of Cortlandt which includes a rich and diverse set of old and new residential neighborhoods that accommodate a variety of housing types, from multifamily dwellings to small-lot bungalows to large estate properties. This recommendation was reached after an arduous process that included evaluating up-zoning over two thirds of the land area of Cortlandt that the Master Plan committee felt would preserve the visual character of the Town and the environment by reducing development potential. However, the Town Board felt, and Town staff agreed, that these objectives could be accomplished by expanding restrictions on development by establishing stricter standards in wetland buffer areas, CEA’s and other environmentally sensitive areas. This will be reflected in a revised lot count formula which is the first step in identifying a build-out potential of a particular property.

The Town’s Residential Zoning Code will continue to permit half-acre (20,000 square foot) lots and smaller in the northern and western portions of the Town; the R-40 zone, which allows one acre lots in the central portion of the Town; and, the most southerly areas of Cortlandt will remain zoned for lots generally two acres in size.

Over the past decade, much of the residential growth in the Town has resulted in the creation of large-lot single family detached dwellings. The Plan seeks to implement measures that will ensure that a percentage of all housing that is constructed in the Town is affordable. Therefore the Master Plan calls for the adoption of an affordable housing program. The Plan calls for the elimination of the Planned Village Development (PVD) Concept and the Special Re-Use Conservation (SRC). The Master Plan also encourages cluster open space design for new residential subdivisions to further protect environmentally sensitive areas and open space.

Commercial Development

Within the context of an overwhelmingly residential land use pattern, the Master Plan specifically seeks to achieve the following three goals relating to commercial development and re-development.

- Promote a jobs/housing balance in the Town
- Balance the Town's ratable base.
- Target appropriate business niches such as research & development

Since adoption of the 1991 Master Plan, much of the nonresidential growth in the Town has occurred along the Route 6 corridor, the Town's primary commercial center. The Comprehensive Master Plan recommends that a "Regional Commercial Center District" redefining existing commercial development along Route 6.

Other recommendations include the creation of an "Office Research Area" by Special Permit which will encourage small office research parks on properties over 50 acres in size. These office research areas would be "campus like" in their settings and would be subject to the issuance of a Special Permit.

A major focus of the 2003 Plan was to create two new zones called – Waterfront Light Industrial and Waterfront Tourism – both of which are primarily located in Annsville and Verplanck. The Waterfront Light Industrial Area will target light industrial uses near waterfront - specifically in Verplanck and Annsville. The Plan suggests that heavier industrial type uses be "phased-out" in these locations. It should be noted that all uses permitted in the Waterfront Tourism districts will be permitted by Special Permit in the Light Industrial areas.

The Waterfront Tourism Area is intended to allow water-dependent and water-enhanced uses in the Annsville and Verplanck areas specifically marinas, boat yards, restaurants, gift shops, restaurants, and other tourist type uses. One objective is to link the areas with the Hudson River Greenway trail system, the Hudson Highlands Gateway Park and the Steamboat Riverfront Park and Trail.

Other suggestions in the 2003 Plan include reducing the potential for "strip" commercial development by redefining the Community Commercial Mixed Use Areas, along Oregon Road. Furthermore, the Plan recommends changing the existing HC zone to a General Commercial Area, creating a Business Mixed Use area along Route 9A as a transitional mixed use area separate from the Community Commercial area in Montrose. The purpose of the Business Mixed Use area is to allow business, services, and offices, as well as small-scale multifamily housing, retail and personal service uses.

The Plan also retains the Designed Industrial Area which currently exists on Furnace Dock Road. There are no new designed industrial areas because, in general, the Town lacks suitably large flat sites for light industrial uses that would be in close proximity to major transportation facilities that can accommodate truck traffic. A proposed Light Industrial Area will replace most of the existing M-1 districts scattered throughout the Town and would continue to operate as heavy commercial/industrial areas.

Open Space & Recreation

To preserve the attractive, rural appearance throughout Cortlandt, open space must be preserved. Cortlandt is proud of its recent successes in acquiring significant tracks of land for open space through partnerships with various government and private agencies. From 1992 – 2004, Cortlandt has increased open space by 65% from 2,729 acres to 4,502 acres.

However, there is more that must be done. The Comprehensive Master Plan discusses the land use related objectives and implementation measures that will achieve the Town's goal of preserving open space.

For planning purposes, the 2003 Master Plan defines open space as follows:

1. Dedicated open space areas that are largely vacant and are restricted from being developed.
2. Properties that are not explicitly dedicated to open space, but the use and character of the properties are essentially the same as dedicated open space such as cemeteries, golf courses and private recreation areas.
3. Undeveloped or underutilized privately-owned land. (e.g. Teatown Reservation Cliffdale Farm, Valeria, and the DeMaria Farm fall into this category.)

Since 1994, Parks, Recreation and Open Space parcels in public ownership are located within a Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) district as shown on the Town Zoning Map. Significant work on a Comprehensive Open Space Plan began in 1995 with the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) preparing an Open Space Index of all vacant parcels over five (5) acres in size.

In 2000, the Town Board established an Open Space Committee dedicated to making recommendations to the Board regarding the acquisition of open space and conservation easements of any size. A primary objective of the Open Space Committee is the development and adoption of an "Open Space Plan". As was stated in the 1991 plan, an open space priority is to seek ways to increase public access to the Hudson River waterfront, particularly in the areas of Verplanck, the V.A. Hospital in Montrose and Annsville Circle.

Natural Resources

Cortlandt is blessed with natural resources which are diverse, accessible and contain elements of great value and significance. The 2003 Plan seeks to protect these areas of Town through a strong set of recommendations to protect the Town's natural resources. As was the case in the 1991 plan, a top priority under natural resources is to clean up polluted water bodies. The 2003 Plan addresses this primarily through compliance with the new Stormwater Phase II regulations which will help the Town identify areas of non-point source pollution. Water quality monitoring is a requirement of Stormwater Phase II and strongly supported in the Master Plan.

Conservation design is also strongly encouraged and recommended as part of the plan. Cortlandt has long had a record of success in utilizing its Wetlands, Steep Slopes and Tree Cutting Ordinances which have all served to help protect these natural resources. The 2003 Plan calls for more stringent regulations and for the Town to conduct a biennial review of all of these ordinances to ensure they remain up-to-date. Biodiversity and endangered species are also addressed in this section. Development should be planned in such a way, that to the greatest extent possible, the Town maintains high quality of its water resources and soils and continues to provide a natural habitat for its native wildlife.

The Plan supports public notification and education regarding the need to test well water, maintain septic systems and the Town's drainage system.

Traffic & Transportation

As part of the planning process, a Town wide public opinion survey was conducted. Not surprisingly, traffic/transportation issues were among the most important issues cited by our residents. Increased traffic on Town and State roadways is one of the most tangible results of continued development in Cortlandt and in the surrounding communities

Major policies addressing traffic and transportation include a recommendation to establish a proactive and continuous transportation planning function within the Town government. Some specific recommendations for this function include the development of a regional computer traffic model that would be continually updated with information provided by developers and information gathered from a continuous monitoring program which will record traffic volumes, accidents, etc. This information will help identify problem locations, help to prioritize road improvements and identify areas where traffic calming measures should be utilized.

In addition, the Plan specifically attempts to address how to improve traffic flow on older roads while preserving trees, stone walls, and other features that add to the attractive rural character of these areas.

Utilities & Local Municipal Services

As with traffic planning, the Master Plan recommends establishing a proactive and continuous water, sewer and drainage planning program within the Town Government to identify future utility improvements and capital projects.

Since 1991 the Town has successfully implemented a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The 2003 Plan strongly supports the continuation of this program. The cost of developing and maintaining public utilities is increasing and strategies for reducing and controlling such costs is critical. The recently completed GIS mapping of all storm water, sewer and water systems in the Town will permit the proper evaluation of existing facilities and foster proactive planning of all system improvements. Once again, the recently adopted Stormwater Phase II regulations are addressed in this section.

Local municipal services that are addressed in the Plan include schools, libraries, fire departments and ambulance corps, sanitation, highway, planning, zoning, engineering, code enforcement, health care services, senior citizen programs and child care programs.

Visual Quality & Community Appearance

The maintenance and enhancement of the visual nature and quality of our community was another top issue identified in the Master Plan survey. The Master Plan calls for the continuation of the Architectural Review Council as an advisory body to the Planning Board and which will review all site plan applications pending before the Planning Board. Furthermore, the Plan recommends developing a design manual and design review process which will improve the quality of design in the Town and ensure that new developments, renovations and signage are compatible with are in which they are located.

Additionally, the Comprehensive Master Plan encourages the creation of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) to protect Cortlandt's unique waterfront and access to the Hudson River.

Historic Preservation

The Plan includes the identification of major historic areas in the Town as *Verplanck, Van Cortlandtville, Oregon Corners and Pleasantside* and recommends the creation of an historic design manual which would detail suggested design criteria to guide proposed activities which otherwise, might be detrimental to a historic property or an a historic neighborhood. In addition, the Plan suggests that the Town identify and list its historic roads and adopt a historic roads ordinance.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

Section B: PURPOSE & NEED

Introduction

The 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan for the Town of Cortlandt, New York, provides a town-wide set of recommendations to allow the community to plan, guide and shape its future. The current update replaces the previous 1991 Master Plan which was adopted by both the Planning Board and Town Board in 1991. Prior to that, there was a Comprehensive Master Plan prepared in 1974 and amended in 1981 with the North Cortlandt Planning Study and in 1987 The South and Central Cortlandt Study. In 1993 New York State enacted Section 272-a of the Town Law providing for the adoption of the town comprehensive plan by only the Town Board. Most of the 118 policies in the 1991 Master Plan were implemented or are on-going.

Much has happened in Cortlandt since the adoption of the 1991 Master Plan. Development pressures continued in the region and Cortlandt led the way in acquiring and preserving large tracts of Open Space and providing new recreation facilities. That is not to say that Cortlandt did not grow during the past 12 years, it did.

Residential development in the 1990's added 700 new housing units to the town that included 43 affordable dwelling units. The majority of new residential construction was single family homes in new subdivisions such as Cortlandt Chase, Cortlandt Estates, Old Oaks, Peachwood, Blue Jay Estates and Covington Estates. In 1993, the Cross Creek development on Oregon Road added 40 affordable town homes to the Town's housing stock.

Significant commercial development and job creation took place along the following major transportation corridors: along Route 6 new development included the reconstruction and expansion of the former Westchester Mall into the Cortlandt Town Center, the construction of a Circuit City store and Pike Plaza and the conversion of the old Caldors building into a Kohls store; construction on Route 129 included the Very Best IRTJ building; on Route 9A the Bethel Nursing Home was completed; on Route 202/35 a major expansion of the Hudson Valley Hospital Center was also completed.

Major transportation improvements included the construction of the new Cortlandt Train Station, Memorial Drive and the reconstruction of Route 6. New community facilities included the Hollow Brook Fire Station, Cortlandt Town Hall on Oregon Road, the Emergency Facilities Building (New York State Police & Cortlandt Regional Paramedics) on Memorial Drive and the Northern Westchester Water Works filtration plant on Route 6.

While growth in the Town's population slowed to 1% in the 1990's, other demographic changes resulted in a substantial increase to school enrollments. Increased awareness for environmental protection included biodiversity and watershed areas.

Based on the results of a citizen survey which was conducted as part of this Master Plan process, the top 3 issues were: open space preservation, visual/community character and traffic/transportation.

Specifically, the planning process has revealed that the Town of Cortlandt in 2003 is evolving from a community that experienced significant residential expansion to one that is "maturing". Particular attention should be paid to the impact of new development on the Town's architectural and visual character. A revised set of policies is required to guide development and conservation in Cortlandt. The 2003 Town of Cortlandt Master Plan has been drafted to address the unique challenges and opportunities that confront Cortlandt today and over the next 10 to 20 years.

The 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan is the result of a 5 year effort by the Master Plan Committee with the assistance of the Town of Cortlandt Department of Technical Services, Planning Division. This Master Plan has also been shaped by the input of members from the Town Board, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Conservation Advisory Council, the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Advisory Board, the Architectural Advisory Council and various other committees, department heads, as well as public participants in the planning process. Also assisting the Master Plan Committee was Stuart Turner & Associates, and the Westchester County Geographic Information Systems.

Purpose & Need

The 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan provides the community a town-wide view of conditions and trends on a wide variety of issues and provides for a set of long-range policy recommendations to be used by the community to help shape and manage future growth in the Town of Cortlandt. As the Town's various officials make decisions, the Master Plan should serve as a "road map" and reference guide so that decisions are made in a consistent and reasoned manner. The Master Plan should express the community's "vision", i.e., what kind of community is Cortlandt? What are its existing and future needs? How will these needs be met?

It should be noted that the adoption of a Master Plan is not tantamount to the rigid application of every policy found in the Plan. The Master Plan does NOT carry the authority of law or legislation. Rather, the formal adoption of the 2003 Master Plan is an acknowledgement that these policies have been developed to help the Town direct and manage the decision-making process over a long-term period. The 2003 Master Plan is in many ways a set of management tools. This is important to stress since the Town is essentially a mostly developed community. Therefore the Plan pays particular attention to the existing character of the Town and the heightened sensitivity to those remaining developable parcels.

Basis for Implementing Changes

Many of the policies contained in the 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan call for the Town to actively pursue certain goals, such as significant revisions to the Town's Zoning Ordinance. It is acknowledged that implementation of the policies contained in the Master Plan is a long-term process which will take considerable effort to see through its various elements, such as enacting new legislation or revisions to existing legislation. Other aspects of the Plan are more general and non-legislative, but will also require an effort to make the local government more efficient and effective.

Section C: BACKGROUND & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Background of the Town of Cortlandt Comprehensive Planning Process

The Town of Cortlandt commenced a comprehensive planning process in 1998 to review and update the previously adopted 1991 Town of Cortlandt Master Plan. In 2000, this effort was upgraded to a new Comprehensive Master Plan to be completed in 2003 and adopted in 2004 by the Town Board. This effort began with the identification of the policies that have been implemented since 1991 and whether or not these policies have achieved their intended objectives; identified policies that had not been implemented and if these should still be pursued; and, identified any new needs or issues which should be addressed as part of the 2003 Master Plan.

The Master Plan Committee (MPC) worked tirelessly on this project for over 5 years. The 11 members on the front of this document reflect the current membership. They represent a cross-section of the Town including liaisons from the CAC and the Planning Board. Part of the process of the MPC was to meet with and/or correspond with various Town department heads, Board members, and local committees and councils including the Conservation Advisory Council, the Architectural Advisory Council, local historical societies, local and county officials and homeowners groups. The MPC also had several meetings with the Town Board during the master plan process to keep the Town Board up to date on the status and schedule of the work.

The Town of Cortlandt Town Board appointed a Master Plan Committee (MPC) by Resolution No. 214-98. In order to assure maximum public participation during the planning process the MPC appointees represent members of other Town boards and committees as well as citizens-at-large. Appointees included the Supervisor, a Town Board member, two members of the Planning Board, two members of the Zoning Board of Appeals, and one member each from the following committees: Conservation Advisory Council, Save Our Lakes, Traffic Safety Committee, Architectural Review Council, Pride in Cortlandt Committee. The MPC was also involved in the selection and interview process for a planning consultant to assist in the preparation of the Master Plan.

The Cortlandt planning staff and planning consultant, Stuart Turner & Associates, have assisted in the development of this plan. Maps for this document have been prepared with the assistance of and the Westchester County Geographic Information Systems.

Base Studies

In order for a Master Plan to successfully guide future decision making in the Town, it must consider the past and present pattern of development, the physical and environmental setting and the Town's regional setting. The MPC conducted an extensive analysis of baseline conditions on a variety of topics important to the Town.

The Base Studies provide an informed platform from which to make reasoned Master Plan policy recommendations. The Base Studies was written to provide an inventory of current conditions and a well-balanced assessment of conditions that may affect policy decisions.

Baseline condition reports which were reviewed included the data prepared for the 1991 Plan and updated for the 2003 Plan. The policies then reflected current conditions on topics such as population (based on the 2000 Census) and housing, natural resources, community facilities, land use, transportation, utilities, economic development and historic and aesthetic resources. The MPC also conducted an extensive bus tour of the entire Town in 1998 and staff provided numerous photographs depicting the Town's visual character and existing conditions. The Base Studies benefited from the detailed land use and environmental mapping which resulted from the implementation of the Town-wide GIS in 2002.

The information contained in the existing conditions analyses, and public comment obtained through a Public Opinion Survey, as well as the significant public comment received at various public workshops and meetings, have been helpful in identifying challenges currently confronting Cortlandt and conceptualizing a vision for Cortlandt's future.

Draft Housing Action Plan

During preparation of this Plan, the MPC also reviewed and commented on a draft Housing Action Plan dated May, 2000 which was prepared by Stuart Turner & Associates. This Housing Action Plan was forwarded to the Town Board for their consideration and the policies and recommendations of the Housing Action Plan have been incorporated into this Master Plan document.

The objectives of the Housing Action Plan were as follows:

1. To review the policies, goals, and objectives contained in the 1991 Master Plan related to affordable housing and determine whether the implementation measures to effectuate them have resulted in the establishment of affordable housing in Cortlandt.
2. To provide a demographic overview of the Town's population based on 1990 Bureau of the Census data on population and housing that were not available at the time the previous Master Plan Update was prepared. The demographic overview is intended to determine what portion of Cortlandt's population, if any, have unmet housing needs. It is possible to identify household types that may not have entry into the Cortlandt housing market by comparing the Town's population to Westchester County's population and determining what population segments in the County are not represented or underrepresented in the Town.

3. To review current County policies related to the provision of affordable housing. County policies influence the Town's ability to meet its housing allocation.
4. To recommend implementation measures to implement this Housing Action Plan.

Re-Use of the FDR VA Hospital

The MPC was also involved in formulating a proposal for the re-use of the FDR VA Hospital by the Town of Cortlandt. This effort was conducted by Ernst & Young LLP, as consultants for the Town of Cortlandt and spanned several months. The MPC involvement in this committee's review and analysis allowed the MPC to better plan and understand this unique parcel in Town. Certain policies contained in the Master Plan address the FDR VA Hospital property.

Route 202/35, 6, Bear Mountain Parkway Sustainable Development Study

In the spring of 2000, while the MPC has been deep in their process of creating the 2003 Master Plan, a major regional planning study (Sustainable Development Study) was initiated by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) to guide land use patterns and transportation decision-making within a study area which included three major transportation corridors in Cortlandt: Routes 6, 202/35 and the Bear Mountain Parkway. The planning process for this Sustainable Development Study (SDS) has involved inter-municipal participation and cooperation among the three municipalities within which these corridors are located: the Town of Cortlandt, the Town of Yorktown, and the City of Peekskill. A draft of the Sustainable Development Study was released in September 2002.

The Town's 2003 Master Plan process was extended to consider and incorporate the SDS policies into the master plan document, where appropriate. It should be noted that the SDS is still as of January 2004, not complete or adopted. The MPC has chosen to incorporate some recommendations contained in the Draft SDS. However, similar to other major studies referenced in the Master Plan, the Town Board can choose to adopt any or all of the recommendation contained in the SDS and make it an addendum to this 2003 Master Plan.

The Croton Watershed Study

Another major planning study which was taking place simultaneously to the 2003 Cortlandt Master Plan was the Croton Watershed Plan. The Croton Watershed Plan is a long-term plan which is being conducted by the Westchester County Planning Department and involves the cooperative effort of 12 communities surrounding the NYC watershed. A draft of the Croton Watershed Plan was released in March, 2003 and many of the suggested policies have been integrated into the 2003 Cortlandt Master Plan.

It is anticipated that sometime in 2004, a final “Comprehensive Croton Watershed Quality Protection Plan for Westchester County, NY” will be released. At that time, the Town Board can choose to adopt any or all of the recommendation contained in the “Croton Plan” and make it an addendum to this 2003 Master Plan.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

The Master Plan process was also extended to make use of detailed land use and environmental mapping that became available as a result of the implementation of a Town-wide geographic information system (GIS). GIS mapping and analysis was provided by both in house staff and the Westchester County GIS.

Moratorium

In October 2001, the Cortlandt Town Board adopted a local law establishing a moratorium with respect to filing new applications before the Planning Board. The purpose of the moratorium was to allow the Town time to conduct a review and update of its Master Plan and to have a citizens (MPC) committee make recommendations to the Town Board with respect to any changes to be made to that plan. During the period of the moratorium, projects that had already been filed with the Planning Board before a certain date were allowed to continue through the approval process.

Goals and Objectives

Like the 1991 Master Plan, the 2003 Plan identified goals and objectives. The goals and objectives contained in the 1991 Master Plan were reviewed by the MPC to use as a foundation to build on in the 2003 Plan. *Unlike* the 1991 Plan the 2003 Plan combines the goals and objectives with the policies in each chapter of the Master Plan document instead of in a separate report. The goals and objectives addressed the issues and visions identified and studied by the MPC that supports the policies.

Master Plan Policies

The MPC conducted extensive reviews of the 118 policies of the 1991 Town of Cortlandt Master Plan which served as a foundation to build on in the 2003 Plan. Although many of the 118 policies were implemented since 1991, in some cases changed conditions required a new approach to past policies to address both short and long range planning needs in the Town. The MPC also carried over or updated policies that were either on-going or not implemented since 1991.

The 2003 Master Plan contains many new policies to address existing conditions and to implement the goals and objectives.

Overview: Comprehensive Planning in New York State

New York State Town Law regulates the preparation and adoption of comprehensive plans. Section 272-a of that law states that a comprehensive plan is one that will “identify the goals and objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development” of a town. Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan is discretionary, i.e., it is not required.

However, if a plan is prepared and adopted subsequently by the Town Board, the town’s land use regulations must be in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan. In addition, governmental agencies must take the adopted town comprehensive plan into consideration when planning capital projects that are located in the municipality.

A variety of local, county, state and other regional agencies review actions or make decisions that affect the overall land use and development pattern and character of the Town. These agencies include, but are not limited to the Town Board, Planning Board, school and fire districts, Westchester County and New York State transportation departments, and other groups. In these activities, they should be guided by a comprehensive plan that provides direction and a framework for this decision-making.

Section 272-a also guides the content of the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan may include the following elements:

- *General statement of goals, objectives, principles, policies for the immediate and long-range enhancement, growth and development of the town.*
- *Consideration of regional needs and plans of other government agencies.*
- *Existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses, including commercial, industrial, residential, open space, institutional and other uses.*
- *Consideration of agricultural uses, historic and cultural resources, coastal and natural resources.*
- *Consideration of demographic and socio-economic trends.*
- *The location and types of transportation facilities.*
- *Existing and proposed general location of utilities.*
- *Existing housing and future housing needs, including affordable housing.*
- *The present and general location of educational, health, emergency protection and other community facilities and services.*
- *Existing and proposed active and passive recreation facilities.*
- *Strategies for improving the local economy.*
- *Implementation measures to achieve the plan’s goals and objectives.*
- *Other items which are consistent with the orderly growth and development of the town.*

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The 2003 Master Plan process was a public process spanning some 5 years. The Cortlandt Community was invited to participate in helping to create this document that would help chart Cortlandt's future.

Public participation serves several important purposes. For one, the Master Plan is a community-based effort and reflects the cumulative values of the Town residents. Many comments made by the public helped modify and focus the work conducted by the MPC. Local residents also bring a level of expertise on Town history and conditions in their own local neighborhoods. To that end, Cortlandt chose to conduct various public forums in various neighborhoods throughout the Town so as to provide a more in-depth public participation format.

Public Participation in the Preparation of the 2003 Master Plan:

There have been many public meetings during the 5 year process to prepare the 2003 Master Plan including regularly scheduled MPC meetings, overview meetings with the Town Board officials and special public forums. The regularly schedule MPC meetings were held in the Cortlandt Town Hall usually twice a month and sometimes weekly as needed in 2003 to complete the work. All MPC meetings were open to the public. Prior to the meetings, agendas were given to the media, Town officials and interested parties and posted on the Town's web site. Minutes of the meetings were prepared. Similarly, the overview meetings with the Town Board were conducted at regularly scheduled work session meetings which are open to the public.

One of the first documents prepared by the MPC was a Public Opinion Survey concerning various important issues confronting the Town. This questionnaire was distributed throughout the Town that generated approximately 380 responses. The results were then tabulated in a report to the MPC and the Town Board.

As indicated below, various public forums were held at Town Hall during the preparation period. These forums were well advertised in all the local newspapers including the Pennysaver, plus notices were posted on community bulletin boards and given to various Town officials, departments, committees and neighborhood associations.

Information Public Meeting – November, 1999

A Public Information Meeting was first held in November, 1999 to explain the history and process of preparing and adopting a Master Plan and to provide an overview of the topics concerning the Town to be included in the Plan. The public also had an opportunity at this meeting to discuss important issues to be considered by the MPC concerning traffic, open space, recreation, tree cutting and sewers, among others.

Public Informational Meeting - June, 2001

In June 2001, the Master Plan Committee held a public forum at Town Hall to obtain citizen input on the issues, opportunities and challenges confronting the Town. This forum presented information to the public concerning the Master Plan process and provided an opportunity for the public to offer comments and suggestions on specific issues during the workshop portion of the meeting. These suggestions were taken into consideration during the development of this Plan.

Public Informational Meeting - March, 2003

In March of 2003 the MPC held an informational public meeting to review the progress made on its update of the Town's Master Plan that included an overview of the draft Master Plan goals, objectives and policies and a discussion of the next steps in the process. Also comments and questions from the public were discussed at this meeting. In the months following this meeting the MPC received many written comments from the public and citizen groups that were considered.

Special Joint Meeting of TB, PB, ZBA and MPC – September, 2003

In addition to the public informational meetings, various Special Joint Meetings of the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, The Town Board and the MPC were held. The latest of which was held:

- **Saturday, September 6, 2003:** Presentation at the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals Joint Board meeting of progress made to-date and the future plan for presentation and adoption by the Town Board.

Fall 2003 Public “Workshops” in Various Geographic Locations:

In September through November, 2003 the MPC conducted three (3) neighborhood public workshops in three different geographic areas in the Town on Saturdays that lasted each a minimum of 3 hours as follows:

- **Saturday, September 13, 2003:** Focused on areas of Crugers, Montrose, and Verplanck. Held at the Red Schoolhouse, Sixth Street, Verplanck, NY.
- **Saturday, September 20, 2003:** Focused on areas of South of Maple Avenue, East of Route 9 including Furnace Woods, Mt. Airy, Blue Mountain, Quaker Ridge and Teatown. Held at: Blue Mountain Middle School, Furnace Dock Road.
- **Saturday, October 18, 2003 & Saturday November 15, 2003:** Focused on areas North of Maple Avenue, East of Route 9, including Crompond, Mohegan Lake, the Northeast quadrant, Gull Manor, Lake Allendale, Toddville, Annsville and Van Cortlandtville. Held at: Cortlandt Town Hall, 1 Heady Street. NOTE: This workshop was adjourned to November and continued on November 15.

Town Board Public Participation Process

The formal adoption of the Master Plan by the Town Board also involved public participation. While the actual Master Plan carries no legislative authority, its importance to the community is emphasized by a mandatory environmental review through the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Specific Town Board Public Workshops and Meetings include:

- January 26, 2004: A Monday evening Town Board Work Session dedicated solely to the discussion of the Final Draft of the Master Plan.
- January 31, 2004: A Saturday morning/afternoon Joint Meeting between the Town Board and the Master Plan Committee.
- February 10, 2004: At an official Town Board Meeting the – receive and final the 2003 Final Comprehensive Master Plan and schedule Public Hearing for April 20, 2004.
- March 9, 2004: At an official Town Board Meeting – receive and file the Scoping Document for the GEIS.
- March 29, 2004 – Special Meeting of the Town Board – Declare Lead Agency, Adopt Amended Master Plan and Scope for GEIS.
- April 20, 2004 – Official Town Board Public Hearing on the 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan.
- May 11, 2004 – Official Town Board Public Hearing on the 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan.
- June 15, 2004 - Official Town Board Public Hearing on the 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan.

Town Board/SEQRA & The Adoption of the Master Plan

The adoption of the 2003 Master Plan will require the preparation of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), which Cortlandt is completing with the assistance of Turner & Associates. The SEQRA process requires a formal public hearing on the Draft GEIS and the comments received are to be used in preparation of the Final GEIS and making modifications to the Master Plan based on public comments. As specified in NYS legislation, the EIS public hearing is combined with the locally mandated public hearing. The Town Board as the lead agency will refer the Master Plan to the Planning Board for its review and comments prior to its adoption. The Planning Board of the Town of Cortlandt held a Special meeting on March 23, 2004 to review the Plan. The Town Board is expected to adopt this Master Plan at their August 17, 2004 meeting.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 1: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

LAND USE ELEMENT - OPEN SPACE SECTION

A. INTRODUCTION

GOAL: Continue to preserve, protect and acquire open space.

The open space section of the Master plan discusses the land use related objectives and implementation measures that are intended to achieve the Town's goal of preserving open space. This section focuses primarily on passive recreation and open space objectives, while the active recreational needs of the community are addressed in the recreation section of the community facilities element.



Oscawana Island in Crugers

Open space, simply defined, is land that is “open and green”, i.e., it is relatively free of structures, buildings and other elements of the man-made environment and is largely in a natural or vegetated state. Generally, open space is not used intensively. For planning purposes, the Master Plan Committee has defined the land use category “open space” as actually representing three distinct subcategories:

- ❖ Dedicated open space areas that are largely vacant and are formally restricted from being developed, e.g., public passive parkland such as the Hudson Highlands Gateway Park. Privately-owned undeveloped areas that are restricted from development by conservation easements or similar restrictions would also fall within this subcategory.
- ❖ Properties that are not explicitly dedicated to open space, but the use and character of the properties are essentially the same as dedicated open space. While man-made structures may be present, the overall property maintains a significant percentage of land area that is undisturbed or green, e.g., a cemetery. Another type of open space would be certain types of recreational facilities such as a park (Blue Mountain or Georges Island, for example), a playfield or a golf course – while it may be more intensively used, a golf course’s design results in significant expanses of land being retained in a vegetated, open state.
- ❖ Undeveloped or underutilized privately-owned land. While the land may currently provide open space benefits, there is no guarantee in the future that these benefits will be preserved since this land could be subject to development in the future. Properties such as Teatown Reservation (Cliffdale Farm), Valeria, and the DeMaria Farm fall into this category.



Hudson Highlands Gateway Park - Annsville

In defining and categorizing open space, the Committee was also advised by the New York State Land Use Classification System. Using the NYS system as a basis for our discussion and presentation, allows the statistics we developed to be reasonably compared to other Towns across the County and the State.

Based on the results of the Master Plan Public Opinion Survey, open space was one of the most important issues on which the Town should take action. Open space is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Preserve the Town's biodiversity by protecting significant expanses of land or corridors in their natural ecological habitat.
- Protect environmentally sensitive land, e.g., wetlands and steep slopes.
- Protect scenic views considered important to the community.
- Provide passive recreational opportunities, including but not limited to hiking and bird watching.
- Preserve historic and archeological resources.
- Protect surface and ground water resources by buffering these resources from the pollutants generated by development.
- Generate economic benefits generated by the tourists who may visit the open space amenities that are open to the public.
- Preserve community character and quality of life by buffering more intensive areas of development from residential neighborhoods, stabilizing property values.
- Limit the impacts associated with man-made development, including increases in pollutants, traffic, and noise levels.

The proposals included in the Plan are directed to the furtherance of these objectives. The most fundamental step to be taken is the proposed development of a Comprehensive Open Space Plan, to identify open space patterns and linkages, critical properties and environmental concerns and to create a prioritized list of properties to be considered for protection and/or acquisition. As the Master Plan is being prepared for presentation to the Town Board, this work is underway.

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

Existing PROS and Cluster Open Space Zoning

Parks, Recreation and Open Space parcels in public ownership as of 1994 are located within a Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) district as shown on the Town Zoning Map. The Zoning Map shows 13 PROS districts in the Town containing 2,336 acres. Since 1994, when the last comprehensive zoning map of the town was adopted, additional public open space lands have been acquired and should be zoned as a PROS district. PROS districts identifies parks and recreation areas as open space for passive and active recreational uses

Also shown as PROS on the Zoning Map are cluster open space developments containing residential development and protected open space land such as Valeria, Cortlandt Chase, Cortlandt Estates, Valley View among others.

Open Space Trends Update

In 2002, approximately 4,502 acres, or 21 percent, of the Town of Cortlandt is considered “dedicated open space”, representing a 64 percent increase in open space since 1990 (open space in 1990 was 2,729 acres).

Dedicated open space acreage in the Town of Cortlandt can be broken down into the following categories: state parkland (11%), county parkland (46%), town recreational facilities and parks (4%), and open space within cluster subdivisions (5%), conservation lands including New York City watershed property (32%), private homeowner association recreation lands (1%) and recreational facilities on public school lands (1%). The largest area of growth in open space is represented by acquisitions of conservation land by the State of New York, the County of Westchester, New York City and the Town of Cortlandt.

Other public and private lands in the Cortlandt which serve some of the functions of open space are undeveloped lands associated with Camp Smith, the FDR VA Hospital grounds, Teatown Reservation (Cliffdale Farm), as well as cemeteries, utility rights-of-way, large estate properties, and farms and riding stables. However, these properties are not protected from development and are not included in the estimate of “dedicated open space”.

In 2002, approximately 3,803 acres (17% of Town land area) was classified as vacant and undeveloped. In 2002, development applications pending before the Planning Board represent approximately 1,544 acres of the Town’s undeveloped and vacant land. It is anticipated that a portion of the land area affected by these development applications will result in open space preservation although the total acreage is unknown at this time. Approximately 100 acres of dedicated open space was created from subdivisions approved in the past ten years. Since 1990, undeveloped and vacant land decreased by approximately 2,500 acres, with approximately 800 acres converted to residential and nonresidential development and approximately 1,773 acres converted to dedicated open space. New open space lands include, among others; the Hudson Highland Gateway Park, Harbour Landing, Blue Lakes and the transfer of land in Camp Smith to parkland.

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

OBJECTIVE: Complete and adopt a comprehensive Open Space Plan.

The creation of an Open Space Plan was first recommended in the 1991 Plan and some initial work to inventory significant open space parcels was accomplished. Work on a Comprehensive Open Space Plan began in 1995 with the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) preparing an Open Space Index of all vacant parcels over five (5) acres in size. While this effort resulted in an identification of important properties that should be protected, there were some concerns those properties smaller than five (5) acres in size were not inventoried.

These smaller (less than 5 acres parcels) may offer strategic connections to link open space areas. In the past, it proved time-consuming and cumbersome to analyze the open space potential of all parcels in the Town. However, this effort is now more manageable with the availability of detailed land use and environmental maps and databases as part of Cortlandt's Geographic Information System (GIS).

It is recommended that the Town proactively identify properties that are essential to creating a well-planned and meaningful system of open space. Currently, there is a concern that isolated areas of open space are being preserved, but without beneficial linkages to other open space.

It is recommended that the Town prepare a comprehensive Open Space Plan and Open Space Map, which would specifically identify areas recommended for open space preservation. The Plan should illustrate existing designated open spaces as well as lands targeted for future preservation, maximizing open space benefits, such as protection of sensitive environmental areas, scenic views, or wildlife habitat.

Policy 1: Complete and adopt an updated Comprehensive Open Space Plan.

In order to prioritize properties that should be designated open space, the comprehensive Open Space Plan should be guided by criteria used to evaluate the importance of parcels for open space preservation. These criteria include.

- Unique habitats or habitat which supports rare, threatened and/or endangered wildlife and plant species and ecosystems.
- Scenic views of the Hudson River or the Hudson Highlands, or other significant scenic and cultural areas identified by the Comprehensive Open Space Plan.
- Historic and archeological resources that protect and perpetuate the historic character of the Town.
- Adjacency to or location within a Critical Environmental Area
- Prevalence of significant natural features such as prominent ridgelines, steep topography, and water features including lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, coastlines, river habitats, or other features that are sensitive to development.
- Adjacency to private or public parks, wildlife and nature preserves sanctuaries or other open space in order to connect, expand and enhance the value of these important conservation areas.
- Natural buffer between and within residential neighborhoods to protect and enhance quality of life and neighborhood character.

- Other parcels that exhibit exceptional open space qualities or provide links to other open space areas.
- Lands identified as providing important recreational opportunities for the Town.
- Lands and/or buffer areas associated with protecting a public water supply or aquifer.
- Lands which promote tourism.
- Lands necessary for the acquisition of new and expansion of existing active recreation facilities.

Based on Local Law No. 2 of 2000 the Town Board by Resolution No. 68-03 established an Open Space Committee to make recommendations to the Board regarding the acquisition of open space.

The Planning Board should consult the Open Space Plan when reviewing development applications, and when appropriate, should recommend conservation easements, cluster development, or open space acquisition in order to protect an area recommended for open space preservation. Likewise, future applicants should recognize the recommendations of the Open Space plan as part of their Site Development and Subdivision plans that are to be submitted to the Planning Board.

It is recommended that when the Open Space Plan is adopted by the Town Board that it be incorporated into the Town Master Plan. In addition, the Open Space Plan should be updated biennially to reflect open space acquisitions and recent development.

The Open Space Plan will strengthen the Town's position in its advocacy of the protection of open space. By identifying specific properties recommended for open space preservation, it can negotiate for limited or full interest in a property before a development is proposed. In such cases, the importance of the parcel in the Town's Comprehensive Open Space Plan would be evaluated and appropriate measures would be required if development is to proceed (e.g. mandatory clustering, conservation easements, public access easements, etc.)

OBJECTIVE: Acquire open space throughout the Town through a variety of mechanisms, including: land donations, partnerships, support of land trust efforts, fee simple acquisition, conservation easements and cluster development.

Policy 2: Target specific properties for open space acquisition in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan and leverage the Town's funding to obtain additional financing.

Based on the Open Space Plan being prepared by the Open Space Committee, and as adopted by the Town Board, specific properties will be identified for open space preservation and acquisition.

In the past, the Town of Cortlandt Town Board has proactively partnered with other governmental agencies such as New York State, Westchester County, private land preservation organizations such as Scenic Hudson Inc. and neighboring property owners to acquire property for open space.

Recent examples of these types of partnerships include the acquisition of the 352 acre Hillpoint property to create the Hudson Highlands Gateway Park and the New York State acquisition of the Harbour Landing property.



The Hudson River from Hudson Highlands Gateway Park

By Local Law No. 2 of 2000 the Cortlandt Town Board created a capital reserve fund for the future acquisition of open space. The Town is also working with Westchester County and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to acquire and protect the sensitive watershed lands in the Croton Watershed.

The Town is encouraged to work with the City of Peekskill to acquire and protect sensitive watershed areas in the Peekskill Hollowbrook Watershed. The Town is also encouraged to continue to include funding for recreation facilities in the Town's Capital Improvement Program and to use its funds to leverage additional financing from other organizations with an interest in open space preservation and recreation.

These partnerships and shared funding reduce the cost of open space and recreation land acquisition. In Rem property lists should be monitored and reviewed for potential public ownership of likely open space parcels.

Policy 3: Support open space preservation efforts of land trusts working with the Town to acquire and maintain open space property consistent with Town Policy.

Continue to work with land trusts to preserve remaining farm land (e.g., the DeMaria property) and large estate properties. When appropriate, the Town should partner with land trusts to obtain the preservation of valuable land. Land trusts can also play an important role in the acquisition of land or conservation easements to protect other sensitive environmental or aesthetic features.

Policy 4: Encourage private property owners to provide for conservation easements to protect environmentally sensitive lands and open space.

Encourage property owners to establish new conservation easements. Inventory, map and monitor existing and new conservation easements and open space lands on a regular basis. Organize programs to train staff, board members and the public on how to document and maintain conservation easements and public open space land.

Programs should be created to advise and educate the public on the tax benefits of providing conservation easements to protect environmentally sensitive land and open space. Such public awareness programs on the benefits of conservation easements could involve a television program on the town's local cable channel, conducting public forums and providing informational brochures. Public information should include what types of open space are available, what activities (like bird watching or hiking) may be pursued and where parking and access points are for these areas.

Policy 5: Seek the right of first refusal for parcels of land as identified in the open space plan.

The town should seek the right of first refusal for acquisition and preservation of parcels of land identified in the Open Space Plan. This can be accomplished by contacting and encouraging property owners to agree to notify the Town at the time they intend to sell their property. The right of first refusal would not obligate the Town to purchase the property, but it may allow the Town to identify a prospective buyer at a very early stage.

The Town may be able to either convince a prospective buyer to provide for environmental protection measures or acquire the property as open space. In some cases, a right of first refusal has prompted the original property owner or new buyer to donate sensitive portions of the property to either the Town or land trust organizations.

Policy 6: Continue to support the efforts of the Open Space Committee.

On February 11, 2003 by Resolution No. 68-03, the Town Board appointed the Open Space Committee to evaluate potential open space parcels for preservation and acquisition. In order to make recommendations to the Town Board, the Committee is preparing an Open Space Plan that will identify, evaluate and prioritize potential open space parcels to be protected and/or acquired.

As recommended by the Master Plan, the Open Space Plan should be updated biennially to reflect open space acquisitions or development that may have occurred. A Preliminary Open Space Map has been prepared as part of the Master Plan process. It is envisioned that the Open Space Committee will produce additional open space maps which will supercede this Preliminary Open Space map.

Policy 7: The Town Board should consider bonding for the purpose of acquiring major open space parcels throughout the Town.

As mentioned in the base studies for Open Space, Cortlandt has long been a leader in creating partnerships with the State, County and preservation organization such as Scenic Hudson, to acquire open space throughout the Town. Recent acquisitions include, among others; the Hudson Highland Gateway Park (352 acres), Harbour Landing (approximately 50 acres) Blue Lakes (approximately 269 acres) and the designation of land in the Camp Smith Military Reservation to parkland. The Town should continue to lead the way in acquiring more open space to retain the unique character of the Town of Cortlandt.

It is recommended that in order to facilitate more open space acquisition in the future, the Town Board consider bonding as a funding mechanism for large acquisitions of open space land throughout the Town. In the past, many open space acquisitions have been reactive to proposed development applications. Bonding would allow a more proactive approach to open space acquisition.

This proposed bonding should only be done with the approval of the Town residents through a referendum. The bonding will result in an increase in taxes to residents and everyone should be given an opportunity to express either their support or opposition to such a proposal.

The referendum should be as specific as possible with respect to identifying specific properties for acquisition and the total cost. The prioritized acquisition list being prepared by the Open Space Committee should be used in identifying parcels to be negotiated for and included in a proposed bond issue.

OBJECTIVE: Protect open space with appropriate land use regulations.

Policy 8: Designate recent public acquisitions and dedications as "Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS)" District on the Town's Zoning Map

As recommended in the 1991 Master Plan, the PROS zoning district was created and includes all existing public parkland and open space in the Town. The zoning map should be updated to rezone newly acquired (since 1994) parkland and open space parcels, such as Harbour Landing, Hudson Highlands Gateway Park (formerly identified as the "Hillpoint" property) and other public open space and parkland properties.

Policy 9: Designate privately owned open space lands such as watershed lands, designated open space/conservation lands and homeowner association park lands, golf courses, as "Conservation, Recreation and Open Space (CROS)" District on the Town's Zoning Map.

The CROS district would be different from the PROS district in that the PROS district is intended to apply solely to public recreation facilities and land. The CROS district would apply to private land that is used for conservation, recreation and open space.

There are a number of properties that would be designated CROS including cemeteries, golf courses, NYC Watershed properties as well as Cliffdale Farm and Teatown. Other properties which may also be CROS are dedicated open space and conservation lands and development – restricted homeowner association lands.

These properties should be placed on the Zoning Map in a newly created Conservation Recreation and Open Space (CROS) district for privately-owned properties that are limited to open space, conservation and/or recreational use. Such a designation on the Town Zoning Map will implement the town's policy to protect private open space land from future development and maintain conservation and recreation areas as open space.

Policy 10: Create a cemetery district and designate cemeteries such as the 3 located along Oregon Road and St. Patricks Cemetary on Broadway as a "cemetery zoning district".

The Town currently has several parcels of land which are designated cemeteries – most of which are located on Oregon Road and one of which is located on Broadway. There are a number of other cemeteries which are located on church property throughout the Town, these will remain zoned residential.

Policy 11: Encourage Cluster Open Space Design, where appropriate to further protect environmentally sensitive areas and preserve open space.

Pursuant to Section 278 of the NYS Town law and subject to Planning Board and Town Board approval, promote "conservation" subdivision design and protect environmentally sensitive areas. The cluster subdivision section of the Zoning Code should contain specific development standards to protect wetlands, water-bodies, watercourses, steep slopes and sensitive habitats over and above the protections required by existing environmental protection legislation.

Cluster subdivision, also known as open space or conservation subdivision, permits the arrangement of residential buildings or lots on a smaller amount of land by reducing the minimum lot size and/or building setback regulations to establish the remaining undeveloped portion of the property as open space.

Cluster subdivisions afford no increase in the density of lots or dwelling units that would ordinarily be permitted by the zoning district in which the subject property is located. In some instances, conservation easements may be used to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas on an individual parcel. However, if the conservation easements are employed, the Town is encouraged to educate the property owner that the area is not to be disturbed and to have the area clearly demarcated and monitored by the Town.

Sometimes it may be appropriate for the Planning Board to approve a smaller lot, and allow an area intended for open space to be held in a homeowner's association or dedicated to the Town or other conservation association to avoid property rights issues in the future. The Planning Board should require consideration of a cluster open space alternative in addition to a conventional design in applications which require the preparation of a DEIS per SEQRA.

If the land to be preserved is not privately owned, there is more opportunity to use the open space land for other purposes, e.g., passive recreation. The Master Plan proposes the following additional standards:

- a. A requirement that a certain percentage of the land be reserved as open space. For example, no more than 50% of the property can be consumed by lots, streets and any designated active recreation areas.
- b. Future development and/or subdivision of any reserved open space land are prohibited.
- c. Locate homes within the subdivision in areas where they would be least likely to block scenic views and disturb sensitive environmental features of the land.
- d. Prohibit (as opposed to restrict or discourage in other areas) the location of homes on scenic ridgelines.
- e. Preserve roadside wooded buffers to a minimum width of 30 feet.
- f. Provide for proper maintenance of reserved open space areas, when such open space areas are in the ownership of a homeowner's association. This would include proof that such responsibility is written into the homeowner's association agreement, which runs with the land.
- g. Strictly prohibit (as opposed to restrict in other areas) the wide spread cutting and clearing of trees.

Policy 12: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to restrict future land use in the Camp Smith Reuse A zone to open space and recreation uses.

While the Town of Cortlandt does not currently have zoning authority over the New York State owned Camp Smith Military Reservation facility, in 1993 the Town established the Camp Smith Reuse Zoning District to encourage beneficial reuse of the Camp Smith Military Reservation site in the event that the site is no longer used as a military reservation.

The current Camp Smith Reuse A and B Zoning Districts are intended to preserve open space and channel development into areas where development and infrastructure already exists. Given Camp Smith's prominent location in the scenic Hudson Valley and its adjacency to state parkland, the town should limit future land use in the Camp Smith Reuse A zone to parks, recreation and open space.

OBJECTIVE: Improve access and monitoring for Open Space areas.

Policy 13: Improve and expand access to designated open space by using existing road and utility rights-of-way and other properties to connect them to each other.

Many of the designated open space areas in Cortlandt are used for passive recreation, e.g., hiking, bird watching or non-motorized cycling. A larger proportion of Town residents may be encouraged to use open space for passive recreational purposes if accessibility to them was improved. Wherever possible, open space areas should be linked.

In particular, the Town should explore vacant parcels and linear utility rights-of-way for their potential to connect open space areas via existing and proposed trails. It is however, recognized that maximizing public access to open space parcels will be limited by the necessary protection of sensitive environmental features and the legitimate security and liability concerns in some utility rights-of-way.

For example, the Town should meet with representatives of Con Edison or AT&T to discuss the possibility of obtaining an easement for public trails along their rights-of-way. The Con Edison right-of-way, which encompasses roughly 160 acres, connects the Teatown Reservation in southeast Cortlandt to Croton Gorge Park and Montrose to the north. A linear park along this right-of-way was previously proposed in the 1974 and 1991 Master Plans

Other potential locations for trails would be along highway corridor rights-of-way such as Route 9, Route 202/35 and the Bear Mountain Parkway. Trail construction should be a part of proposed highway improvements or proposed development applications to the Planning Board.

GIS technology should be used to map proposed connections between various open space parcels, parkland, neighborhoods and existing trail systems (including the Peekskill Briarcliff Trailway and the Hudson Valley Greenway Trail).

Policy 14: Create village greens in existing hamlet areas and in other areas, where appropriate.

A basic feature of a traditional hamlet is a village green, which may be used as a passive recreational area or community meeting place for special or neighborhood events. Cortlandt's hamlets, including, but not limited to, Verplanck, Montrose, Toddville, Oregon Corners and Van Cortlandtville would benefit from such village green or commons.

A green contributes greatly to a neighborhood's sense of community and place, and also provides an important visual and recreational amenity. Suitable properties should be mapped to determine if any excess right-of-way land or a vacant parcel of property could serve as greens for hamlet areas.

Policy 15: Adopt Integrated Pest Management Practices

The Town is encouraged to adopt an Integrated Pest Management Ordinance to establish standards that will be consistent with manufacturer's recommendations and sound environmental practices.

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RECREATION SECTION: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A. INTRODUCTION

***GOAL: Expand, maintain
& improve recreational
facilities.***

This section of the Master Plan relies on the Town of Cortlandt Parks, Recreation and Conservation Advisory Board's report entitled Long Range Plan for the Development of Recreational Facilities in the Town of Cortlandt, New York, March 2000 (referred to herein as the "Long Range Plan"), which addresses Cortlandt's needs for recreational space, facilities and programs. This section focuses primarily on the active recreational facilities needs of the community. Such facilities include ball fields, playgrounds or basketball courts. Passive recreational and open space objectives are addressed in the open space section of the land use element.



Charles Cook Pool in Furnace Dock Area.

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

Based on generally accepted recreational planning standards, there is a deficiency and uneven distribution of municipal or neighborhood-oriented parks and active recreation facilities in Cortlandt. Town, school district, and private recreational space and facilities total approximately 275 acres land. In 2000, this equated to approximately 9.5 acres of active recreational space per 1,000 residents. If private recreational facilities are omitted from the inventory, the amount of active recreational space drops to 7.8 acres per 1,000 residents.

Recreational planning standards (National Recreation and Parks standards) recommend that a core park system for a community should include between 6.25 to 10.5 acres of “developed open space” per 1,000 residents.

Actively used Open Space consists of land available for active recreation as well as undeveloped land that are often associated with the active facilities. Based on the standard range noted above, and using the town's population of 28,672, approximately 179-301 acres of Town parkland should be available. The amount of recreational land within the Town is in the lower end of this range. However, it is also important that not only an adequate amount of acreage be provided but that the parks are located in a manner that is readily accessible to all Town residents.

The Town should continue to plan, develop, and maintain adequate recreational services and facilities to meet the needs of the existing population as well as to tailor its programs to the demands of a changing user population. Where land for town recreation purposes cannot be provided at a particular development, the Town collects a fee in lieu of land that is currently \$6,000 per residential lot or unit for new applications. The Master Plan Committee emphasizes the objective of ensuring that adequate budgets are established to maintain the Town’s park system. In establishing new parks, there should be substantial dialogue with other recreational providers to determine whether maintenance could be accomplished with the assistance of other community, county, regional or state organizations.



Steamboat Dock & Overlook, Verplanck

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are intended to implement the Town’s recreation goals:

OBJECTIVE: Maintain the existing inventory of local, county and state recreational facilities throughout the Town and continuously improve and expand facilities to reflect the needs of the Town's population.

Policy 16: Develop additional Town operated active and passive recreational facilities and regularly maintain existing facilities.

As indicated in the Long Range Plan, the Town should continue to develop additional recreational space, facilities and programs to satisfy the changing needs of the Town's population. The creation of new active recreational facilities should consider the potential adverse impacts on natural resources, adjacent homes, traffic flow and parking.

General recommendations contained in the Long Range Plan include:

- Search for space for community use.
- All non-accessible, (land-locked) Town-owned parkland should be re-evaluated for possible gift/sale to the neighborhood within which it is located. These facilities are not used by all Town residents.
- Re-visit all undeveloped parkland to evaluate for potential passive or recreational use.
- Look to developers to provide active recreation space in their development site or provide a fee in lieu to construct facilities on other Town property.
- Protect prior investments in recreational facilities by stepping up current practices in the repair, replacement and maintenance of these facilities.
- Expand existing recreational facilities as it is considered a more efficient, desirable alternative of providing new recreation possibilities to residents.
- Motivate schools to become more active and involved in providing space for programs that benefit Town residents and partner in facility development.

Recommendations contained in the Long Range Plan have been followed to fund recreation improvements in the Capital Improvement Program. Projects that have been recently completed include two skate parks, a pavilion at Steamboat Dock, and the Bear Mountain Bridge Road Toll House Restoration. Other recreational improvements recently completed have included the launch facilities for kayaks and canoes at Oscawana Park and the Paddlesport Center at Annsville.

Other opportunities to be considered to develop new recreation facilities are in general:

- Provide for more intensive use and for a greater variety of recreation uses at existing recreation facilities.
- In Rem parcels should be reviewed for possible recreation uses.
- Acquire land either through outright purchase or land donation in neighborhoods where appropriate pursuant to the Long Range Plan for Development of Recreational Facilities.
- Work collaboratively with the school systems and the County and the State to develop recreation facilities.

- Evaluate on a regular basis possible increases in the recreation fee in lieu of land that is paid to the Town in connection with new residential development.

Some specific suggestions are as follows:

- a. Work with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for passive recreational use of the Montrose Point Park (Harbour Landing).
- b. Provide for passive recreational use of the Hudson Highlands Gateway Park.
- c. Rezone and develop for recreational use the Con Ed property in Verplanck, should it ever become available. It should be noted that this property is not associated with the Entergy Nuclear Power Plant at Indian Point in Buchanan, NY.
- d. Plan for the eventual recreational re-use of the existing Cortlandt Highway garage located at 8th Street in Verplanck, which is anticipated to be re-located to a central DES garage facility.

Policy 17: Monitor and maintain existing facilities to ensure they continue to address the recreational needs of the community.

Encourage the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Advisory Board to conduct reviews of the existing facilities every 2 years. In addition, the Town should provide adequate funding, staffing and support to maintain existing facilities.

Policy 18: Assess active recreational needs according to geographic location.

The Parks, Recreation and Conservation Advisory Board and the Department of Environmental Facilities/Recreation Division staff are encouraged to annually assess active recreational needs on a local and regional basis to ensure an appropriate distribution of these facilities throughout the Town.

Facilities should also be designed with the particular user population in mind. For example, a neighborhood with a high proportion of active seniors may demand different facilities than a neighborhood with a high percentage of pre-school age children. In addition, the need for additional active recreational facilities should be re-evaluated as the Town's population grows.

Policy 19: Continue the Role of the Parks, Recreation, And Conservation Advisory Board in recreation facility planning.

The Master Plan recommends that the Parks, Recreation, Conservation Advisory Board continue to advise the various boards on facility planning and development in connection with active and passive recreation issues.

This includes advising the Planning Board on all major subdivision applications and whether appropriate land should be set-aside for recreational purposes or if funds in lieu should be provided from the applicant to satisfy the recreation demand created by the new population.

Policy 20: Include in the Town's Zoning Regulations recreational standards and requirements

Recreation requirements should be included in the Site Development Plan and Special Permit regulations for all new residential development, similar to those contained in the subdivision regulations. The ordinance should also require that the ownership, use and maintenance of the active recreational lands be specified at the time of final site plan/special permit/subdivision approval and that the active recreation areas be fully improved by the developer.

Policy 21: Encourage the State and County to continue to improve and maintain existing State and County Parks located within the Town.

Lobby the County and State to improve their existing parkland and upgrade them in ways to better serve Town residents. The Town should encourage the County and State to obtain assistance from private conservation and recreation groups such as the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Adirondack Trail Club or the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference to make improvements, such as trail clearing. Examples of needed improvements include:

- ❖ Improve signage and public access to parks, including the Peekskill-Briarcliff Trailway.
- ❖ Remedial action to correct the persistent dumping problem along roads providing access to various parks.
- ❖ Develop adequate off-street parking areas at all recreational sites, where possible (e.g. Oscawana Island.)

Policy 22: Create new bikeways/trails and pedestrian walkways. (See also Traffic and Transportation)

Encourage the development of bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways along selected routes throughout the Town. Parking facilities should be provided in conjunction with these linear bikeways and trails. The Town should lobby the County and the State to include bikeways and bicycle parking when improvements are made to roadways or parks.

Cortlandt supports and is participating in the development of the Hudson River Greenway Trail proposed by the Greenway Council and the development of bikeways along the Bear Mountain Parkway and the Peekskill-Briarcliff Trail Way. Westchester County is developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the Mid-Hudson South Region that would include the Bear Mountain Parkway/Routes 6/35/202 corridors in which the Town is participating. Along with creating new bikeways and trails, the Town should also promote bicycle rentals and tourism organizations, such as bed and breakfast inns and others.

Policy 23: Continue to fund recreation facilities through the Town's Capital Improvement Program, the "money in lieu of land" fund and leverage funds through grants obtained from New York State and other organizations and the CDBG Program.

The Cortlandt Town Board encourages partnerships with New York State, Westchester County, private land preservation organizations such as Scenic Hudson Inc., and private property owners. This partnership approach was used to secure funds and acquire land for the Hudson Highlands Gateway Park (the former Hillpoint property) and Harbour Landing.

The Town should continue to work collaboratively with other agencies to acquire or develop land for recreational facilities. The town should continue to accept “money in lieu of land” from developers only when there is no appropriate land available for recreation use, and pursue grants from the federal, state and county governments, whenever possible.

OBJECTIVE: Improve public access to, and recreational use of the Hudson River waterfront.

Policy 24: Continue to provide additional public access to the Hudson River waterfront and promote water-oriented recreational activities and tourism.

The Hudson River is a tremendous scenic and recreational resource that is underutilized because of restricted public access. Improved public access to the Hudson River in the Town and the entire Hudson Valley is a priority of the Town, Hudson River Greenway Council, Scenic Hudson, Westchester County, New York State and other organizations. The Town supports the ongoing development of Steamboat Riverfront Park, the Hudson Valley Greenway Pedestrian Trail, the Hudson River Shoreline Trail and proposals by Metro-North, Westchester County and New York State to enhance public access to waterfront areas.

Efforts to increase public access and recreational opportunities for the Hudson River should be coordinated with the government or institutional agencies that control significant expanses of the waterfront. The Town should focus its efforts and pursue public access easements or acquisition of land at FDR VA Hospital, Camp Smith, George’s Island, Oscawana Island and Con Edison and Metro North facilities as well as at yacht clubs, marinas, and other privately-owned properties.

Specific recommendations for improved recreation and public access along the waterfront include:

- Develop public boat launching facilities at the Steamboat Waterfront Park at the former Martin site.

- Complete the planned recreation improvements for the Steamboat Riverfront Park when the Martin property acquisition is complete. Other planned Steamboat Riverfront Park improvements include extending connections along Broadway and Kings Ferry Road and possible additional land acquisitions in the area.
- Require public access to and along the River as part of any development or expansion project proposed along the Hudson River. The Town should include specific requirements for public access to any approvals for proposed rezoning, special permits or certain types of variances along the waterfront.
- Continue to work with the FDR VA Hospital on their reuse plans to provide for a waterfront trail connection across the VA property near the Hudson River.
- Acquire easements along the waterfront to create a linear park and Hudson River Shoreline Trail to provide walking and biking opportunities along the Town's entire shoreline.
- Promote events and programs at Steamboat Riverfront Park, George's Island and Oscawana Island. Subject to obtaining the required approvals, activities could include crafts fairs, children's sporting events, community picnics, etc.
- Link the Town's waterfront with the waterfront in Croton, Buchanan and Peekskill.
- Develop a detailed waterfront map that identifies land use and improvements within the Town's waterfront area to guide long range planning and future development.
- Provide tourist information for visitors in the form of signage, brochures and maps.
- Support Riverkeeper and Greenway programs and objectives as they relate to the Hudson River and public access to it.
- Seek opportunities to acquire riverfront property that would provide docking facilities for Hudson River passenger and tour boats and historical ships for educational purposes

Policy 25: Continue to explore funding opportunities which may be available through the National Heritage Program.

The U.S. Congress designated the Hudson River Valley as a National Heritage Area in 1996 recognizing the importance of the river and its resources to the nation's founding and development. This designation allows the federal governmental agencies to assist New York and Hudson River Valley communities in preserving, protecting and interpreting these resources for the benefit of the nation, and to authorize federal financial and technical assistance to serve these purposes. Therefore, this designation will benefit the Town in applying for grants for open space acquisition and park and recreation improvements.



For specific recommendations on Biodiversity – please see the Natural Resources Chapter 4 and the Biodiversity Addendum located at Section 10.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 2: LAND USE PLAN – RESIDENTIAL USES

A. INTRODUCTION

GOAL: Provide diversified housing opportunities to ensure that the Town maintains an adequate supply and range of housing stock.

More than any other single component, a Town is defined by its residential neighborhoods. With approximately 94% of its land zoned for residential uses, Cortlandt is even more representative of this concept than most Towns.

The Town has a rich and diverse set of old and new residential neighborhoods that accommodate a variety of housing types, from multifamily dwellings to small-lot bungalows to large estate properties. Housing types and densities are generally correlated with two main factors: historical development patterns and environmental constraints. The central portion of the Town is characterized by low-density residential uses, while the southern portion of the Town, generally south of the reservoir system and Colabaugh Pond Road, exhibits the lowest residential densities in Cortlandt. This is mostly due to environmental constraints and lack of public water and sewer service. Higher density residential land uses are concentrated in the northern portion of the Town, generally in the vicinity of and north of Route 202 and west of Route 9, in the Montrose and Verplanck areas. This pattern is documented and reinforced by the Town's zoning pattern. In general, medium density residential zones (R-G, R-10, R-15, R-20) are primarily found in the northern and western portion of the Town; the lower density R-40 zone, which allows one acre lots, covers portions of the northern and central areas of the Town; and southerly areas of Cortlandt are zoned for lots for a minimum two acres in size. Over the past decade, much of the residential growth in the Town has resulted in the creation of large-lot single family detached dwellings.



Single Family Homes - Cortlandt Chase

All new housing construction should be designed in a manner that enhances the overall character of Cortlandt through implementation of and adherence to appropriate visual and environmental planning principles. The Plan seeks to promote the creation of safe, livable neighborhoods rather than a collection of unconnected residential subdivisions.

Therefore, it is not only important to identify and consider the density and types of residential uses that should be permitted, but also to focus on the streetscape and other elements that enrich the community experience, such as: sidewalks, walking trails, small neighborhood parks, narrow traffic-calmed roads, preservation of mature tree stands, the introduction of street trees, or other physical features that bind a neighborhood together.

This Plan also seeks to implement measures that will ensure that a percentage of all housing that is constructed in the Town is affordable. Currently, residential property tax relief is available to homeowners under the New York State STAR program, including enhanced school tax relief for senior citizens. In addition, there is “property tax relief” for veterans and persons with disabilities and limited incomes. The Westchester County Housing Implementation Commission (HIC) determined that the Town of Cortlandt’s 1990-2000 local housing obligations was 180 affordable housing units. Since 43 units have been developed during the same time period, a net total of 137 affordable housing units must still be created to match the Town’s allocation¹. In 2003, five development applications have been submitted which propose the creation of approximately 150 affordable units. If constructed, the Town’s “regional” obligation will be satisfied. The Plan further recommends the adoption of housing policies that would continually add a proportion of affordable housing along with market rate housing that is being developed.

By adopting an affordable housing program, the Town will, among other things, provide an opportunity for existing residents to be given preference to occupy affordable units with special emphasis being given to provide housing to teachers, nurses, firefighters, EMS workers, librarians and other public service employees. The Plan recommends the Town emphasize greater public notification when affordable housing is available.

Another major thrust of this Master Plan is to encourage better residential design and environmentally sensitive layouts for new development. In addition, the Plan recommends that residential subdivision incorporate “conservation design” principles. Housing should be situated on the less environmentally “challenged” portions of a property.

The Plan proposes to change the zoning classification for existing multi-family developments to “Multi-Family” with no increase in the number of units. The Plan also suggest maintaining the existing multi-family zone which is currently called “H-C9A” and will be renamed in this Plan to “Business Mixed Use”.

The Plan proposes to eliminate two floating zones which exist in the current Zoning Code. They are Planned Village Development (PVD) and Special ReUse Conservation (SRC).

¹ Countywide, satisfaction of each municipality’s housing obligation has been extended.

The Plan suggests that the zoning reflect the pattern of existing residential development that already exists. If a neighborhood consists of dwellings on 10,000 square foot lots, the zoning should fit the pattern in order to reduce nonconformities. This action would benefit homeowners without significantly increasing buildout in these largely developed neighborhoods.

The demands that residential uses place on the Town's fiscal structure as well as infrastructure, including roads, schools, utilities, and other services, will continue to be evaluated and mitigated as part of any State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) review process. The need to protect the Town's aesthetic and scenic character should and will be balanced with the goal of encouraging additional housing opportunities.

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

1. Demographic, Housing and Residential Development Trends

According to U.S. Census estimates, the total number of all housing units in the unincorporated Town of Cortlandt, outside the incorporated Villages of Buchanan and Croton-on-Hudson was approximately 10,616 housing units. From 1990-1999, based on Town building permit data, 695 housing units were added to Cortlandt's housing stock. Assuming that certificates of occupancy have been issued for every building permit, the Town's housing stock in 2000 should have totaled 11,311 housing units, or an increase of 6.5 percent since 1990. For further information on census data, please refer to the Base Studies which are on file at the Department of Technical Services – Planning Division.

This total may be slightly lower since demolitions over the same time period have not been counted. Of the 695 dwelling units that have been added to the housing stock, approximately 5 units were two family dwellings; 40 units were Townhomes, and the remainder was single family detached dwellings.

The 2000 Census data indicates that the total number of housing units totals 10,294 units. This is substantially less than the 11,311 housing units that have been estimated using 1990 census data and building permit records. The Town has filed a challenge with the Census Bureau regarding inconsistencies found between past and current census data. For the purposes of the statistics cited in the following discussion of residential issues, current census information/derived data based on past census data has been used.²

According to the 2000 Census, approximately 79 percent or 7,799 housing units were owner-occupied and the remaining 21 percent was renter-occupied. With respect to housing stock, single-family detached dwellings represented 75 percent, 4 percent consisted of two-family dwellings, four percent consists of three and four-family dwellings, and the remainder, or 17 percent, included multifamily dwellings and mobile homes.

² Note: Based on a review of the 1990 census data, it is possible that the 2000 data are accurate, and the 1990 census estimates are inaccurate

In 2000, the median year a structure was built in the Town of Cortlandt was 1957. The median value of a home in the Town (including villages) was \$234,400. According to 2002 sales data provided by the Westchester County Board of Realtors, the median sales price of a single family home in Cortlandt was \$310,000, with an average sales price of \$351,482.

Despite the significant rise in prices, these values were more affordable than the Westchester County median and average single family sales values of \$471,500 and \$623,681, respectively. As reported in the 2000 US Census the median gross rent paid for rental housing units in the Town of Cortlandt was \$851. County wide (including the Cities) the median gross rent was \$839. Among all the towns in Westchester County in 2000, Cortlandt had the lowest, most affordable, median rental cost for housing.

According to the Draft Housing Action Plan prepared by Stuart Turner & Associates in June 2000, Springvale which is a major senior housing development in the Town with 525 apartments, had apartment rental costs of \$480 for an efficiency, \$685 for a studio, \$670-755 for a one bedroom and \$685-905 for a two bedroom. Based on these costs and County definitions, Springvale would be considered "affordable". Likewise, a two bedroom apartment renting for \$980 at the Amberlands Apartment complex with 414 rental units is considered to be an affordable price in Westchester County.

As part of the current comprehensive planning efforts, the Town's master plan consultant, Stuart Turner & Associates prepared the above mentioned draft Town of Cortlandt Housing Action Plan. The housing Action Plan determined that a need exists for affordable housing in the Town and what specific segments of the population are in need. The Plan also discussed methods to address the County's affordable housing mandate and potential administrative mechanisms associated with a town affordable housing program. In general, the draft Housing Action Plan recommended that the Town consider expanding housing opportunities for "starter families", single-parent families, and seniors.

In 2003, approximately 36.5 percent of the Town's land area has been developed for residential uses. An additional 7 percent of the Town's land area is currently under development review for residential subdivisions. Applications for major residential development pending before the Planning Board at the end of 2001 included 19 projects proposing a total of 737 dwelling units on approximately 1,500 acres. In addition, six applications with 86 proposed housing units on 152 acres are not being processed due to the Town moratorium pursuant to Local Law No. 9 of 2001.

Approximately 2,000 acres in the Town, zoned strictly for residential use, are vacant. Another 3,200 acres are made up of large parcels of land containing at least one house and maybe further developed for additional residential uses under current zoning requirements. Based on a build out analysis under the current zoning on remaining vacant and underdeveloped lands in the unincorporated Town, it is estimated that approximately up to 3,300 dwelling units could be constructed excluding multi-family development utilizing the PVD criteria.

2. Existing Zoning

Residential uses which are allowed in certain zoning districts that fall into one of two broad categories: residential districts and commercial districts. Their purposes, as stated in the zoning ordinance, are as follows:

- (1) Residential districts are “*established in order to meet the housing needs of the present and future population of the town and the region and to promote the stability and desirability of residential neighborhoods. Residential districts are established to provide and preserve neighborhoods containing detached single-family and two-family homes at a variety of densities and where appropriate, multifamily dwellings pursuant to §281 of the New York State Town Law. General residence districts provide for a broader mix of single and two-family homes. Residential districts are intended to be free from uses other than residential uses, except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts as set forth in this chapter.*” Accessory apartments are also permitted in these districts by special use permit.
- (2) “Community Commercial” (CC) Districts are “*designed to provide shopping facilities and services for persons in immediately adjacent areas.*” While the primary purpose expressed is to allow places for commercial uses, the CC district also permits single-family, two-family dwellings, and mixed-use buildings, where the ground floor level may be in commercial use, and the upper floor is contained in residential use.
- (3) The Highway Commercial (HC) Districts are “*designed to accommodate automobile-oriented commercial facilities serving a wide area.*” The HC district allows the continuation of single family and two family dwellings in existence at the time the ordinance was adopted (1993). A related zone, the HC-9A zone, was created in 1999 to expressly permit multifamily residential uses. The HC districts also permit rooming houses by special use permit. Note that the HC-9A district also allows nonresidential uses.
- (4) The Camp Smith property is currently zoned “Reuse Area A” and “Reuse Area B”. The zoning allows single-family detached housing in the Reuse Area A at a density of one dwelling per approximately 4 acres. Within Reuse Area B, the residential density is one dwelling per 5,000 square feet. Reuse Area B would also permit a mix of single family, two family and multifamily dwellings. Development of the Camp Smith property for these uses requires special use permit approval by the Town Board. The Plan envisions that Camp Smith’s current use as a military installation will continue into the foreseeable future.

The Town currently has two special zoning districts that, upon special use permit approval of the Town Board, would allow a mix of housing types. The special districts are the “Planned Village Development” (PVD) special use and the “Special Reuse and Conservation Development” (SRC) district. It is anticipated in this Master Plan that both the PVD and the SRC will be eliminated from the Zoning Code.

Proposed Zoning envisioned under the New Master Plan:

The 2003 Master Plan seeks to achieve the following:

- The Plan recommends that the Town revise the current lot count formula to increase reductions for environmental constraints by subtracting out 50 percent of the wetland buffer area. Currently, the lot count formula has a 0 percent reduction for wetland buffer areas. This will result in a significant reduction in the future buildout potential of vacant and underutilized parcels in the Town.
- Conservation subdivision design (cluster) should be encouraged wherever possible.
- Rezone existing residentially-developed lots to reflect actual lot sizes in order to reduce nonconformities in certain neighborhoods.
- Require that 10% of housing constructed in residential developments be set aside for affordable housing.
- Adopt design guidelines that encourage the qualities of desirable places to live.
- Consider future upzoning in residential areas.

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are intended to implement the Town's residential land use goal.

Objective: Preserve the Town's Essential Residential Character

As described in the base studies the Town of Cortlandt is a maturing suburban community with a basic land-use pattern that is essentially established. This new Master Plan maintains this pattern. As recommended in the 1991 Plan, the Town updated its zoning ordinance and map which implemented many of the 1991 Plan's land use policies intended to preserve the Town's basic residential character.

Policy 26: Preserve and reinforce the Town's basic residential character and pattern of density, in which there is a mix of higher density areas and areas of rural landscape. The Town should continue to evaluate future upzoning throughout the Town.

As described in the Base Studies, the Town of Cortlandt is a maturing suburban community with a basic land use pattern that is essentially established.

This New Master Plan maintains this pattern. Thus, higher residential densities will remain focused in already built-up areas and in hamlet centers. Undeveloped land in the Town should be evaluated for appropriate future land uses that are consistent with this Master Plan.

In those areas of the Town where the basic residential character reflects higher density housing such as in hamlet areas and along existing major road corridors where residential uses are intended to break-up the strip commercial pattern of development, the Plan recommends keeping the current mix of commercial and residential uses.

The Plan recommends that the land area within the Croton Watershed, the Peekskill Hollowbrook watershed and within other environmentally challenged areas, be considered for future upzoning to further reduce residential densities.

Policy 27: Adjust zoning district boundaries to be consistent with the existing development pattern and to better reflect the character of residential neighborhoods.

There are a number of existing residential neighborhoods that are regulated by zoning districts whose bulk standards are not appropriate to the bulk dimensions of existing lots in those neighborhoods.

For example, there are areas of the Town that may currently be zoned R-40 (minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet) although the area may be already be developed with single-family dwellings on 20,000 square foot lots. As part of the zoning update to follow the Plan adoption, the zoning district boundaries should be adjusted with the express objective of eliminating existing non-conforming lots and non-conforming building setbacks.

This change will reduce the need for a homeowner to obtain zoning variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals for various proposed improvements to their residences. This zoning change will only apply to residential neighborhoods which are already developed with similar sized lots and will not apply to new subdivisions.

Policy 28: Revise the current lot count formula to increase reductions for environmental constraints by subtracting out 50% of the wetland buffer area.

In order to better protect environmentally sensitive areas, 50% of the wetland buffer area will be subtracted from the total lot area in the lot count formula This will result in a density reduction in the future buildout potential of vacant and underutilized parcels in the Town. The Town recognizes that much of the remaining vacant and underutilized parcels are highly environmentally constrained with wetlands and steep slopes.

Objective: Continue to Provide a Diverse Housing Stock.

The Base Studies prepared for this Master Plan demonstrate that Cortlandt offers an adequate mix of housing types at various housing values that make the Town considerably more affordable than other areas of northern Westchester County. As mentioned previously, in 1990 approximately 70 percent of the housing stock consisted of single-family detached dwellings.

In the past ten years the overwhelming majority of building permits were issued for large-lot single-family detached dwellings suggesting that the development of other housing types has not kept pace with single family detached dwelling construction. The Plan seeks to encourage a proportionate increase in two, three- and multifamily dwellings that maintain the 70/30 mix.

The following policies encourage the creation of a diverse range of housing opportunities and are also intended to meet the objective of promoting affordable housing opportunities in the Town of Cortlandt.

Policy 29: The Town should continue, strengthen, and supplement existing zoning mechanisms that allow for a variety of affordable and/or handicapped-accessible housing opportunities to meet the needs for housing by Town residents.

The draft Town of Cortlandt Housing Action Plan, prepared by Stuart Turner & Associates, in 2000, concluded that a need exists for affordable housing in the Town for specific segments of the population. The plan also contains methods to address the County's affordable housing mandate and potential administrative mechanisms to help the Town with an affordable housing program.

The Town should continue to use existing zoning provisions that allow for a variety of affordable housing opportunities. These include renting of rooms within homes, rooming houses, accessory apartments, and two-family homes which are permitted in various districts.

Typically, homeowners do not restrict occupancy of accessory apartments or two-family dwelling units to income restricted households. As such, these units do not qualify as new affordable housing units, but still provide the Town with a variety of housing types. The Town should also review and revise the special use permit regulations contained in the Zoning Ordinance to provide for a specific minimum number of affordable and handicapped accessible units.

Policy 30: Create a Multi-Family Special Zoning District which will include older existing multi-family areas constructed under a prior zoning ordinance and those constructed pursuant to Cluster Open Space Regulations. These existing multi-family developments should be considered conforming.

The primary purpose for the MFS zone is to recognize existing multi-family development in the Town which was allowed and constructed under a prior zoning ordinance and those which were constructed pursuant to Cluster Open Space Regulations.

Currently our zoning ordinance does recognize these developments as conforming uses and this new MFS zone will continue to allow these developments to be "conforming". The Multi-Family Special Zone will not permit any additional "as of right" dwelling units for existing developments.

The existing multi-family developments to be mapped are:

Amberlands
Coachlight Square
Springvale
Roundtop
Jacob Hill
Valeria
Conklin Park
Cross Creek
Wild Birch Farms

Policy 31: Encourage a mix of residential and nonresidential uses along Route 9A from Montrose south to the Croton Line with retail and service commercial uses concentrated in existing hamlet centers.

The Route 9A corridor presently includes a diverse mix of local retail, residential, and miscellaneous office and business uses. The Master Plan envisions continuing the Community Commercial area in Montrose that would be targeted for pedestrian and aesthetic improvements and shared parking facilities.

The Community Commercial zone would be adjacent to residential zones and Business Mixed Use areas but linked to one another via sidewalks and trail connections.

The intent is to limit commercial sprawl along this corridor and concentrate uses that generate a significant amount of vehicular trips (e.g., convenience retail) to community commercial areas. The Business Mixed Use area will provide for residential and commercial uses on larger lots with less building and parking lot coverage and more landscaped areas than the current HC/9A & HC zone. Parks, landscaping and recreation areas should also be included for residential uses.

Policy 32: Improve existing Community Commercial areas along Oregon Road by implementing design standards to enhance visual appearance.

Oregon Road is a busy Town road that is mostly residential in character. Since existing commercial uses are not extensive, the historical character of many of the properties and old hamlet centers are still apparent.

Some local retail uses are scattered along the frontage of this road but generally concentrated in four locations:

- ❖ Van Cortlandtville
- ❖ Oregon Corners
- ❖ Oregon Road & Westbrook Drive
- ❖ Homestead Plaza on Oregon Road

To discourage strip commercial development of this corridor, the Plan recommends that Community Commercial areas be focused and limited to the four existing hamlet centers. Architectural and site development plan design standards would be implemented to preserve the small-scale and historic character of the Community Commercial areas. Shared parking, landscaped buffer areas, sidewalks, and unified architectural themes would enhance the overall appearance of these centers.

Policy 33: Eliminate Planned Village Development (PVD) from the Zoning Ordinance.

According to the 1991 Master Plan, properties on which the PVD was intended to be applied included: properties along Route 9 and 9A in Montrose; the former Hollowbrook Drive-In property and adjacent properties; the Ginsburg site and the Fooks property. It should be noted that since the adoption of the 1991 Master Plan, *none* of these properties were ever developed under the PVD or the SRC.

However, the PVD district, as it is an unmapped zone, could be requested on any property within the Town of Cortlandt that meets the 25 acre minimum requirement with adequate utilities and has reasonable access to a “highway” with no decrease in its level of service, with public transportation nearby and within walking distance to shopping and business areas

After much discussion and analysis of this issue, it was determined by the Town Board that they wished to eliminate the Planned Village Development (PVD) from the Master Plan.

Policy 34: Eliminate the Special Reuse and Conservation Development (SRC) from the Zoning Ordinance

The SRC district was established to “*enable and encourage successful and beneficial redevelopment of large institutional properties which become available for reuse...*” for a number of scenic, aesthetic, and environmental purposes. Among the uses that would be permitted are single family, two family and multifamily dwellings. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit would be one dwelling/5,000 square feet. This zone was intended to be applied to the FDR VA Hospital property or the Hudson Institute property. However, given the current status of the VA Hospital and continued use for veteran and age-related senior housing, and the lack of infrastructure to develop the Hudson Institute property, the SRC district has never been applied to either property.

After much discussion and analysis of this issue, it was determined by the Town Board that they wished to eliminate the Special Reuse and Conservation Development (SRC) from the Master Plan.

Policy 35: Continue to work with the asset manager/private developer at the FDR VA Hospital with regard to their future plans, including but not limited to, proposed housing.

The FDR VA Hospital is in the process of working with an asset manager/private developer for a long-term lease of a portion of this 177-acre site in Montrose. As proposed, a portion of the FDR VA Hospital site will be re-developed to provide housing for veterans and their families as well other uses. Cortlandt has participated in the planning process of this project as an interested agency.

It should be noted that Cortlandt has no direct authority over a higher level of government, however, we have been working very closely with the current asset manager. In particular, the Town has expressed an interest in several community facility buildings within the complex, and has also expressed a desire to promote access to the Hudson riverfront through the FDR property.

Objective: Create Subdivision Design Guidelines that will result in more appropriate and aesthetic proposals.

Policy 36: Create new subdivision design guidelines within the Town's subdivision regulations.

New subdivision design guidelines should be created which will encourage building design and location that works with the natural topography and features of the land while avoiding significant disturbances to environmentally sensitive areas. Buildings which are out of character with the natural site should be strongly discouraged.

In addition, special attention should be paid to developing specific design guidelines that apply to cluster/open space subdivision. All updated subdivision design guidelines will also include specific recommendations for enhanced engineering design of roads, landscaping and storm water drainage.

OBJECTIVE: Promote Affordable Housing Opportunities in the Town of Cortlandt.

Policy 37: Establish an Affordable Housing Program to be administered by the Town or an Agent of the Town.

While many of the policies recommend the formation of zones and the construction of a diverse range of housing types, there is no guarantee that housing will remain affordable without appropriate mechanisms to ensure affordability for a defined time period. The Plan recommends that the Town create an Affordable Housing Program that would be administered by either the Town or by a third party with specific experience managing affordable housing units. The creation of an Affordable Housing Program will require several steps to be taken by the Town Board:

- 1) Establish the entity to administer the program with its responsibilities and staffing.
- 2) Create a system for the selection of eligible households including:
 - a. Utilize income guidelines set by HUD and administered by Westchester County.
 - b. Establish and Monitor conditions and restrictions on the resale/rental of dwelling units.
 - c. Create affordable housing application and informational packet.
 - d. Advertise unit availability and receive applications.
 - e. Certify household eligibility by income and other household characteristics.
 - f. Select households by lottery. 7
 - g. Interview/Select prospective purchasers/renters.
- 3) Maintain list of eligible households
- 4) Review and update requirements of the Affordable Housing Program.

Policy 38: Update the Town of Cortlandt “Draft Housing Action Plan” prepared by Turner & Associates” dated June, 2000.

The Plan recommends that since it has been over 3 years since the preparation of this plan by Turner & Associates the Town should revisit and update this plan as soon as possible.

Policy 39: Adopt Inclusionary Zoning Regulations which requires that at least 10% of the proposed residential units be affordable. This would only apply to proposed subdivisions with 10 or more units as recommended in the 2000 Turner Affordable Housing Plan.

The Plan recommends that the construction of a defined percentage (10%) of affordable housing units be required as part of any residential development or subdivision. It is noted that if the Town had adopted inclusionary zoning in the early 1990's, that required 10% of all building lots be set aside for the development of affordable units, approximately 70 affordable housing units would have been created in the previous decade.

OBJECTIVE: Provide for varied dimensional limitations on residential accessory structures with Architectural Committee review.

Based on the Town's experience with the current zoning code requirements for accessory buildings including variance requests submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals, the following policies are recommended.

Policy 40: Ensure that accessory residential structures do not adversely affect neighboring residential properties by establishing adequate size and setback restrictions for accessory structures and review by a Town Architectural Review Committee.

To prevent accessory structures (i.e., garages and storage sheds) from becoming out of scale with the principal building on the same lot and with adjacent properties, it is proposed that in addition to height and location restrictions, the overall size and minimum setbacks from property lines based on the minimum lot size requirements for an accessory structure should be required.

For example, the minimum setback for an accessory building in the R-40 zone could be increased from 6 feet to 10 feet; within the R-80 district, it could be increased from 6 feet to 15 feet. Also, when the Town establishes an Architectural Review Committee to review and approve the architectural appearance of new homes and renovations/additions, it should also include the appearance and location of new accessory structures.

Policy 41: Change the maximum height of residential accessory structures to allow roof lines to match the existing architectural style of the principal building on the lot, including review by the Town Architectural Review Committee.

To prevent accessory buildings (i.e., garages and storage sheds) from becoming dissimilar to the principal building on the same lot, it is proposed that the maximum height of residential accessory buildings be changed from 14 feet to 1½ stories or 26 feet to allow roof lines to match the existing architectural style of a principal building. If the Town permits an increase in the maximum height of an accessory structure, an increase in the minimum lot line setback may also be warranted.

Policy 42: Provide a maximum dimension for oversized sheds on residential property.

In the past, the Town has witnessed the attempt by some property owners to get around existing regulations by the construction of multiple smaller sheds. It is the intention of the master plan to regulate a maximum wall length of 12 feet for any shed (tool shed, storage shed) on residential lots.

OBJECTIVE: Control oversized homes on small lots to preserve existing neighborhood character.



Policy 43: Establish maximum floor area ratios (FARs) in the zoning code to restrict oversized residential structures.

The intent of this policy is to help retain the cohesive character of residential neighborhoods throughout the Town by requiring a similarity in building scale and massing. It is recommended that the Town establish maximum floor area ratios within the various residential zoning districts based on the minimum lot size.

FAR should apply to both new buildings, additions and other alterations, and would ensure that they are consistent in scale with adjoining residences on both sides of a street in the neighborhood setting.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 3 LAND USE: COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL USES

A. INTRODUCTION

Goal: Strengthen the tax base and provide continued opportunities for new investment and economic activity in the Town.

As residential development embodies our homes and neighborhoods, commercial uses provide us with opportunities to shop and work, as well as strengthening our tax base and affording opportunities for investment and economic growth.

Historically, it has been difficult to develop varied commercial opportunities in Cortlandt because of the distance of available commercial land from major highways, lack of sizeable development tracts and a lack of density in the market area. Over the last twenty years, the New York City commuting radius has grown and development density has increased within and around the Town. New development in surrounding communities including Peekskill, Yorktown as well as Putnam, northern Rockland and Orange Counties has increased the viability of our market area. In addition, proposed roadway improvements, such as the completion of the Bear Mountain Parkway extension, will change the environment for Commercial development in the future.



Cortlandt Town Center - Route 6

This section of the Master Plan addresses these topics and goals for the future. Within the context of an overwhelmingly residential land use pattern, the Master Plan specifically seeks to achieve the following:

- **Promote a jobs/housing balance in the Town.** In order to promote a variety of employment opportunities in the community, commercial/industrial areas of the Town should accommodate a diverse range of businesses that support a variety of occupations.
- **Balance the Town's ratable base.** Encourage business development and expansion in appropriate areas to generate sales and property tax revenues within the community. Nonresidential uses generally provide net property tax revenues that help offset the net costs typically generated by residential development.
- **Target appropriate business niches.** The Master Plan Committee closely reviewed the findings of Town of Cortlandt Economic Development Strategy (EDS) report which identified several business niches to pursue, including research and development, business services, tourism-related uses, health and medical services, and white-collar professional office uses, including finance, real estate, and insurance businesses. The master plan suggests a variety of mechanisms to encourage these types of uses

B. BASE STUDIES

1. Existing Zoning

The nonresidential uses that are allowed in Cortlandt are set forth in the Town zoning ordinance. Nonresidential uses are permitted in certain zoning districts that fall into one of two broad categories: commercial districts and industrial districts whose purposes are as follows:

- (1) Community Commercial (CC) Districts are “designed to provide shopping facilities and services for persons residing in immediately adjacent areas. The sizes of business are restricted in order to limit traffic volumes to a level appropriate to the character of the districts”. While identified as a “commercial district”, the CC district also permits residential uses and is probably more appropriately referred to as a “mixed use” district. CC districts are scattered throughout the Town in areas such as Verplanck, Montrose, and Oregon Corners. In some instances, the CC district applies to parcels of land in locations that do not meet the intent of the district. For example, the Cortlandt Yacht Club is zoned “CC”, although this use and its location is not consistent with the intent expressed previously.

- (2) Highway Commercial (HC and HC-9A) Districts are “designed to accommodate automobile-oriented commercial facilities serving a wide area.” The HC zone is found along Routes 6, 35/202, 9, 9A, and 129. Like the CC district, the HC zones are also mixed use districts as they permit residential uses. While the HC district allows pre-existing one and two-family dwellings, the HC-9A district also permits buildings with three- and four-family dwellings. These two districts are adjoining or near one another along the Route 9A and Route 202/35 corridors.
- (3) The Designed Commercial (CD) districts located on Route 6 and Route 202/35 are intended to “provide a means for the establishment of well-designed, efficient and convenience retail shopping centers and complementary activities serving a wide area.” To some extent, the market area of the CD and HC zones are complementary as they are both intended to provide commercial services and facilities that meet the demands of a wide area. The primary difference between the HC and CD zones is that the CD zone does not allow residential uses, and the CD zone requires a much larger minimum lot area (80,000 sf) than the HC district. The CD district also does not permit auto-related uses.

In addition to its commercial districts, the Town also has two types of industrial districts. They are as follows:

- (1) The Designed Industrial (M-D) district is “*intended to permit and encourage industrial development and compatible commercial activities that will be so located and designed as to constitute a harmonious and appropriate part of the physical development of the Town and contribute to the soundness of the economic base of the Town...*”. Three M-D districts exist: one is located on Arlo Lane, another is located at the corner of Furnace Dock Road and Croton Avenue, and the third is located along the Hudson River shoreline within Verplanck. The minimum lot size for the M-D district is 5 acres.
- (2) The Light Industrial (M-1) district is intended to “provide a means for the establishment of industries and compatible commercial activities in appropriate portions of the Town.” Six M-1 districts are located in the Town: one located along the Hudson River shoreline at the end of Roa Hook Road, one on Crugers Station Road, two in Montrose along the railroad right-of-way, one along Route 9 south of Welcher Avenue and one at the end of Regina Avenue that only permits storage. Minimum lot sizes are 20,000 square feet. While many of the properties within the Roa Hook Road M-1 district maintain river frontage, many of the industrial uses found here do not utilize or rely on this valuable waterfront location. Waterfront access is limited by the existing rail right-of-way that borders the river in this location.

Generally the existing boundaries of the Town’s commercial and industrial districts encompass already developed areas of commercial and industrial uses that can no longer provide for significant expansion of the Town’s ratable base.

However, some exceptions include a limited amount of vacant land within the HC zone at the easternmost extension of the Route 6 corridor, and in a CD district with frontage on Route 202/35. Otherwise, nonresidential development is currently limited to in-fill development of existing commercial corridors, or reuse of already developed parcels.

As indicated in the base studies and as derived utilizing GIS technology, vacant land zoned for commercial use in the CC, HC, HC/9A and CD zones total 123.49 acres. If developed in accordance with existing zoning, approximately 2.3 million square feet of office/retail/commercial building area may be generated. Vacant land zoned for industrial use in the MD and M-1 zones totals 24.12 acres that under existing zoning would yield approximately 871,000 square feet of building area.

In addition, it is expected that reuse of underutilized parcels will occur over time, as existing parcels that are still in residential use are converted to commercial uses or that as existing buildings are enlarged. It should be noted that recent commercial development has been much less intense than the maximum amount of development allowable in commercial districts as currently defined in the zoning ordinance. For example, a recently approved two-story office building on Albany Post Road in a HC zone has a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.35, compared with the estimated 0.5 FAR allowable under the zoning ordinance. Similarly, the Cortlandt Town Center was developed at an FAR of 0.15, compared with the 0.4 FAR permitted under the zoning.

Thus, in past practice commercial development has not come close to the FAR that could be achieved under the zoning ordinance. This indicates that the density permitted under the zoning ordinance if actually utilized, may be inappropriately high in certain areas. Therefore, the Master Plan suggests significant reductions in density as a result of these findings.

2. Growth Trends

Since adoption of the 1991 Master Plan, much of the nonresidential growth in the Town has occurred along the Route 6 corridor, the Town's primary commercial center. A number of policies in the 1991 plan were implemented to improve the Town's economy. In particular, the New York State Department of Transportation's reconstruction of Route 6 has helped improve traffic flow and circulation within this center. These improvements, coupled with continued increases in the region's population, have fueled the demand for additional retail development. Major national retail chain stores have been introduced or expanded.

Additions to the Route 6 commercial center include an expanded and renovated Cortlandt Town Center which contains major retail stores such as Home Depot and Walmart. Other commercial development which has occurred since 1991 along Route 6 includes, a new Circuit City store, an expanded and renovated Shop Rite, completion of Pike Plaza and the conversion and renovation of the former Caldor's department store to Kohl's. The Cortlandt Town Center as a regional destination is one of the largest shopping centers in northern Westchester County.

3. Economic Development Strategy

To assess the broader health of Cortlandt's economy, the Town commissioned a study entitled the Town of Cortlandt Economic Development Strategy (EDS) report that was completed in 1999. The study investigated the prospects for various types of commercial and industrial uses.

The report recommended that the following business niches be targeted:

- (1) Health Services
- (2) Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Legal
- (3) Computers and Communications
- (4) Business Services
- (5) Research and Development and Allied Industries
- (6) Consultants and Self-Employed Professionals
- (7) Artists and Designers
- (8) Tourism

The Town's ability to attract businesses within these targeted niches will depend on the availability of property with adequate infrastructure but also the Town's willingness to market these alternative uses proactively and be creative and receptive to various proposals.

It is notable that the Strategy Report **did not** identify manufacturing or warehouse/distribution uses as business niches – this reflects the distance of the Town to major transportation corridors that can accommodate major truck traffic, e.g., I-684 or I-84.

The following Master Plan policies focus economic development, redevelopment and revitalization within appropriate geographic areas of the Town. The policies are based on the assumption that economic development is desirable to provide varied employment opportunities in the community, meet the demand for commercial services generated by the Town's expanded population, and as a means to provide a balanced ratable base within Cortlandt.

C. RECOMMENDED COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL LAND USE PATTERN

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the intended land use pattern for commercial and industrial uses in the Town of Cortlandt. The specific objectives and policies to achieve this land use pattern follow this section. The Master Plan proposes to reinforce and refine the hierarchy of commercial and industrial areas that are allowed in the Town.

In addition, the Plan proposes special districts that would target specific business niches within areas that have unique location characteristics, i.e., the riverfront and the VA Hospital. The following provides a description of the recommended nonresidential land use areas.

Any new construction must conform to other objectives of this plan, including environmental protection, traffic mitigation and improvements, and strengthened design standards. Potential impacts associated with any proposed development, both on an individual and cumulative basis will continue to be evaluated through the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process.

There are nine (9) types of Commercial/Industrial Zones suggested in the Master Plan and they are:

1. Community Commercial Mixed Use Areas.

The Master Plan proposes retaining the existing “Community Commercial” mixed use areas. The primary purpose of the Community Commercial area is to accommodate the service commercial and retail uses that meet the local convenience needs of residents in adjoining neighborhoods. These areas would allow retail, residential and service type commercial uses at a “village-scale” character of development. Most automotive-related uses would be discouraged in these areas. These areas are also targeted for other improvements, including sidewalks, streetscape design updates such as decorative lighting, and signage which would reinforce the pedestrian orientation that is intended for these areas, and help establish a unified character to each locale.

Where a Community Commercial area encompasses a historic hamlet area, the design of these centers should complement the existing historic character of its surrounds. The Community Commercial areas have been strictly limited to concentrate retail and personal service establishments within specific “centers” in order to discourage the expansion of strip commercial development in the Town. The Community Commercial areas are located as follows:

- ❖ **Oregon Road:** Four Community Commercial areas are along Oregon Road. One area would be located along the Town’s boundary with the Town of Putnam Valley within the Oregon Corners hamlet. The second area would be located in the vicinity of Westbrook Drive and Oregon Road. The third would be located in the vicinity of Town Hall within the Van Cortlandtville hamlet area. The fourth area would be reduced to include Homestead Plaza but eliminate part of the Hollowbrook Golf Course. These four areas are currently zoned “CC”. An additional small “CC” zone adjacent to the Hampton Oaks Shopping Center would also remain as Community Commercial.

- ❖ **Crompond Road (Route 202/35):** As the Route 6 corridor is built out over time, it is anticipated that pressure will be exerted to further develop the Route 202/35 corridor. To meet the retail demands of adjoining neighborhoods, the Master Plan recommends that two Community Commercial areas would exist:
 - Located between Croton Avenue and the Bear Mountain Parkway.
 - Located between Rick Lane and Clinton Avenue.

- ❖ **Albany Post Road (Route 9A):** Albany Post Road is an historic road which meanders through older hamlets, including Montrose and Crugers, as well as established villages, including Buchanan and Croton-on-Hudson. These communities have established “main street” environments that should be preserved and revitalized. The area of Montrose along Route 9A currently zoned “CC” would remain “CC” or Community Commercial. The Master Plan seeks to continue to encourage revitalization of the Verplanck hamlet by continuing a Community Commercial area at the intersection of Broadway and 6th Street that is currently zoned “CC”.

2. Business Mixed Use Areas

A Business Mixed Use area (hereinafter referred to as the “Business Mixed Use” areas) is envisioned along Route 9A as a transitional mixed use environment separate from the Community Commercial area in Montrose.

The purpose of the Business Mixed Use area is to allow business, services, and offices, as well as small-scale multifamily housing, retail and personal service uses. The Business Mixed Use area would be linked to the Community Commercial area via sidewalks and trails. Business Mixed Use Area is proposed on Albany Post Road in the areas currently zoned “HC” and “HC-9A”.

To implement the objectives of the EDS report, the Business Mixed Use area would permit business offices for health, finance, insurance, real estate, and legal, computers and communications, and other professional office uses. These uses would be compatible with the limited multifamily residential development which may occur in these locations.

Within these areas, limited types of automotive-related uses would be allowed in accordance with strict design guidelines.

3. General Commercial Areas

General Commercial Areas are intended to allow offices, business and service commercial uses, as well as automotive-related uses within select areas of the Town. These areas would not allow residential uses. Retail uses would also be permitted. General Commercial areas are proposed within the Route 6 and Route 202/35 commercial corridors currently zoned HC Highway Commercial.

4. Regional Commercial Center

Route 6 will continue to be the Regional Commercial Center in the community. Uses that would be allowed within the Regional Commercial Center include:

- Shopping centers
- Offices
- Movie theatres
- Restaurants
- Big Box Retailers such as Walmart and Home Depot

It should be noted that there are no new areas proposed for “Regional Commercial Centers” in the Town. It should also be noted that the minimum lot area needed for this use is 80,000 square feet.

5. Office/Research Area (By Special Permit)

The EDS report identified several business niches to pursue including Office/Research Areas. It is anticipated that the office research area uses will be permitted by Special Permit on lots of at least 50 acres

6. Designed Industrial Area

The designed industrial area would apply only to 2 existing industrial complexes located along Furnace Dock Road and Arlo Lane. No new planned industrial areas are proposed for the Town. In general, the Town lacks suitably large flat sites for light industrial uses that would be in close proximity to major transportation facilities that accommodate truck traffic.

7. Light Industrial Area

With one exception, the existing M-1 districts scattered throughout the Town would continue to operate as heavy commercial/industrial areas. For the most part, these areas would continue to allow the same uses allowed in the M-1 zone. The one exception is the M-1 district at the end of Roa Hook Road that is proposed for Waterfront Light Industrial.

8. Waterfront Light Industrial Area

The waterfront light industrial area is proposed in two locations: the M-1 district at the end of Roa Hook Road, and the M-D district located in Verplanck.

All current uses allowed in the M-1 zone would be allowed in the new Waterfront Light Industrial zone with the exception of contractor's yards and wholesale trade such as oil storage. Contractor's yard and whole sale trade uses will be permitted by Special Permit only. It should be noted that all existing contractor's yards or wholesale trade operations located within the waterfront light industrial zones shall without further action, be deemed to have been granted a Special Permit. Any proposed expansion of such use shall require a Special Permit.

The plan envisions that waterfront light industrial areas will require a minimum of 40,000 square feet. The Plan acknowledges that the existing railroad right-of-way limits shoreline access in some locations. Other water dependent uses, including marinas and boatyards, would also be allowed by right. Additionally, all uses in the waterfront tourism zone that are not included uses in the Waterfront Light Industrial zone will be permitted by Special Permit only.

9. Waterfront Tourism Area

Two areas of the Town are envisioned as Waterfront Tourism Areas: Annsville Circle and Verplanck:



Annsville Creek Paddlesport Center

Annsville

The Town's westerly boundary at the Bear Mountain Bridge is a main gateway to the Hudson Highlands on the east side of the Hudson River. Traveling east along Bear Mountain Bridge Road (Route 202/6) or south along Route 9 from the Town's border with Philipstown towards Annsville Circle, a visitor is afforded beautiful views of the Hudson Highlands and/or the Hudson River. These two major thoroughfares meet at Annsville Circle, which is surrounded by the tidal creeks associated with the river and Annsville Creek. At this location, visitors have already passed the Town's new Visitor Center located at the historic tollhouse on Bear Mountain Road, the Monteverde Restaurant, and the recently constructed Paddlesport Center - all uses that cater to tourists and recreational visitors. This is further reinforced by the presence of the Reef Restaurant located at the Annsville Creek and the recent acquisition of the 352 acre Hudson Highlands Park which provides scenic trails and is located less than 1 mile up Route 9 from Annsville Circle. However, as a result of the existing HC zoning in these areas, Route 9/202/6 has the potential to evolve into an automotive-repair use dominated corridor that would detract substantially from the Town's waterfront character in this location.

The Master Plan envisions creating a new waterfront tourism area that would encompass the Annsville Circle hamlet. The intent is to allow water-dependent and water-enhanced uses in this location, and to link the area with the Hudson River Greenway trail system.

The Annsville hamlet would also allow Community commercial uses which would meet the local retail needs of the Town's neighborhoods north and west of Annsville Circle as well as serving as a quaint tourist destination where antique and gift shops, restaurants, marinas, overnight accommodations, catering establishments, and similar uses would be encouraged.

Verplanck

The Master Plan envisions the creation of waterfront tourism areas along the Verplanck shoreline. The waterfront tourism area encompasses properties located at the western terminus of 6th Street, and properties at the end of Broadway in the vicinity of Steamboat Riverfront Park. Properties along Kings Ferry Road between Riverview Avenue and Sunset Road, including the Kings and Cortlandt Yacht Clubs, would be included in the waterfront tourism area.

Uses could include boutiques, antique and gift shops, restaurants, marinas, bed & breakfasts and similar tourist-related activities. More detail on permitted and special permit uses for property within the Waterfront Tourism District will be specified in the Zoning Code and could include mixed uses on the same lot.



D. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The Master Plan envisions a hierarchy of land use areas that are intended to accommodate a range of commercial and industrial uses to accomplish the Town's economic objectives. The Plan recognizes that the majority of the Town's commercial and industrial areas are currently developed and that any future development should be reduced by lowering the maximum amounts of building coverage, floor area and parking lots permitted by zoning.

The objectives and policies for commercial and industrial uses are as follows.

OBJECTIVE: Improve the economic health and the environment of existing commercial and industrial areas.**Policy 44: Provide infrastructure and aesthetic improvements to existing commercial areas.**

Public improvements to commercial areas involve road and traffic improvements, including streetscapes, sidewalks and pedestrian connections, landscaping, decorative lighting, sewer and water availability and storm water management as well as development of shared parking areas.

The Town should continue to obtain funding and assist the New York State Department of Transportation in making needed improvements to the major State roads that provide access to the Town's commercial areas. Transportation improvements include those recommended in the adopted Sustainable Development Study (SDS) as well as those identified by the Plan.

In addition, the Master Plan recommends that the Town continues to commit to a capital improvement program that prioritizes infrastructure to areas targeted for business development. In particular, the Plan recommends that infrastructure be first targeted to the office/research areas and the Town Regional Commercial Center. Secondly, Community Business and Community Commercial areas should also be targeted as areas where centralized sewer and water should be studied and funded.

Overall, the Plan anticipates that the infill development of vacant and underutilized land along the Town's major road corridors, i.e., Route 6, Routes 202/35, and Route 9A will be the focus of growth over the next 10-20 years. Development and redevelopment affords the Town the opportunity to improve and upgrade the aesthetics of the Town.

In particular, the major objective is to avoid site design and improvements that reinforce the "strip commercial" appearances. To improve the attractiveness of commercial corridors, multiple curb cuts should be avoided and shared driveway access should be planned, particularly along Routes 9A and 202/35 and Route 6.

Shared interior access roadways to help eliminate multiple curb cuts along Route 9A, 202/35 and Route 6 should also be strongly encouraged as areas are re-developed and seek Site Development Plan approval from the Planning Board. The Town encourages the Master Planning of several parcels or groups of parcels to achieve improved landscaping and a unified architectural design and signage as well as more efficient traffic and pedestrian circulation and access systems through service roads, shared driveways and sidewalks. Within the Community Commercial areas, the Plan recommends that improvements include shared parking areas.

The Plan recommends that the zoning ordinance enable the Planning Board to request applicants to examine, as part of subdivision or site plan review, vehicular and pedestrian connections with adjoining parcels. The zoning ordinance should also be revised to give the Planning Board the authority to require easements for these future connections.

Policy 45: Attract new business uses as needed to existing developed areas.

Consistent with the recommendations of the EDS report, the Town should attract businesses within the niches identified in that report. The Town should encourage these businesses in locations where adequate land and infrastructure exists or is anticipated and where potential environmental impacts are limited or adequately mitigated.

As necessary, the Town should re-zone eligible properties to achieve this objective. The land use plan identifies potential locations for encouraging office, research and development, tourism, neighborhood and regional retail, and health-related uses as follows:

- Tourism: Creation of gateway waterfront districts at Annsville Circle/Hamlet and on the Verplanck waterfront
- Regional Retail: Town Regional Commercial Center
- Local Retail Office Uses: Community Commercial Areas
- Small Business, Office and Retail Uses: Community Business areas

New commercial and industrial development will be focused in areas that are already developed with such uses with the goal of improving the aesthetic character of existing commercial corridors, while discouraging the creation of new strip commercial areas.

The Master Plan introduces 2 new areas for possible future commercial and industrial development – Camp Smith Re Use B and the FDR VA Hospital. These new areas provide an opportunity for a different mix and combination of uses near the Hudson River. By encouraging a more appropriate mix of uses based on the unique characteristics of various geographic areas of the Town, additional economic opportunities will be generated.

Policy 46: Encourage the reuse and redevelopment of vacant commercial and industrial buildings.

While the Master Plan reinforces a land use hierarchy and proposes to shift the overall intent of several areas, e.g., convert the highway commercial nature of the Annsville Circle area to a waterfront tourism destination, the Plan overall does not propose to increase significantly the amount of land dedicated to non-residential use. The Plan proposes to concentrate retail development within existing hamlet and village centers in order to encourage reuse and redevelopment of vacant properties and buildings within these long-established business and retail centers rather than opening up new property to commercial development.

Policy 47: Revise dimensional regulations for commercial and industrial zoning districts to introduce floor area ratio regulations (in some cases sliding scale) and limit impervious coverage.

Currently, the Town's zoning ordinance restricts building coverage, i.e., the amount of land area that may be covered by buildings. The regulations also establish the minimum amount of lot area that must be landscaped. The remaining land may be developed with parking and other impervious surfaces.

The Master Plan recommends that development on individual lots be controlled through restrictions on development coverage and the imposition of floor area ratios (FAR). Total building area would be regulated in accordance with maximum floor area ratios to control the overall bulk of a building on a lot. The floor area ratio (FAR) is the product of the total building floor area divided by the lot area. In the cases of Special Permits for Commercial/Industrial Uses, it is recommended that a sliding scale Floor Area Ratio (FAR) be used. For example, proposed projects located adjacent to residential areas would have a lower FAR than if a project was located adjacent to non-residential uses.

Revised dimensional regulations would also limit the total amount of impervious surfaces on any lot regardless of whether it consists of building or parking surfaces. Compared to current zoning the proposed revised regulations will result in a reduction in the amount in building and parking areas and an increase in landscaping. To illustrate these changes the Master Plan Committee and staff prepared a Revised Table of Dimensional Regulations and conducted a build out of commercial and industrial uses that resulted in smaller buildings than currently permitted by the Zoning Code.

Policy 48: Encourage creative campus style office uses and research and development by Special Permit on large parcels of land over 50 acres.

The Plan envisions creative campus style offices on large parcels over 50 acres in size with buildings set in park-like surrounds. Development coverage would be limited to encourage preservation of open space within these campus settings.

In areas where campus style development is to occur, encourage parking under the buildings to reduce impervious surfaces. It is important to note that proposed campus-style office uses should fit into the character of the area in which it is proposed.

These types of uses are considered to be attractive industries that would introduce white-collar employment, provide alternate traffic patterns compared to retail development, and introduce additional property tax revenues.

Policy 49: Encourage a mix of residential and nonresidential uses along Route 9A from Montrose south to the Croton Line with retail and service commercial uses concentrated in existing hamlet centers.

The Route 9A corridor presently includes a diverse mix of local retail, residential, and miscellaneous office and business uses. The Master Plan envisions continuing the Community Commercial area in Montrose that would be targeted for pedestrian and aesthetic improvements and shared parking facilities. The Community Commercial zone would be adjacent to residential zones and Business Mixed Use areas but linked to one another via sidewalks and trail connections.

The intent is to limit commercial sprawl along this corridor and concentrate uses that generate a significant amount of vehicular trips (e.g., convenience retail) to community commercial areas. The Business Mixed Use area will provide for residential and commercial uses on larger lots with less building and parking lot coverage and more landscaped areas than the current HC/9A & HC zone. Parks, landscaping and recreation areas should also be included for residential uses.

Policy 50: Improve existing Community Commercial areas along Oregon Road by implementing design standards to enhance visual appearance.

Oregon Road is a busy Town road that is mostly residential in character. Since existing commercial uses are not extensive, the historical character of many of the properties and old hamlet centers are still apparent.

Some local retail uses are scattered along the frontage of this road but generally concentrated in four locations:

- ❖ Van Cortlandtville
- ❖ Oregon Corners
- ❖ Oregon Road & Westbrook Drive
- ❖ Homestead Plaza on Oregon Road

To discourage strip commercial development of this corridor, the Plan recommends that Community Commercial areas be focused and limited to the four existing hamlet centers. Architectural and site development plan design standards would be implemented to preserve the small-scale and historic character of the Community Commercial areas. Shared parking, landscaped buffer areas, sidewalks, and unified architectural themes would enhance the overall appearance of these centers.

Policy 51: Create commercial design standards and guidelines for the Route 6 and Route 202/35 commercial areas to unify the appearance of commercial uses along these corridors.

Route 6 is the Town's most visible, intensively used and developed regional commercial corridor. With the reconstruction of Route 6 completed in 1995 by the New York State DOT, this commercial corridor has attracted new development and remains the focus of new development proposals. Route 6's position as a major destination is reinforced by new commercial development also occurring in Yorktown and Peekskill.

The Master Plan desires to create a unified theme for the Route 6 and Route 202/35 corridors to improve its visual appearance. It also encourages pedestrian activity between the center and adjoining neighborhoods in order to reduce overall vehicular trips.

The Master Plan also discourages the addition of any future big box retail uses on vacant parcels along Route 6, 202 or Route 9A.

In order to enhance the visual quality of the corridor, the Master Plan recommends that the Town work with NYSDOT to explore the possible creation of a tree-lined median along Route 6. This has been accomplished along other major transportation corridors in the region, including Route 59 in Nanuet (Rockland County) and Route 9 in Fishkill (Dutchess County).

Lastly, the Master Plan recommends that to discourage the perception of Route 6 as a "highway", the Town should actively promote a "signature" name for this corridor, e.g., "the Boulevard" or "Cortlandt Boulevard" rather than "Route 6". Pedestrian sidewalks, banners, decorative lighting, and similar architectural elements should be introduced to unify the corridor's appearance.

Policy 52: Identify areas along Route 202/35 to serve several specific economic development objectives such as Community Commercial, general commercial, medical offices and other medical-related uses.

The Master Plan envisions that uses along Route 202/35 be focused on medical-related uses to achieve a number of economic development objectives. Starting along the road's western border with the City of Peekskill, the Plan envisions medical office and health-related facilities in the vicinity of the Hudson Valley Hospital Center.

Between Tamarack Lane and Clinton Avenue, residential uses would continue to predominate. Between Clinton Avenue and Rick Lane, a Community Commercial area would be retained to continue the existing local retail and service uses that serve adjoining neighborhoods. Another Community Commercial area would be located between the Bear Mountain Parkway and Croton Avenue to encompass existing retail and service commercial uses. Outside of the Community Commercial areas, business offices, service and retail uses would be encouraged on larger lots for the existing HC zone as a new General Commercial Zone .

New development or expansion of commercial areas should be carefully evaluated for impacts on adjacent residential areas, including utilizing special permits for business and professional offices in "transitional locations".

The informal Catskill Aqueduct trail should continue to provide a pedestrian connection that links adjoining residential neighborhoods to the Community Commercial areas.

Policy 53: Establish waterfront use areas by the creation of a Waterfront Tourism Zone and a Waterfront Industrial Zone in the areas of Verplanck and Annsville.

The Master Plan proposes two distinct waterfront areas: a waterfront tourism area, and a waterfront industrial area.

Waterfront Light Industrial:

The waterfront light industrial area would encompass properties at the end of Roa Hook Road near Annsville, and a portion of the large existing MD zone located in Verplanck. The purpose of the Waterfront Industrial area is to support water dependent uses, i.e., uses that rely on a shoreline location to transport or receive materials or otherwise rely on the Hudson River water as part of their business.

All current uses allowed in the M-1 zone would be allowed in the new Waterfront Light Industrial zone with the exception of contractor's yards and wholesale trade such as oil storage. Contractor's yard and whole sale trade uses will be permitted by Special Permit only. It should be noted that all existing contractor's yards or wholesale trade operations located within the waterfront light industrial zones shall without further action, be deemed to have been granted a Special Permit. Any proposed expansion of such use shall require a Special Permit.

The plan envisions that waterfront light industrial areas will require a minimum of 40,000 square feet. The Plan acknowledges that the existing railroad right-of-way limits shoreline access in some locations. Other water dependent uses, including marinas and boatyards, would also be allowed by right. Additionally, all uses in the waterfront tourism zone that are not included uses in the Waterfront Light Industrial zone will be permitted by Special Permit only.

Waterfront Tourism

The Plan envisions creating two waterfront tourism areas: one at the Annsville Circle and hamlet, and the other along the shoreline in Verplanck. In these two locations, the Plan recommends that tourism-related uses be encouraged. Tourism-related uses would include: fishing, boating and similar water-dependent recreation uses, bed & breakfasts, spas, restaurants with outdoor decks, gift shops, boutiques, marinas, and similar uses. Both residential and commercial components are encouraged in the Waterfront Tourism areas for a "mixed-use" type approach. i.e. "living above the store".

As a condition of approval, properties that are developed for these purposes would be required to give easements to the Town for the purpose of continuing the Hudson River Shoreline Trail and a Riverwalk which provides public access to the Hudson River. These plans should be coordinated with the Hudson River Valley Greenway trail system

The Annsville hamlet would also permit Community Commercial type uses to meet the local retail and service commercial needs of adjoining neighborhoods, including those located to the north and west of the hamlet.

Overall, the waterfront tourism areas would focus tourism type uses to those unique areas of in the Town where waterfront access is not encumbered by railroad tracks and where opportunities exist to enhance the Town's gateway (Annsville) and preserve the historic character of the hamlets of Verplanck and Annsville.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 4: NATURAL RESOURCES

A. INTRODUCTION

GOAL: Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive and critical areas.

Cortlandt is blessed with natural resources that are both diverse and accessible, comprising elements of great value and significant ecological importance. From the Georges and Oscawana Islands on the Hudson River shoreline to the Croton Reservoir and Dam, from Teatown Lake Reservation to the Blue Mountain Preserve and on many other properties, both publicly and privately owned, a network of open space and natural features afford the Town's residents with a unique opportunity to live in one of the most beautiful places in the lower Hudson River Valley.

Together with the possession of these natural resources is the responsibility to be a good steward for lands within the town and an advocate for sound environmental planning. Development and construction can adversely affect natural resources and wildlife habitats. Stormwater runoff from developed areas can cause on- and off-site pollution of groundwater, soils, wetlands, water bodies and watercourses or erosion of steep slopes and stream banks. Leachate from septic systems, runoff from lawns including fertilizers, pesticides and animal wastes and runoff from roads containing salts, oil, and gasoline and engine coolant are all potential sources of pollution.



Croton River Gorge in Croton-on-Hudson

Conservation design is a relatively recent planning technique which Cortlandt has embraced in substantive ways. The implementation of Wetlands, Steep Slopes and Tree Cutting Ordinances have all served to help protect these natural resources and to call public attention to these important issues. Recent upgrades in the EPA's Stormwater regulations established important guidelines for the Town to follow. The Master Plan calls for a continuing review of all regulations written for the protection of the Town's natural resources to make these regulations compatible with best engineering practices and the latest science available. This will provide for flexibility in design to address the environmental sensitivity and minimize the impacts of development within the Town and to provide for long range maintenance and management of these natural resources. Development can and should be planned in such a way, that to the greatest extent possible, the Town maintains high quality of its water resources and soils and continues to provide a natural habitat for its native wildlife.

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

1. Existing Town Legislation

The Town of Cortlandt Code currently has various pieces of legislation to conserve and/or protect natural resources as follows:

- Chapter 175: Flood Damage Prevention
- Chapter 179; Wetlands, Water Bodies and Watercourses
- Chapter 253; Sludge and Hazardous Material
- Chapter 259; Steep Slopes
- Chapter 283; Tree Cutting
- Chapter 301; Diversion of Watercourses
- Chapter 307; Zoning for Cluster Development, Aquifer Protection District and Special Reuse and Conservation Development

As identified in the updated Base Studies, the inventory of natural resources in the Town of Cortlandt generally includes geology, topography, soils, biodiversity, wetlands, water resources, vegetation and wildlife. Local geologic deposits found in the bedrock formations include emery, granite and limestone, which were the source of early mining activities conducted in various areas of the Town. The Town's topographic features include steep slopes on mountains and hillsides; and low-lying wetland areas all within a variety of drainage basins with streams connecting to the New York City watershed and/or directly to the Hudson River. Several kinds of soil types are found in the Town of Cortlandt, most of which are glacial in origin.

Developed areas of the Town have experienced changes in soil characteristics due to the clearing of land and the cutting or filling of the natural topography. The two major drainage basins in the Town are the Upper Hudson River and the Croton River/Croton Reservoir. The many sub-drainage basins include the Peekskill Hollow Brook, Sprout Brook, Furnace Brook and Dickie Brook, among others.

The dominant forest type that covers undeveloped areas in the Town is a mix of deciduous forest, composed of broad-leaved trees and various evergreen species. Depending on soil, ground water and topographic features, the under story of shrubs and ground covers are diverse and provide for a large number of wildlife species. In particular, the Hudson River is an extremely productive estuary that supports an abundant array of wildlife and is one of five designated major Critical Environmental Areas in the Town.

Watershed protection is crucial to the water quality of the Croton Reservoir, the Indian Brook Reservoir, the Croton-on-Hudson Aquifer and the Peekskill Hollow Brook, all of which serve as sources of public drinking water. As required by the New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement, the Westchester County Department of Planning in cooperation with the watershed communities is in the process of preparing The Comprehensive Croton Watershed Quality Protection Plan for Westchester County.

Biodiversity science and its application have made major strides in recent years. A current study, "Croton to Highlands Biotic Corridor" project is scheduled for completion in the Spring of 2004. When the study is completed and adopted by the Town Board, its recommendations should be evaluated for possible incorporation into the Town of Cortlandt Master Plan.

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are intended to support and augment existing Town policies and to help achieve the goals of protecting environmentally sensitive and critical areas from inappropriate development and to the greatest extent possible, preserving the Town's high quality of its water resources, steep slopes, vegetation, and natural habitat for its native wildlife, including protected, rare and endangered species.

OBJECTIVE: Establish ground and surface water quality control measures and water quality monitoring programs to assess and control non-point source water pollution within all watersheds.

As identified in the base Studies, at least 10 water bodies in Cortlandt are on the list of non-point source nominations pursuant to the New York State Nonpoint Source Water Pollution Control Law and they are:

- 1) Westchester Lake/Wallace Pond
- 2) Dickey Brook/Loundsbury Pond
- 3) Petersons Pond
- 4) Furnace Dock Lake
- 5) Furnace Brook from Route 9 West to the Hudson River
- 6) Lake Meahagh

- 7) Twin Lakes
- 8) Colabaugh Pond
- 9) Cortlandt Lake
- 10) Peekskill Hollow Brook from the Westchester Putnam Border to the Peekskill Water Supply Intake on Pump House Road.

The major types of nonpoint source pollution in the Town are septic systems and/or sewage treatment plants; lawn chemicals; urban runoff such as soil erosion from improperly contained construction sites or salt and petroleum based residues from roadways and parking lots; and household wastes, such as dishwashing detergent.

Policy 54: Establish a comprehensive program for the cleanup of polluted water bodies.

Through use of the Storm Water Phase II Management Controls in coordination with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Town should implement a comprehensive program for the cleanup of polluted water bodies. It is recommended that this program focus on the control and abatement program for nonpoint sources of pollution and coordinate and utilize County, State and New York City Department of Environmental Protection resources to conduct such a program.

The main objectives of the program would be to:

- Conduct periodic water quality monitoring.
- Develop management programs to mitigate the cause and effects of nonpoint source pollution.
- Keep current the list of polluted water bodies and monitor and test.
- The Town should pursue Hudson River Estuary Plan Funds and other available grants to fund such a control and abatement program for nonpoint sources of pollution.
- Strengthen enforcement of existing regulations to prevent nonpoint source pollution and coordinate with other involved governmental agencies.
- Give top priority for new sewers to the Town's existing higher density areas.
- Work with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to control and reduce nonpoint sources of pollution within the NYC Watershed for the Croton Reservoir, including implementation of the Comprehensive Croton Watershed Water Quality Protection Plan.
- Work with the City of Peekskill, the Towns of New Castle, Yorktown, Philipstown and Putnam Valley and the Villages of Croton-on-Hudson and Buchanan to control and reduce nonpoint sources of pollution within these municipal watersheds for the protection of public water supplies.
- Reference and require the use of the "Westchester County Best Management Practices" and the "New York State Guidelines for Urban Erosion and Sediment Control" to control soil erosion and sedimentation in all new development in the site plan and subdivision regulations including mandating water quality controls for storm water runoff.

- Consider applying new New York City watershed regulations to other areas of the Town.
- As required by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, develop a town-wide storm water management plan.
- Consider regulations to provide for proper maintenance and disposal of domestic and agricultural animal waste. (i.e. pooper-scooper law)
- Educate the public about preventing water pollution by not dumping grass clippings and yard waste in or near wetlands, water bodies and watercourses and by the proper disposal of household chemicals, motor oil, batteries, tires, etc.
- Require the removal of junk and debris from wetlands and wetland buffers.

Policy 55: Adopt stand-alone Storm Water Phase II Management Control Ordinance as recommended by the NYSDEC and EPA.

In order to protect the Town's water resources from an increase in the quantity of runoff and a decrease in the quality of storm water runoff from new impervious surfaces the Town should continue its implementation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Phase II Storm Water Management Control Ordinance. These new regulations would be added to the Town's Subdivision and Site Development Plan Regulations to require that each new subdivision and site development plan include a storm water management plan. Such a plan would have to mitigate the impact of the proposed land use on water quantity and quality, both on-site and off-site within the receiving watershed. As a reference guide for the new storm water regulations the Town should consider the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Storm water controls. (See Section on Utilities).

Policy 56: Adopt low-impact development and "green building" design standards in the Town's Subdivision and Site Development Plan Regulations.

Low impact development is a method to address on-site storm water management that is being implemented by federal agencies as well as state, county and municipal governments for regulatory compliance and water resource protection.

Low impact storm water development utilizes a combination of planning and design strategies, and conservation approaches and techniques to reduce site development impacts.

The objective of low impact storm water development is to maintain the hydrologic cycle within a project by using small scale Integrated Management Practices (IMPs) throughout a site, on buildings and for infrastructure improvements. Common IMPs include impervious surface reduction and bio-retention (the use of the plant soil complex for storm water management), grass swales, rain gardens, roof gardens, permeable pavers and amended soils.

It is recommended that the Town amend its Zoning Ordinance and its Subdivision and Site Development Plan Regulations to incorporate low impact development and "green building" standards for new development to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces and off site storm water runoff by such methods as shared parking lots and driveways, increasing the amounts of required landscaping, using pervious paving materials and other IMPs.

Policy 57: Evaluate Design and Maintenance of both Municipal and Private Storm water Drainage Systems.

An important element in controlling excessive runoff of sediments and contaminants is the condition and efficacy of the system of catch basins, water quality control basins, detention basins and other storm water controls installed to do the job.

With the establishment of the Town's Geographical Information System, Town owned drainage systems should be inventoried and mapped as part of a regular maintenance program. Simultaneously, the Town should be planning needed improvements to the design and operation of storm water drainage systems.

The design, landscaping and maintenance of storm water drainage systems should be carefully evaluated by the Town, based on best management practices and other local ordinances to provide for ecological function, to mitigate visual impacts and to maintain drainage controls needed for each area.

With the approval of new development, applicants should provide the Town with an electronic copy of plans (including necessary GIS data) for new storm water control structures to add to the Town's database and mapping of infrastructure.

Policy 58: Promote proper maintenance of on-site waste water (septic) systems.

Maintenance of septic systems is necessary to prevent clogged leachate beds, which can result in a breakout of septic waste water to the surface of the ground. Runoff from breakouts can pollute nearby lakes, ponds and streams.

Assuming proper maintenance, septic systems are designed to function adequately for many years, after which repairs or replacement may be necessary. To help ensure that property owners maintain their septic systems properly, the Town should conduct periodic Town-wide public educational programs to inform residents of the need for septic system maintenance and to show them proper maintenance methods. Such a program was conducted by the Save Our Lakes Committee in 1999.

As recommended under Policy #1 a regular testing program of lakes, ponds, streams and groundwater will enable the Town to determine how well septic maintenance programs are working and where problems still remain.

As recommended by the Save Our Lakes Committee, the Town should consider adopting a mandatory septic system maintenance ordinance. Such an ordinance could include the concept that properties with septic systems must show recent maintenance (within the last 2 years) from a Westchester County licensed contractor prior to receiving any new building permits or Certificates of Occupancy from the Town's Department of Technical Services – Code Enforcement Division.

Policy 59: Promote periodic testing of well water.

A public education and testing program should be organized and sponsored by the Town for areas that depend on well water. Homeowners and businesses in these areas should be sent a notification explaining why it is in their interest to have their wells tested. The cost of the testing is relatively inexpensive.

Furthermore, a relatively small number of homes and businesses would be involved. At the same time it would ensure homeowners and businesses that their water is safe to drink and would give the Town valuable information about potential groundwater pollution.

OBJECTIVE: Improve enforcement: evaluate and update local environmental laws to further protect the Town's natural resources.

The Town ordinances regarding ecologically sensitive wetlands, water bodies, watercourses, steep slopes, trees, wildlife, vegetation, biodiversity should be reviewed on a regular basis by Engineering and Planning staff and updated to insure that the ordinances represent the best science and engineering standards available.

Policy 60: Revise the Wetlands, Steep Slopes and Tree Ordinances and require biennial reviews of these ordinances by Town Staff to ensure they are up-to-date.

The following notes are recommendations for the Town's three core environmental ordinances:

Wetlands:

- Prohibit the future use of wetlands for storm water detention to mitigate increased runoff generated by proposed development resulting in potential adverse impacts on water quality and quantity, sedimentation and wetland ecology.
- A "functional assessment" should be required in all applications involving all wetland and wetland buffer disturbances to determine appropriate mitigation.
- Vernal pools should be addressed in the newly revised Wetlands ordinance.
- To protect wetlands from increased storm water runoff, permanent upland sedimentation traps, pollution filters, water quality basins and detention basins should be required between the storm water discharge and wetland buffer areas. These safeguards, recommended by the Westchester County Soil and Water Conservation District, should reduce potential adverse impacts on wetland systems.
- Require wetland delineation for pending development applications to be updated every two (2) years.

- When wetlands disturbances are unavoidable, the approval authority will recommend appropriate mitigation which may include replacing lost wetlands. Mandate the creation of replacement wetlands at a ratio of 1 to 2.0 as mitigation of any loss of existing wetlands and develop standards for the construction, monitoring (for up to 15 years) and maintenance of replacement wetlands.
- The creation of new or replacement wetlands should be located in appropriate areas that to the greatest extent possible avoid disturbance to large trees, steep slopes, rock outcrops and threatened and endangered wildlife species. New wetlands should also consider impacts on existing soil types and drainage patterns.
- Increase the reduction in the lot count formula for wetland buffers to include 50% of the wetland buffer which will also help protect wetlands.
- Strongly discourage disturbances in buffer areas. This will be considered only after it has been proven that encroachments are unavoidable.

Steep Slopes:

- Strongly discourage the disturbance on steep slope areas over 30% and greater than 5,000 contiguous square feet with no other alternative.
- Restrict the height of cuts on steep slopes for erosion control and visual quality purposes.

Tree Ordinance:

- Provide standards for saving and protecting trees during construction and for providing replacement trees, such as requiring the preparation and implementation of a Tree Preservation Plan. A Tree Preservation Plan should include the establishment of a tree replacement ratio and minimum tree size and allowing the planting of replacement trees in other areas of the town
- For new construction, prohibit clearing of trees for an area not to exceed twice the foundation size on a new home.
- Require tree removal permits on all properties for the removal not more than 3 trees over 12 inches in diameter in one year.
- Increase the penalty for violations of the Tree Ordinance to the maximum allowed by State law.

Policy 61: Create a comprehensive environmental ordinance for the Town.

Coordinate and organize local environmental protection and preservation ordinances and regulations under one umbrella entitled, “Town of Cortlandt Natural Resources Preservation and Protection Ordinance”.

For easy and quick reference and use of the Town's environmental regulations, (which will include reference to the lot count formula in the Zoning Code) it is recommended that such regulations be organized under one umbrella section of the Town Code. The comprehensive environmental ordinance should reference the Lot Count Formula. This umbrella ordinance should also provide for the elimination of redundancy and compounding of controls.

Policy 62: Adopt a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance.

It is recommended that the Town adopt their own Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance which will contain the Westchester County's Best Management Practices Manual and the New York State Guidelines for Urban Erosion Control and Sediment Control, and the NYS Stormwater Management Design Manual. The stand-alone ordinance will provide even more controls than exist currently in Best Management Practices and/or the NYS Guidelines for Urban Erosion and Sediment Control to mandate the use of soil erosion and sedimentation controls during construction including enforcement provisions, inspection fees, performance securities and regular inspections. The Soil and Sediment Control Ordinance would be included in the proposed umbrella environmental protection ordinance.

Policy 63: Clarify and cross-reference all applicable Local, State and Federal performance standards and pollution control regulations.

Performance standards and pollution control regulations regarding air quality; water quality; hazardous materials handling, disposal, and storage; solid waste; and other items are contained in State and Federal regulations. Certain sections of the Code of the Town of Cortlandt should reference these regulations, as appropriate. This policy also proposes that the Town adopt more stringent local performance standards for items currently regulated by the Town, if State and Federal standards are inadequate.

The Town should revise the performance standards in the zoning and subdivision ordinances accordingly. Successful implementation of local performance regulations will require enforcement, penalties for violation, and an educational program for citizens.

Further, in some instances, existing State and Federal regulations may be inadequate. The Town should undertake technical studies to evaluate these regulations to determine instances in which inadequacies exist. In cases where State and Federal regulations are found to be inadequate, the Town may wish to establish more stringent requirements. An example of one such area of concern is the use of insecticides, fertilizers, and pesticides on lawns, farmlands, golf courses, etc. (As indicated in the Base Studies, lawn chemicals were cited as primary pollutants of Wallace Pond, Dickiebusch Lake/Lounsbury Pond, and Twin Lakes, identified in the Westchester County nonpoint source pollution survey.)

Stricter performance standards for lawn chemicals may be particularly important in Critical Environmental Areas. It is also noted that Westchester County has recently adopted a Pesticide Notification Law which Cortlandt strongly supports.

Policy 64: Encourage the adoption of the “Croton to Highlands Biodiversity Plan” recommendations.

In order to incorporate biodiversity information into local and regional land use decisions the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Metropolitan Conservation Alliance is preparing the “Croton to Highlands Biodiversity Plan” project as a collaborative, inter-municipal effort with the four towns of Cortlandt, New Castle, Putnam Valley and Yorktown.

Larger applications to the Planning Board will require biodiversity assessments. It is anticipated that land use planning and conservation recommendations for maintaining biodiversity, ecological function and landscape connectivity will be completed by Spring 2004.

Please see the Addendum to this Master Plan for a full copy of the “Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Plan” written by Michael W. Klemens and Nicholas A. Miller of the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society. When the study is completed and adopted by the Town Board, its recommendations should be evaluated for incorporation into the Town of Cortlandt Master Plan.

Policy 65: Participate in the Westchester County Endangered Species Program

The Town should participate in the Westchester County Endangered Species Program, which will include among other things, an inventory of wildlife and plant species on Town and County property/parkland and a wildlife and plant preservation plan. A local Wildlife and Vegetation Preservation Ordinance, which should be contained in a Comprehensive Environmental Protection Ordinance, can establish guidelines for new development that reduce and mitigate the potential impacts and risks on the town's biodiversity resources. Such guidelines would include: ecological standards for proposed mitigation of impacts on native plant species, soil types, slopes, drainage, water resources and wildlife habitats.

Depending on the nature of each individual site, as determined by a biodiversity assessment, certain biodiversity features deemed to be important can be preserved as a result of the application process for new development. The Planning Board should supply applicants with biodiversity guidelines and should encourage using biodiversity assessments to plan projects.



Box Turtle at Hudson Highlands Gateway Park

Policy 66: Establish a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) to provide for greater protection of shore land areas.

The Town's coastal zone along the Hudson River has been designated a Significant Habitat Area by the NYSDEC and most of it has been proposed as Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance (SASS) by the Department of State.

To establish a comprehensive strategy for the protection and improvement of this unique coastal area, the Town should prepare and adopt a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) pursuant to the Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act of the State of New York.

Rezoning of the waterfront area should be done in conjunction with the preparation of the LWRP. The Town should coordinate with neighboring municipalities that have waterfront redevelopment plans already in place such as Peekskill and Croton-on-Hudson.

The Town or its designee can help offset the cost of creating a LWRP by applying for a Federal grant through the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, which was created by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. In addition, technical assistance is available from the State and from the Greenway Council.

See also Visual Quality.

Policy 67: Expand the Town's Aquifer Protection Ordinance.

Identify and map additional aquifers and aquifer recharge areas in the Town and evaluate their relative importance. Some of this information is available through the U.S. Geological Service (USGS). In addition, provide funding for any further research that may be necessary to supplement the USGS data. The Aquifer Protection Ordinance should be expanded to include additional aquifers or aquifer recharge areas that are determined to warrant protection. This ordinance should also be referenced in the new Comprehensive Environmental Protection Ordinance.

Policy 68: Adopt zoning regulations and land use controls within the NYC and Peekskill Hollow Brook watersheds.

As recommended in the "Comprehensive Croton Watershed Quality Protection Plan for Westchester County," when completed and adopted by the Town Board. Consider adoption of similar regulations in the Peekskill Hollow Brook Watershed. When the Comprehensive Croton Watershed Quality Protection Plan for Westchester County is complete, the Town Board's adoption of the Croton Plan should constitute an addendum to the Master Plan.

In addition, The Town should adopt land use controls within the area of the NYC Watershed to incorporate proposed water quality controls. For example, zoning regulations can restrict certain land uses which may impact ground water such as dry cleaners, laundromats and storage of petroleum products.

The Town should also explore adopting similar land use regulations that could be beneficial for other watershed areas such as the Peekskill Hollow Brook.

Policy 69: The Town should seek to designate additional Critical Environmental Areas (CEA).

The Town should seek to designate additional Critical Environmental Areas (CEA) on a local level including areas such as Gregory Pond area, the Salt Hill area, and the areas near the Croton Reservoir and near the Peekskill Hollow Brook, which are not already covered by existing CEAs. Existing CEAs are available for review in the Base Studies.

Development proposed in designated CEAs is subject to a more in-depth review than other areas. Specifically, proposed development wholly or partially within or substantially contiguous to a CEA under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), requires the lead agency either in the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) or a DEIS to consider potential impacts on the characteristics of a CEA. Based on the sensitive environmental features identified in the Base Studies, it is recommended that the Town seek CEA designation for such areas as the Gregory Pond wetland, for the Salt Hill area, for areas near the Croton Reservoir, areas near the Peekskill Hollow Brook, and adjacent watershed lands and for all State designated freshwater wetlands and streams.

The Town should map the proposed CEAs, taking the State and County criteria into account, and seek CEA status for these areas. Although Cortlandt's existing environmental regulations apply to all parts of the Town, CEA status would provide an additional measure of protection for these environmentally sensitive areas by ensuring that any proposed development is fully evaluated for potential impacts.

OBJECTIVE: Continue to monitor and control activities at the County Sportsman Center and the Sprout Brook Ash Disposal Facility.

Protect the Town's natural resources from known sources of potential pollution such as monitoring the County Sportsman Center and development of a response plan for the County's Ash Disposal Facility if contamination is present in Sprout Brook. In addition, seek stricter regulations for the transport of ash to and from the ash disposal facility to prevent potential air pollution.

Policy 70: Continue to support environmental monitoring of the Westchester County Sportsman's Center to prevent lead contamination of the soil.

As identified in the Base Studies, the target range of the Sportsmen's Center in Blue Mountain Reservation is adjacent to Furnace Woods Elementary School, the Blue Mountain Middle School and residential areas. Due to prior lead contamination of the soil at the Sportsman Center, the proximity of the target range to schools and homes in the area makes it a potential public safety hazard.

It is recommended that County officials continue to conduct environmental monitoring of the lead contamination of the soil at the Sportsman Center and to keep the Town of Cortlandt informed on a regular basis.

Policy 71: Lobby the County to establish a response plan for the Westchester County Ash Disposal Facility and to develop a plan for closure, remediation and maintenance.

The Town should lobby Westchester County to develop a response plan for the possible contamination of Sprout Brook from the adjacent Westchester County Ash Disposal Facility. Due to concerns about potential contamination from the Ash Disposal Facility the Town has obtained and reviewed water and air monitoring reports from Westchester County to determine the impact the facility has on the environment.

The Town should lobby the County to promulgate stricter regulations regarding the transport of ash to and from the facility to eliminate ash residue from trucks being left on town roadways and neighboring properties.

Westchester County's Ash Disposal Facility is scheduled to close by 2009. The Town should strongly oppose any effort to extend this facility beyond the 2009 scheduled close. The Town of Cortlandt should insist that the County work closely with Town officials in its plans for the closure of this land fill, long term ground water and surface water monitoring, and a remediation plan for any potential pollution. The County should also provide regular reports in connection with all of these issues (in layman terms) for the Town's review. In addition, the County should now be discussing with the Town the long term maintenance and use of this property after 2009.

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate environmental protection measures with regional and neighboring communities.

Policy 72: Coordinate environmental protection measures with those of neighboring communities and with regional agencies.

Regional groups and agencies and neighboring communities have the potential to affect environmental resources in Cortlandt, as our actions can affect our neighbors. This is particularly true of upstream locations, which can affect the water quality of the Town's streams, lakes, and ponds. For example, inter-municipal cooperation is critical in the development of aquifer protection plans. A comprehensive strategy is also needed to guarantee the preservation and enhancement of the Hudson River coastal area. As discussed above, it is recommended that the Town take the waterfront plans of neighboring municipalities into account when preparing its Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP). In addition, the Town should continue to support the Hudson River Greenway Council and Scenic Hudson Inc. in its efforts to protect and enhance the natural resources of the Hudson River and its tributaries.

The Town should also continue its work with neighboring communities on the Croton to Highlands Biotic Corridor Project. The ultimate goal of this study is to provide information that could be included in each municipality's adopted land use regulations in order to preserve and enhance biodiversity on a regional scale.

Stream walk programs should be used to document stream conditions and to share this information with neighboring communities within protected watersheds. Likewise, the Town is involved in formulation of the regional Comprehensive Croton Watershed Quality Protection Plan for Westchester County with other watershed communities and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection and Westchester County Planning Department for the protection of the NYC watershed. Regional watershed protection should also be provided for the Peekskill Hollow Brook Watershed.

Policy 73: Continue to support the efforts of local environmental groups to help monitor and protect the watershed(s).

The Town of Cortlandt is fortunate to have many civic minded citizens living here. The Plan acknowledges the efforts of many organizations and volunteers in continuing to assist the Town, County and State in their efforts to protect this unique area of the Hudson Valley. These efforts should be coordinated with the intent of the Phase II Stormwater Regulations.

Policy 74: Investigate alternate energy sources.

Alternate energy sources could include the use of hybrid energy vehicles for municipal uses, methods to conserve energy at various Town owned locations including Town Hall. Some methods to be explored include solar panels and wind farms.



OPEN SPACE

For policies concerning Open Space, see Chapter 1 Open Space



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 5: TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

A. INTRODUCTION

GOAL: Maintain and improve traffic flows, safety controls as well as pedestrian safety and increase the use of mass transit.

Based on the results of the Master Plan Public Opinion Survey, traffic/transportation issues were among the most important issues cited by our residents. Increased traffic on Town and State roadways is one of the most tangible results of continued development in Cortlandt and in the surrounding communities. Peak commuter hour and high volume shopping traffic congestion on Routes 9, 6 and 202/35 corridors, Oregon Road and other local streets is an increasing concern. Since Cortlandt is situated between Route 9 in Peekskill and the Taconic Parkway in Yorktown and provides access south for Putnam Valley residents, traffic from adjacent municipalities will continue to stress our road network.

Many local roads in the northern part of Town including Oregon Road, Red Mill Road, Lockwood Road, Trolley Road, Dogwood Road, Westbrook Drive, Lexington Avenue and Gallows Hill Road and local roads in the central and southern parts of town (Croton Avenue, Furnace Dock Road, Maple Avenue and Mount Airy Road), are older roads, tree and stone wall lined and difficult to improve without adversely affecting unique visual and historic character in these areas. Road improvements on these older roads should be made in a manner that preserves the unique visual and historic character.



Route 6

The Master Plan seeks to address these and other issues by improving traffic planning within the Town. The Town's participation in the Routes 6, 35 and 202 Sustainable Development Study is a good first step. This study has produced the first comprehensive transportation model for the region that will help the Town identify problem locations from both a congestion and safety standpoint and will assist in future planning efforts.

Traffic Planning should be made a specific technical discipline within the Department of Technical Services. Utilizing recent information from the Sustainable Development Study and information from the many recent traffic studies, the traffic planning effort will be more comprehensive and help to integrate related traffic issues. This will also expand the Capital Improvement Planning and implementation programs currently in place.

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

The growth in traffic utilizing State and local roads in Cortlandt is an important consideration for the Master Plan. The sustained increase in traffic congestion both locally and regionally threatens to restrict development, economic growth and change the residential character of our Town as well as affect the quality of life for our residents, and possibly the swiftness of emergency response, if not mitigated. Thus, the long-range land use planning for the Town (as well as establishing capital improvement priorities) must be cognizant of traffic constraints and opportunities. Cortlandt's connection with the regional transportation network is along heavily traveled state and local roads with identified capacity constraints. The town is not directly served by the region's interstate highway system.

In terms of transportation planning since the 1991 Master Plan, the Town retained traffic consultants who prepared and submitted comprehensive traffic studies in three distinct problem areas; the Northeast Traffic Quadrant; East Main Street (Route 6); and Albany Post Road (Route 9A). Both the Northeast Traffic Quadrant and the Route 9A Corridor Studies recommended various traffic improvements within these areas.

Since 2000 the Town of Cortlandt has participated in the Route 6/202/35 Bear Mountain Parkway Sustainable Development Study along with the Westchester County Planning Department, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, the New York State Department of Transportation and the municipalities of Peekskill and Yorktown. This development study includes documentation for these major roads as well as for the northeast quadrant roadways and considers changing land use policies to better manage transportation demand for the study area which includes areas in Cortlandt from north of Maple Avenue to the town's northerly boundary with Putnam County.

The Sustainable Development Study also examines long-term traffic improvements such as the completion of the Bear Mountain Parkway to the Taconic State Parkway and recommends driveway access management, improvements to bus transit facilities and changes to approximately 18 intersections.

The purpose of these enhancements is to improve traffic flow and safety including bicycle and pedestrian connections. This study examined four different land use scenarios that would reduce potential new traffic volumes by controlling development on vacant parcels greater than 5 acres. The master plan envisions a similar effect in reducing traffic volume town-wide by modifying the lot count formula which will reduce the future build out of new homes.

In addition potential future traffic volumes will be reduced by the elimination of both the Planned Village Development (PVD) and Reuse Special Permits (SRC) and the inclusion of 50% of the wetland buffer into the lot count formula. As noted in the Commercial/Industrial Land Use Section the proposed reduction in the maximum size of new commercial buildings and parking lots from what is currently allowed under zoning will further reduce future traffic volumes.

As noted in the "Town of Cortlandt Economic Development Strategy Report" prepared by Ferrandino & Associates Inc. dated May 1999, transportation service provides both opportunities and constraints for Cortlandt to compete for new industry and business. In addition there was a 1997 Town-wide survey prepared by Chelsea Direct Marketing Inc. with an 18.6% response rate, 76% of the respondents traveled to work by car, 21% by train, 1% by bus, 1% by carpool and 2% by other means. Also based on this survey, 10% of the responded traveled 20-24 miles to work, 11% traveled 30-34 miles and 10% traveled 40-44 miles.

The Town also has several miles of local roads in residential areas that are lined with stone walls and large trees. These features add to the scenic value and quality of life in these neighborhoods. The Master Plan seeks to retain scenic features on local roads to the greatest extent possible when planning for future road improvements. Some examples of roads with scenic features include:

- ❖ Croton Avenue
- ❖ Paulding Lane
- ❖ Teatown Road
- ❖ Red Mill Road
- ❖ Lockwood Road
- ❖ Gallows Hill Road
- ❖ Furnace Dock Road
- ❖ Sunset Road
- ❖ Watch Hill Road

- ❖ Washington Street
- ❖ Kings Ferry Road
- ❖ Quaker Ridge Road and many others.

Public roadways in the Town of Cortlandt are defined by their jurisdiction -- New York State, Westchester County, and town roadways. These can be further classified as local, feeder/collector, and arterial roadways, depending on their location and the amount of use they receive.

There are no interstate highways in the Town of Cortlandt; the entire northwest quadrant of Westchester County, in fact, is not served by a major east-west or north-south Federal Interstate Highway. The north/south I-684 is located about 15 miles to the east, while I-84 and I-287 are located some 15 miles to the north and south of Cortlandt, respectively.

For mass transit, the primary public transportation service for the Town of Cortlandt is the rail line of the Metro-North commuter railroad at the Cortlandt Station on Memorial Drive off Route 9A in Montrose. Other nearby Metro-North railroad stations used by Cortlandt residents includes Peekskill and Croton-on-Hudson. For public bus travel all bus service in the Town of Cortlandt (including local routes and express bus service to White Plains) is provided by the Westchester County Department of Transportation. Improvements to County bus stops along local roads may be needed to increase pavement width, sight distance and to provide and maintain bus shelters.

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are intended to implement the goal to maintain and improve traffic flows in the Town and increase use of mass transit.

OBJECTIVE: Expand transportation planning in the Department of Technical Services

Expansion of transportation planning includes: the monitoring of traffic congestion and safety concerns, including the safety of pedestrians and school children, setting priorities for road improvements, promoting mass transit and promoting the use of State roads and highways for commuter and truck traffic.

Policy 75: Establish transportation planning as a specific technical area within municipal government and offset the costs through the utilization of grants and fees paid for Planning Board applications.

As indicated by available traffic data in the base studies, it is very clear that managing and planning are both critical to controlling and improving traffic conditions. Thus, transportation planning is an expertise that must be provided on a municipal or regional level and on a continuous basis.

This effort should be lead by a professional with specific experience in traffic management and road system design. The work should not be only reactive (i.e., only responding to development applications) but should provide a progressive and systematic approach to dealing with traffic and transportation issues in the Town.

As part of transportation planning the Town should make use of the Geographic Information Systems to map existing transportation facilities, plan for necessary improvements and conduct regular roadway maintenance. Additionally, to improve the evaluation of transportation systems, the Town should standardize analytic methods, which include creating a system-wide data base with a transportation/traffic modeling program that would be updated each time a development or road improvement are proposed. The ultimate goal is to create a regional, holistic approach to traffic management and evaluation.

The Transportation Planning Program should also include a traffic volume counting program and traffic accident analysis to regularly monitor the Town's busiest streets (i.e., twice yearly counts along Oregon Road, Kings Ferry Road, Watch Hill Road, Red Mill Road, Lockwood Road, Trolley Road, Gallows Hill Road, Lexington Avenue, Lafayette Avenue, Maple Avenue, Croton Avenue, Furnace Dock Road and Westbrook Drive, among others) as well as special counts in response to specific planning activities.

Sharp increases in traffic volumes caused by cut-through traffic should be monitored and corrective action should be taken, as necessary. Short term improvements should include signage, striping, minor geometric improvements, and sight distance enhancements and install all-way stop signs in appropriate locations.

Information from the proposed "traffic monitoring program" would be delivered to the Town Board and the Planning Board in an effort to provide a rational basis for decision-making with respect to traffic planning. The monitoring of roadway conditions should include regular evaluation of sight distances from intersections and the removal of roadside vegetation.

Even though Cortlandt has an established system of roads and neighborhoods some opportunities exist for the construction of new roadways. If a traffic monitoring program is in place, it will help provide relevant data with respect to the best locations for new connecting roads and new roadways. Significant short and long term improvements should be made to the existing local and arterial roads to improve traffic flow and safety.

Policy 76: Continue to utilize the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Town highway projects.

As recommended in the 1991 Master Plan the Town has successfully implemented the Capital Improvement Program on a continuing basis to plan and fund needed improvements to roads involving drainage, sight distance, traffic controls, re-paving, roundabouts and horizontal, geometric and other improvements.

As mentioned above in Policy #1 for transportation planning purposes, a current and readily accessible data base is an important element of the Capital Improvement Program, it is also an important asset for responding to proposed development plans and documenting transportation needs to County and State officials.

Policy 77: Improve coordination in traffic planning with various departments, State Agencies, and consultants during the review process of applications for site plan, special permit and subdivision approvals.

Since one of the goals of the Master Plan is to establish an efficient and systematic review process for new development, it would be appropriate to ensure that proposed site development plans, subdivisions and special permits are assessed for optimal traffic circulation, both internally and externally. Although it is recognized that traffic is already very much a focus of the Planning Board, it is recommended that a comprehensive traffic planning checklist be developed for use in all projects that go through the SEQRA, site plan, subdivision and special permit review processes. It should be noted that SEQRA requires the applicant to evaluate traffic impacts such as level of service at intersections and various safety issues. Comprehensive traffic guidelines and standards should be developed to provide to applicants and incorporate into the Town's development regulations.

For example, among the considerations of site review in commercial zones would be limiting multiple driveway entrances and exits and connecting parking lots which may warrant granting of easements such as the easement that was granted by Dunkin Donuts to connect their parking lot to Circuit City. The development of the checklist and coordination of various Town departments, State agencies, and consultants should be an ongoing role of the transportation planning function.

Policy 78: The Town should continue to participate in regional transportation planning.

The Town continues to aggressively participate in regional transportation planning such as the Route 202/35/6 Bear Mountain Parkway Sustainable Development Study with the New York State Department of Transportation, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, the Westchester County Planning Department and the City of Peekskill and the Town of Yorktown.

The Town continues to benefit from participating in the annual NYSDOT Transportation Improvement (TIP) Program by proposing to the State needed traffic improvements within the Town's major transportation corridors.

As recommended in Policy #1 above, if the Town establishes transportation planning as a specific technical area within municipal government, one of its major responsibilities would be participating in regional transportation planning and obtaining maximum funding and responsiveness from County and State transportation officials for local traffic concerns.

The town should consider establishing an Inter Municipal Agreement with adjacent municipalities to coordinate regional traffic improvement efforts. Such an agreement would be particularly helpful between Cortlandt and Yorktown, specifically in the northeast quadrant where recent development along the border has taken place. The Plan suggests future development in this area be closely coordinated between the two Towns so as to better plan for and mitigate traffic impacts in this area.

Policy 79: Establish Transportation Systems Management (TSM) criteria to plan for maintaining and improving traffic conditions in the Town.

Consider and implement a TSM with traffic reduction guidelines to be utilized for any contemplated large-scale commercial, residential or institutional developments. The TSM could include incentives or requirements for car-pooling, staggered work hours, and/or van transportation for local employees. Incentives could also be used to get existing employers (e.g., the FDR VA Hospital, the Hudson Valley Hospital Center and the Bethel Nursing Home) to implement some of these initiatives. Project reviews and approvals by the Planning Board of large residential developments should include provisions for shuttle transportation to the local train station and shopping centers.

In addition, if as part of its new transportation planning function the Town works with the villages of Croton-on-Hudson and Buchanan, the TSM investigation could include existing large employers outside of the Town's jurisdiction (i.e., Entergy). Finally, the TSM could be the mechanism to implement other traffic reduction techniques, such as park and ride lots, HOV priority parking at the train stations, etc

Since the TSM would require ongoing organization and implementation efforts, this would be an important component of the transportation planning function.

As recommended the establishment of transportation planning as a specific area within town government, an on-staff traffic professional should be employed to advise the Town Board and Planning Board on potential cumulative traffic impacts from proposed developments and recommend ways to mitigate such impacts, including but not limited to road modifications, reducing project size or denying approvals. Furthermore, the traffic professional can evaluate the beneficial impacts of proposed road modifications and intersection improvements.

Policy 80: Consolidate and simplify traffic control signage, while still fulfilling mandated size regulations and other requirements.

Another task in the transportation planning function would be to evaluate the consolidation of duplicate traffic signs to aesthetically improve the streetscape. In addition, they can ensure existing signage meets the code for required size, color and other specifications.

The Town should continue to use its standard street identification signs at all intersections except in those areas where Waterfront tourism is being proposed and those areas where Historic Districts are being proposed. Street identification signs, especially in the smaller hamlet type areas, offer an opportunity to continue streetscape type improvements.

The Town's Traffic Safety Committee should continue to perform its advisory role to the Town Board on reviewing proposed road signage requests from residents. Likewise, street signs should carry full street names that are easy to read and there should be no duplication of road names.

Policy 81: Provide for sight easement requirements in the Town Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations.

Sight easements at new road intersections, depending on the width of the public right-of-way, may be required in new subdivisions over private land. The technical requirements for sight easements and general restrictions should be stated in the Town Subdivision and Site Development Plan Regulations under street design guidelines. Town standards require that new road intersections be located at a point that satisfies required sight distance standards. However, the removal of large trees, stone walls and other historical and environmentally important features should be discouraged.

Policy 82: Assess operational classification of the busiest Town roads and seek transfer to the County or State DOT for roads clearly functioning as arterials.

The Base Studies indicate that several Town roads serve as important secondary arterials. It may be in the best interests of the Town to have these roads classified accordingly and have their jurisdiction transferred to the State or County to secure other sources of revenue for maintenance and capital improvements. Roads that may fit this designation include those that carry a significant volume of inter-County traffic, such as Oregon Road and Lexington Avenue.

It should be noted that past attempts to transfer ownership of Lexington Avenue to Westchester County has not been successful since the county required that Lexington Avenue be first improved by the town to county road standards. The Town should meet with County officials to discuss the required upgrades to these roads. It is also noted that this policy is carried over from the 1991 Master Plan in the event that at some point in the future such a transfer of road ownership and maintenance is possible.

Policy 83: Minimize the use of cul-de-sacs in new developments. The Town has a considerable number of existing lengthy cul-de-sacs which have proven to be difficult for garbage pickup, snow removal and most importantly for emergency response purposes.

The Plan encourages the Town to minimize any future construction of cul-de-sacs, which should be limited to no longer than 500 feet and to create linkages in local roadways wherever possible.

Policy 84: Pursue opportunities to obtain funding and approval for major capital projects including: A new Route 9/9A interchange, completion of the Bear Mountain Parkway to the Taconic State Parkway; plan for future road rights-of-way and shared access; Provide for improvements to existing roads and implement recommendations from the Sustainable Development Study as approved by the Town Board.

As described above, there are opportunities for new roads and changes to the existing local or regional highway system in Cortlandt. A review of the Base Studies and previous Master Plan efforts indicates that certain major improvements are justified. At present, the following projects should be pursued:

- A. **Provide new Route 9 access in Montrose** - New access to and from the north and south bound lanes of Route 9 to Memorial Drive where the New York State Police Headquarters Troop K – Zone 3 and the Cortlandt Regional Paramedics are located in the Cortlandt Emergency Services Building and where the Metro-North Cortlandt Station is located, is a clear and important recommendation. The new interchange will provide critical access to Route 9 for the NYS Police, the Paramedics and the approximately 700 weekday train commuters. In addition, this interchange will provide an additional evacuation route for a potential Indian Point emergency. This proposed interchange will also help to reduce the amount of traffic on Albany Post Road (Rt. 9A) and provide more direct traffic access for the FDR VA Hospital.
- B. **Completion of Bear Mountain Parkway** - Currently, the Town experiences serious traffic congestion along Route 35/202 from the Bear Mountain Parkway (BMP) eastward to the Taconic. The Bear Mountain Extension was originally planned to connect not to Route 202/35 as it is currently channeled, but instead to the Taconic State Parkway. If the BMP had been build as originally envisioned, it would have permitted Route 35 to operate as a secondary arterial and commercial corridor, while providing a through route for non-locally based traffic.

The recommendation for completion of the Bear Mountain Parkway has a long history, beginning with the Town's 1955 Master Plan and has been recommended in every Master Plan the Town of Cortlandt has adopted since 1955.

The completion of the BMP is currently being considered as part of the Route 202/35/6 Bear Mountain Parkway Sustainable Development Study as mentioned above. It should be noted that any extension of the BMP must be done in a way that ensures the protection of the west branch of the Hunter Brook and does not adversely impact the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

It should also be noted that if the Sustainable Development Study recommendation of allowing truck traffic to fully utilize the BMP (and alleviate the considerable truck traffic problem in the City of Peekskill) there will need to be considerable improvements made to the existing Bear Mountain Parkway on/off ramps and sight distance analysis and possible changes to traffic signals.

- C. **Plan for future roadway rights-of-way** - As part of the CIP, described above, other potential new roadways may be considered as part of future planning for the Town. If these roads are identified and mapped, the Town could actively pursue obtaining future roadway rights-of-way dedication and construction from proposed development in an area.

For example, a developer of a proposed subdivision or site development plan for commercial development should be required to build a connecting road between two major unconnected roadways or construct intersection improvements including land acquisition. Thus, planning ahead in this way can result in major cost savings to the Town when a new road is contemplated. A few examples of road improvements from the CIP are the Furnace Dock Road extension, the Battery Place Bridge, the Oregon Road/Red Mill Road/Westbrook Dive intersection improvements and proposed improvements to the Crompond Road/Lafayette Avenue intersection as well as the Baker Street/Route 6 intersection.

- D. **Provide for improvements to existing roads** - As part of the CIP, described above, other potential roadway improvements such as pavement width, drainage, sight distance and turning lanes, etc. may be considered for existing roads and intersections as part of planning for future development in the Town. If these roads and intersections are identified and mapped as to needed improvements, the Town could require such improvements by new development. The ability to “plan ahead” in this manner can result in major cost savings to the Town.

- E. **As recommended in the Sustainable Development Study, implement the following:**

- Provide a center turning lane on Route 202/35 from Yorktown to Peekskill;
- Create an alternate north-south route to alleviate traffic congestion in the northeast quadrant.
- Provide a Lexington Avenue Route 6 bypass to alleviate congestion at the Route 6 Lexington Avenue intersection.

- Evaluate road improvements to affect better traffic flow from Route 6 to 202/35 such as improving the Route 6/BMP interchange and the Route 6/Lexington Avenue interchange.

Policy 85: Recommend the construction of a traffic circle at the intersection of Oregon Road, Westbrook Drive, Red Mill Road and Jay Road.

The intersection of Oregon Road, Westbrook Drive, Red Mill Road and Jay Road is a major intersection in the Town located near the Putnam Valley border. Significant improvements including the construction of a traffic circle with appropriate streetscape type improvements such as decorative lampposts, plantings, and sidewalks are recommended in this area.

This intersection is also a major connecting area to the larger commercial areas of Route 6, Route 202/35 and will provide a more attractive gateway to adjacent areas.

Policy 86: Promote the Route 6 Streetscape Concept

The Town should evaluate with the NYSDOT the feasibility of constructing a landscaped center median along Route 6 to improve the visual quality and functionality of the corridor. Other “streetscape type” improvements envisioned include decorative lighting, sidewalks, trees and other pedestrian friendly improvements.

Policy 87: Support the creation of bikeways and pedestrian trails.

The Mid-Hudson South Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan was developed in 1999 by Westchester, Putnam and Rockland Counties in response to federal mandates requiring long range transportation plans include accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians. The plan identifies locations in the three counties where it might be feasible to develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities as an alternative means of transportation.

In the Town of Cortlandt the following routes are shown:

- 1) The Cortlandt Shoreline Trail from Camp Smith, through Verplanck, Montrose and connecting to the Village of Croton.
- 2) The Route 6/35/202 Trail from the Bear Mountain Parkway to the Yorktown border (the proposed trail continues all the way to the Taconic).
- 3) The Route 9 Corridor.

A fourth location in the Oregon Road/Hollowbrook corridor should also be considered for possible bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Policy 88: Pursue opportunities for traffic calming measures to be instituted, where appropriate.

Due to the fast and unobstructed movement of vehicles on roadways, it has become increasingly difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to use the same roads at the same time. This has also impacted the quality of life within neighborhoods. Various traffic calming techniques should be considered such as electronic speed signs, traffic “humps”, roundabouts, narrowing traveled lanes with the use of striping. These calming techniques as part of the transportation planning program detailed in Policy #1 and implemented to reduce traffic volume and speeds in residential areas.

Policy 89: Develop an official map which will identify opportunities for the creation of new roads and the connection of existing roads, while giving consideration to the preservation of historic rock walls and other unique features of historic roadways.

As part of the subdivision and site plan review and approval process the Planning Board should require land to be provided for future road right-of ways based on the Town's plans for future road improvements. Road and intersection improvements should incorporate traffic calming and aesthetic considerations as well as being safe and functional. The character of the surrounding neighborhood should be maintained with road and intersection improvements.

Policy 90: Limit through truck traffic on local roads.

The Town should continue to evaluate and restrict certain through truck traffic on local roads and in residential neighborhoods and continue to enforce truck restrictions. As mentioned previously, the Town should support the recommendation of the Sustainable Development Study to allow truck traffic on the BMP, provided proper enhancements and improvements are made to the roadway. Any unique characteristics of historic or scenic roads should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.

OBJECTIVE: Evaluate the need for the creation of park-and-ride lots.

Policy 91: Evaluate the need for park-and-ride lots by analyzing those areas where the use is currently taking place, such as the intersection of Routes 9/9A in Montrose.

Park-and-ride lots foster car-pooling and the use of public transit (particularly buses) when they are located in strategic areas along commuting routes. Cortlandt is at somewhat of a disadvantage since these locations are typically at highway interchanges and major transit centers, most of which are located outside the Town's jurisdiction.

However, there are opportunities that should be investigated including, Albany Post Road (Rt. 9A) in the vicinity of the existing Montrose/Crugers Route 9 interchange (i.e., where Furnace Dock Road meets Albany Post Road), along Route 9 in the vicinity of Annsville Circle (possible underutilized parcels), at the Cortlandt Town Center (possible available parking). The Town should seek State or Federal transportation grants as part of this effort and work with State and County officials to provide park-and-ride lots as needed.

Consideration should also be given to the design and location for park and ride lots to avoid potential adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive, scenic and historic areas and on neighborhood character. The size of park and ride lots will depend on parking demand and avoiding adverse environmental impacts.

OBJECTIVE: Promote the use of public transit including bus/van and jitney service from large residential areas to train stations, plus reassess facilities and amenities at the Cortlandt Train Station.



Cortlandt Manor Train Station

Policy 92: Encourage the use of public transit by promoting bus, van and jitney service from large residential developments to local train stations.

As part of the TSM identified above, the Town should promote the use of jitney-type service to and from large residential developments to local train stations. The jitney service, although encouraged by the Town, should be privately funded by the specific developments. Such service could include such existing complexes such as Amberlands, but also generally higher density residential nodes, such as the Mohegan Lake area.

In approving new large residential developments the Planning Board could also require that van service to the local train station be provided to mitigate traffic volumes during peak hours and to mitigate the reduced availability of parking spaces at the train station.

Policy 93: Improve bus stops on the County Bee Line System.

Designated bus stops should have safe and adequate pull offs on the side of the road for the County Bee Line bus. Each bus stop should have a shelter with paved walks for use by bus patrons. These bus stops should be maintained on a regular basis by Westchester County.



Cortlandt Manor Train Station

Policy 94: Reassess facilities and amenities at the Cortlandt Train Station.

Re-assess the need for additional facilities and amenities at the Cortlandt Train Station such as a Route 9 interchange, covered parking and commuter services such as restrooms and food service.

Currently Metro North owns, maintains and operates the Cortlandt Train Station and will be adding additional parking spaces in response to the increased demand for train service.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 6: Utilities

GOAL: Develop and maintain adequate utilities to serve the Town's population and businesses

A. INTRODUCTION

Public utilities such as water and sewer systems are essential to ensure public health & safety by providing safer drinking water and lessening the discharge of pollutants to the environment. Currently, approximately 85% of all Cortlandt households are served by a public water system and less than 15% of all households are served by public sewers. In recent years, residential and commercial growth has impacted the environment and has reduced the available capacity in the receiving sanitary sewer system and has created a need to further expand the potable water storage capacity. Furthermore, aging and inadequate (per current standards) septic systems, and the wintertime use of salt on town roadways (affecting the quality of some wells) further necessitate the need to improve and expand central water and sewer systems. Since the cost of developing and maintaining public utilities is increasing, strategies for reducing and controlling such costs is critical. The recently completed GIS mapping of all storm water, sewer and water systems in the Town will permit the proper evaluation of existing facilities and foster proactive planning of all system improvements.



A water project in Cortlandt

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

Water Supply:

Supply of adequate water for the residents and businesses of Cortlandt is a critical community need. Water is provided either by private wells or by municipal or other public utility water districts that charge water usage fees and/or levy taxes for the underground water mains that carry water to individual users and to fire hydrants.

These water districts are the Cortlandt Consolidated Water District, the Montrose Improvement District, and the Northern Westchester Joint Water Works, which together serve the majority of Cortlandt residents. Households outside of a public water district are dependent on wells except for Camp Smith which is served by its own reservoir.

In Cortlandt, the public water supply system is a significant issue for the Master Plan process. In particular, the availability of water service is a critical factor in determining the potential density for new development in a given area. In areas where private wells are required, lower densities are necessary to protect groundwater quality. Limited access to water for firefighting purposes may also restrict the potential density of new development.

Although water delivery systems are now meeting demand, they are operating essentially at or close to their capacity to meet that demand. Limited opportunities exist to extend the service areas of the districts, or to correct problem areas within the districts (e.g., areas of higher elevation). In addition, there are concerns of limited water storage (total storage in the Cortlandt Consolidated Water District is less than one day of average use) or contingency systems in case of disruptions to the normal flow of water. Furthermore, since some pipe networks are old and badly corroded, the capacity is limited and many of these pipes are subject to leaks and breakage.

Sewers/Septic Systems:

The disposal of domestic and commercial sewage is also an important concern. Municipal sewage collection and treatment systems, local private collection and treatment, or individual septic systems all have the capability of treating wastewater. However, as with most of northern Westchester County, the majority of sewage is disposed via private septic systems.

Many septic systems in densely populated areas such as the northeast and central sections of town including Verplanck, Montrose and Crugers are old and not functioning properly and therefore contribute to the degradation of surface and ground water supplies. It should be noted that many of these areas of septic system failure are in Critical Environmental Areas.

Similar to the provision of water, sewage treatment directly affects the potential density of development because dependence on septic systems. This is especially true on lots where both wells and septic systems are utilized.

Approximately 20% of the northern part of the Town is served by the Westchester County Peekskill Sanitary Sewer District. Another 5-10% of the Town is served by private sewage treatment plants such as Springvale, Amberlands, Valeria and Coachlight Square.

The VA FDR Hospital and Camp Smith have their own sewage treatment plants. In addition there are capacity limitations with the gravity sewer systems on Westbrook Drive and at the Stevens Lane pump station. These capacity limitation issues must be addressed before additional connections are made in these areas of Town.

Since the 1991 Master Plan was adopted, the Town continues to expand water and sewer infrastructure town wide. Examples of these improvements and expansions includes the Joint Northern Westchester Water Works facility on Route 6, the Lake Peekskill water main and fire pump station, the Route 6 sewer and water main installations, the Waterbury Manor Sewer District and the Conklin East Sewer District (under construction). In addition, there are plans on the table currently to bring sewer service to areas such as Tammarack (off Route 202), and the area surrounding the Panas High School (off Route 202).

Drainage:

Stormwater drainage systems are important to control flooding and non-point source pollution. In the last 25 to 30 years, the Town has witnessed major new residential and commercial developments throughout the Town. During that time, the Town has required and continues to require developers to provide on-site drainage control systems in terms of stormwater collection, water quality controls and detention of stormwater runoff.

To guarantee continued and proper maintenance of these stormwater facilities, local drainage districts have been established to fund maintenance programs and required improvements. As part of ongoing maintenance program of storm water drains, the Town regularly cleans catch basins of dirt and debris to increase capacity and enhance water quality.

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are intended to implement the goal for the development and maintenance of adequate public utilities to serve the Town's residents and businesses and to ensure that allowable growth does not exceed the capacity of such utilities.

OBJECTIVE: Evaluate, replace and rehabilitate existing water, storm drainage and sanitary sewer systems, establish priorities for upgrades and expansions to these systems to improve capacity and enhance water quality.

Policy 95: Establish utility planning as a specific technical area within the municipal government to develop a schedule of utility evaluation relating to future districts and to prioritize capital projects.

Within the Department of Technical Services the town should provide for utility planning to proactively plan for future utility improvements and capital projects.

Policy 96: Continue to clean and line older cast iron water pipes and replace the nearly 20 miles of brittle transite pipe which is subject to leaks and breakage.

Within the Cortlandt Consolidated Water District the Town should continue the program of cleaning and lining old cast iron pipes and replacing brittle pipe to avoid the loss of water due to leaks and breakage.

Policy 97: Conduct regular flow measurements within the sewer system in areas where the capacity is limited.

Closely monitor the sewer system where capacity problems are known to cause backups on a regular basis such as on Westbrook Drive. The monitoring should include conducting flow measurements to determine if there are illegal sewer connections for roof and footing drains and sump pumps.

Policy 98: Finalize the formation of the commercial Route 6 Sanitary Sewer District and assess fees for rehabilitation of the Westbrook sewer system.

Currently commercial and residential properties along Route 6 are served by the public sewer system but there are also currently 'out of district' property owners which are not part of a local sewer district.

By creating a local sewer district in which the 'out of district' property owners are obligated to join, fees can be assessed on each property in the local sewer district to help pay for needed improvements such as the rehabilitation of the Westbrook sewer system. This local sewer district could eventually include other properties (not currently serviced by sewer) which can be connected to future sewer extensions along Route 6.

Policy 99: Expand the water system backflow prevention and grease trap inspection program for sewers.

By increasing the Town's efforts for water system backflow prevention and grease trap inspections for sewers serious problems can be avoided before they occur. Currently, County and Town law require backflow prevention devices on water service lines which can be the source of pollutants if backflow occurs due to a pressure drop in a water main. Pollutants can enter the water main from commonplace maintenance practices involving cleaning solutions that are drawn into the water main when a pressure drop in the main occurs. (The cleaning solution is usually in a bucket connected to the spigot via a hose). Grease traps at individual sites such as restaurants and retail food stores are important because grease accumulation is a major cause of backups in storm and sanitary sewer lines.

Policy 100: Lobby Westchester County to expand their ‘trunk’ system to Route 202 and Westbrook Drive to better serve the Peekskill Sanitary Sewer District.

As recommended in the Sewer Master Plan the Town should lobby Westchester County to expand their ‘trunk’ system to Route 202 and Westbrook Drive to better serve the Peekskill Sanitary Sewer District and to provide sewers to areas of that Town that need it. There are existing properties along Route 6 which cannot connect to the sewer because of inadequate available capacity at Westbrook Drive.

Policy 101: Establish a sewer maintenance program which would involve training workers and purchasing equipment and assessing a maintenance tax within the district to pay for it.

As recommended in the Sewer Master Plan the Town should establish a sewer maintenance program which would involve training workers and purchasing equipment. This maintenance program should be financed through the Town’s assessing a maintenance tax on district properties. It is anticipated that the proposed maintenance tax would be a small amount of a property owners total tax bill and the proceeds would be used to maintain the system to avoid costly repairs.

Policy 102: Explore methods to reclaim lost capacity in receiving utilities.

When appropriate, existing infrastructure should be upgraded to compensate for the reduced capacity resulting from new development. Methods that should be explored include:

- Evaluate existing infrastructure to determine condition of lines
- Clean and lining older badly corroded water pipe
- Slip line existing sewer pipe
- Repairing catch basins and manholes
- Replace existing lines.

OBJECTIVE: Develop sewer and water infrastructure, where needed.

Policy 103: Expand water and sanitary sewer infrastructure in a manner that supports the land use objectives of the Master Plan and discourage future small privately owned sewer treatment plants.

Since the 1991 Master Plan policy was adopted, the Town has completed and continues to expand water and sewer infrastructure town wide. Examples of these improvements and expansions include: the Joint Northern Westchester Water Works facility on Route 6, the Route 6 sewer and water main installations, the Lake Peekskill water main and the Waterbury Manor Sewer District and the Conklin East Sewer District.

Future growth within the existing districts and additions thereto should also be guided by current studies including "The Long Term Water Needs of the Members of the Northern Westchester Joint Water Works" dated June 28, 2002 and the "Sewer Master Plan" (SMP) for the Town of Cortlandt dated March 2, 2002.

The SMP recommends the formation of a sewer district within the Critical Environmental Area along Albany Post Road (Route 9A) from Watch Hill Road to Kings Ferry Road. This district would be served by an expanded sewer treatment plant located in the recently approved Roundtop development.

It should be noted that the land use recommendations contained in this Master Plan under residential and commercial policies cannot be fully implemented without a central sewer system. It should be further noted that the land use recommendations contained in this master plan do not increase the full build out potential compared to current zoning.

Future Town sewer studies should explore the feasibility of tying existing small sewer treatment plants into larger districts. Small package plants such as Valeria, Springvale or Amberlands may discharge into smaller streams that cannot readily dilute the effluent or may need to be upgraded to meet current standards. The Town discourages the future use of privately owned sewage treatment plants and instead encourages future development to connect to existing public facilities, where possible.

Future improvements to the Town's existing water distribution system should also provide for additional water storage tanks and maintaining proper water pressure throughout the system.

Policy 104: Focus future sewer expansion planning resources to existing hamlet areas such as Verplanck, Montrose, Crugers, and Toddville.

Existing hamlet areas such as Verplanck, Montrose, Crugers and Toddville as well as other areas where lot sizes are small and two-family houses are permitted should be given priority in sewer expansion planning. The Town should explore utilizing the federally owned treatment plant located at the FDR Hospital site in Montrose.

Likewise, new development should allow for the expansion of sanitary sewers in commercial and residential areas

Policy 105: Explore the feasibility of extending a sewer main along Route 9/9A to the Ossining Treatment Plant and the Buchanan Treatment Plant.

As recommended in the Sewer Master Plan the Town should explore extending a sewer main to the Ossining Treatment Plant and/or the Buchanan Treatment Plant for the Montrose, Verplanck and Crugers areas to eliminate existing smaller individual sewer treatment plants and to bring sewer service to areas of failing septic systems.

Among other things, this evaluation should include capacity analysis within the receiving infrastructure which includes the Ossining Treatment Plant and the Buchanan Treatment Plant.

Future buildout in these areas will be consistent with current zoning as proposed under the Master Plan.

Policy 106: Continue to liaison with neighboring communities to coordinate large infrastructure projects in order to maximize efficiency and minimize cost.

As envisioned by the 1991 Master Plan, the Town has benefited from inter-municipal cooperation on large infrastructure improvements such as the formation of the Northern Westchester Joint Waterworks and the on-going Route 6/202/Bear Mountain Parkway Sustainable Development Study. The Town is also working with Westchester County and other municipalities such as Ossining, Croton, Buchanan and Yorktown to construct and operate a recyclable solid waste material transfer station and material recovery facility in Cortlandt on Roa Hook Road.

The Town of Cortlandt also continues to share various Town services and equipment with the Villages of Croton-on-Hudson and Buchanan.

In addition, the March 2002 Sewer Master Plan has identified areas along the easterly municipal border between the Towns of Cortlandt and Yorktown that would benefit from a cooperative effort between the communities with respect to water, sewer and drainage.

The County's proposal to serve areas outside the Sewer District and create a "diversion" through Cortlandt will not be endorsed unless it is absolutely clear that sewer capacity at the Westchester County Plant is available to Cortlandt residents and that there is net positive environmental and financial benefit.

Policy 107: Continue to seek funding to offset the cost of water and sewer improvements.

Funding is available through various County and State programs to improve the quality of water supply and reduce impacts to the environment from septic system failures. The Town has been successful in establishing sewer districts that would not otherwise be economically viable without assistance from Community Development Block Grants and the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. Furthermore the City of New York currently has money available to fund sewer improvements within their watershed.

OBJECTIVE: Complete the development and implementation of a Geographic Information System (GIS).

For the past 5 years, the Town's Capital Improvement Program has funded the establishment of a Geographic Information System. During that time, the Town has been working on a phased development of GIS which will ultimately provide a framework for information management and geographic data utilization for use by all of the Town Departments and services.

Town maps were prepared utilizing GIS technology for the 2003 Master Plan through a cooperative effort between the Westchester County GIS Department working with town staff and the Master Plan Committee. Completed GIS Maps from the 2003 Master Plan will be part of the town's new GIS system.

Policy 108: Utilize and expand the Town's GIS program to manage and monitor water, sewer and drainage systems.

The Town is currently mapping existing water and drainage systems to assist with management and monitoring of water, sewer and drainage systems and plan for future improvements. GIS will continue to be a major tool for providing updates and enhancements to this vital information in the future.

Policy 109: Establish GIS as a specific technical area within the municipal government.

GIS is and will continue to be a major source of vital information to many departments and services throughout the Town. As part of the effort to complete the mapping for the 2003 Master Plan, the Committee has learned first-hand the necessity of having the technical skills "in-house" to complete needed maps.

The Plan recommends the Town consider the establishment of GIS as a specific technical area within the municipal government which involves continual planning, technical training for staff and identifying tasks that should be outsourced.

**OBJECTIVE: Maintain and improve stormwater drainage systems
Town-wide to control flooding and reduce non-point source
pollution and soil erosion.**

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency is requiring municipalities nationwide to develop stormwater management plans by March 2003 and to implement them by 2008. Such management plans must include public education and outreach, detection and elimination of illegal sewage and stormwater runoff connections, prevention of construction runoff and promotion of "good housekeeping" measures. A stormwater management program will also help to control flooding and reduce non-point source pollution and soil erosion. The Town is encouraged to make use of the Geographic Information System being established to map existing stormwater drainage facilities to locate and identify potential problem areas and to plan needed improvements.

Policy 110: Town storm water management practices should include public education and outreach programs on storm water impacts and should include various techniques to provide for public involvement and participation, including a “stream-walk” program.

Storm water public education and outreach programs should include use of the town’s web page, distribution of printed material at public buildings and mailings, speakers at community group meetings and use of the town’s local cable channel. Storm water practices to be encouraged should include: proper lawn and garden care in the use of fertilizers and pesticides, low impact development, pollution prevention for businesses, trash management and water conservation practices.

In addition, the Town should utilize various techniques to provide for public involvement and participation including the support of a volunteer “stream-walk” program. In order to allow for public involvement and participation in storm water management practices there should be; (1) public notice and access to documents and information; (2) public presentation and comments on the storm water management plan and on annual reports; (3) a public involvement/participation program; (4) a contact person identified and; (5) community hot lines.

Public participation activities could include storm drain stenciling and volunteer monitoring. Additionally, the Town should consider working with Westchester County on providing materials for public notice with respect to storm water management practices.

Policy 111: Town storm water management practices should include detection and elimination of illicit discharge.

Storm water management detection and elimination activities should include; (1) outfall mapping; (2) prohibition of illicit discharges and hookups to Town utilities (3) informing the public, employees and businesses of hazards from illicit discharges; (4) system mapping and; (5) system inspections. Some types of discharges to target include: failing septic systems, illegal dumping, industrial and business connections, recreational sewage, sanitary sewer overflows and wastewater connections to the storm water system. Significant penalties for violators should be imposed.

Policy 112: Town storm water management practices should require site storm water runoff controls.

In order to control the quality and quantity of storm water runoff the town should implement the following practices:

- Require erosion and sedimentation controls through an ordinance or other regulatory mechanism which would be in addition to those already contained in the “Westchester County Best Management Practices Manual”.
- Provide opportunity for public comment on construction plans.
- Require construction site plan review.
- Require overall construction site waste management.
- Site inspections and enforcement

- Coordinate efforts to control storm water runoff with adjacent municipalities such as the Town of Yorktown.
- Education and training of construction site operators.

Construction program criteria should include the New York State Standards for Erosion and Sediment Control and the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual.

Policy 113: Town storm water management practices should include post-construction requirements.

Post-construction stormwater management should include the following;

- Assess existing conditions throughout the Town and identify appropriate management practices to reduce pollutant discharge to the maximum extent practicable.
- Establishment of drainage districts to fund future maintenance should be required of all major developments.
- Regulate post-construction runoff from development through an ordinance or other regulatory mechanism.
- Develop management practice inspection and maintenance program.
- Post-construction program criteria should include the New York State Management Design Manual.



Croton Reservoir

Policy 114: Town storm water management practices should include pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations.

Program requirements for pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations should include the following;

- Prevent discharge of pollutants from municipal operations.
- Follow DEC Non-Point Source Management Practices Catalog, or equivalent.
- Conduct employee education with respect to pollution prevention training.
- For new development, the Town should consider forming a drainage district so that fees can be collected for future maintenance activities.

Town storm water management practices should include the following;

- Street cleaning
- Catch Basin and storm drain system cleaning
- Alternative discharge options for chlorinated water
- Hazardous and waste material management
- Landscaping and lawn care and integrated pest management
- Road salt storage
- Municipally-owned septic system management
- Spill response and prevention



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 7: LOCAL MUNICIPAL SERVICES

A. INTRODUCTION

GOAL: Develop and maintain adequate services to serve the Town's population and businesses

Local municipal services such as schools, libraries, fire departments and ambulance corps, health care services, senior citizen programs and child care are vital pillars of community life. Other local services include sanitation, highway, planning, zoning, engineering, code enforcement, water & sewer, etc. Residential and commercial growth in recent years has burdened local services. The Town's school districts, in particular, have experienced significant growth in enrollment, which has, in turn resulted in costly building programs in all school districts. Volunteer fire departments and EMS/ambulance corps serve more homes and businesses every year.



State Police & Cortlandt Regional Paramedic Headquarters

Meeting the challenge of providing essential services is one that requires constant attention and support by the Town. Other services, such as outreach to seniors and teens, support of the Croton-Cortlandt Center for the Arts, are needed more than ever.

Strategies for providing these services to Town residents and dealing with the impact of new development are key to making services available on a continuing basis. New development should address potential problems and impacts on existing services.

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

The Master Plan Base Studies contains general information on local services such as schools, fire protection, ambulance service, health care, postal and retail services, child care and senior citizen programs. In response to new development, local fire districts are looking for ways to maintain the current high level of emergency services while not overburdening the taxpayer. Due to increased school enrollments in the last ten years local schools have added classrooms and teaching staff while increasing school budgets and taxes.

While the Town of Cortlandt is served by seven postal districts, post offices such as Verplanck and Crompond do not provide home delivery and Cortlandt Manor does not have its own post office. In recent years the Hudson Valley Hospital Center has completed a major expansion program of its building and health services and medical and dental office space in the town is in demand. In response to growing senior citizen and teenager populations the Town of Cortlandt continues to fund and expand programs and other assistance for these age groups.

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are intended to implement the goal for the development and maintenance of adequate local services to serve the Town's residents and businesses and to ensure that allowable growth does not exceed the capacity of such services.

OBJECTIVE: Improve services for the public by assisting the local school districts, libraries, fire districts, police services, ambulance, health care, homeland security and postal services and provide more town information and access via the internet and on the local cable channel.

Policy 115: Explore methods of reducing impacts from new developments on the School districts and on Town Services.

Explore methods of reducing impacts from new developments through efforts to attract new rateables to school districts that are particularly overburdened. Likewise, school districts should be encouraged to respond to proposals for new development with regard to potential negative fiscal impacts and increased enrollments.

In order to better address the fiscal status of local services and school districts, the Town should consider collecting fees from developers to fund comprehensive regional studies with neighboring municipalities which would assist in better evaluating the actual fiscal impact from proposed new development.

Policy 116: Respond to the service and equipment needs of the various fire departments.

In response to the cumulative effect of many new housing and commercial development projects throughout the Town, the fire districts are looking for ways to maintain the current high level of emergency services while not overburdening the taxpayers of the districts.

One such way as proposed by the Lake Mohegan Fire District is for developers to donate money to the Apparatus Replacement Fund; the Montrose Fire Department has also suggested that the Town request funds from developers to purchase a new 100' ladder truck.

Over the years various fire departments have indicated, in response to new development, that certain areas within their districts require capital improvements in order to foster optimum fire and ambulance protection to the Town.

One example of such capital improvements is the building of new fire stations like the one recently constructed by the Lake Mohegan Fire District on Oregon Road near Westbrook Drive.

The Plan supports the concept of requesting and/or requiring developers to contribute to any necessary capital improvements in the fire districts to better serve said future development.



Lake Mohegan Fire Station

Policy 117: Continue to provide incentives for Fire Department and Emergency Medical Service volunteers such as property tax reductions for volunteer service.

Cortlandt is fortunate to have much of their fire and ambulance services provided for by professional volunteers. The Town is encouraged to continue to support any and all efforts of these various departments to maintain a large volunteer base.

Throughout northern Westchester, as the population continues to grow, housing prices increase, and the demographics of where people work changes, many volunteer fire departments and EMS units face a problem in attracting volunteers.

Although the Town of Cortlandt is one of the most affordable Towns to live within northern Westchester County, it should continue to investigate ways to provide incentives to local volunteers (such as property tax abatements and the like) to continue to provide encouragement to residents to volunteer for in fire departments and EMS agencies.



Hudson Valley Hospital Center - Cortlandt Manor

Policy 118: Encourage the establishment of a new post office facility for Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567.

A new Cortlandt-based post office would be a strong focal point for Town's identity and would nicely accompany the recent Cortlandt Manor 10567 designation. In addition, a major public building such as a post office adds considerably to the identity of a hamlet as a center for community activity. Locations that could be considered for this new post office include areas such as in the vicinity of the Cortlandt Manor Train Station or in the Van Cortlandtville Hamlet.

The Town should seek assistance from the U.S. Postal Service to help it achieve the goal of a Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567 Post Office facility. It should be noted that a new post office was one of the most often cited concerns regarding community identity and character. The Town should also lobby for postal delivery for the hamlets of Verplanck, Crompond and Mohegan Lake.

Policy 119: Continue to provide financial support to the libraries that provide library services to the Town's residents

As indicated in the Base Studies, there are three libraries that serve the Town of Cortlandt population and they are the Hendrick Hudson Free Library in Montrose, the Croton Free Library in Croton-on-Hudson, the Field Library in Peekskill, and the John C. Hart Memorial Library in the Shrub Oak hamlet in Yorktown. These libraries belong to the Westchester Library System and continue to see an increase, from year to year, in the demand for their services. Cortlandt has provided financial support to all local libraries and should continue to do so in the future.

Policy 120: Continue to improve the Town's web site, online services and Cable TV coverage.

In addition to the Town's Cable TV station, the Town has been actively involved in developing and maintaining a web site to constantly provide information to its resident population over the internet.

The Town's web site is a major source of information about the various Town Departments and services, including a calendar of activities and meeting dates for the various Town Boards, Councils and Committees. The Town should continue to make future enhancements to its website that make it possible for the public to pay taxes, download building permits and other forms, water bills and other fees online and that the Town's Master Plan, the Zoning Ordinance and the Wetlands, Steep Slope and Tree Ordinances be available on the web site. Recommend the Town periodically notify residents of the existence of the Town website.

It is also recommended that all public hearings be advertised on the local cable channel and on the website and that more town meetings be televised and shown at various times to better inform the public.

Policy 121: Encourage the installation of high quality telecommunication infrastructure to support the needs of existing and future businesses in the Town.

As indicated in the Economic Development Strategy Report, the Town should work with telecommunication companies to ensure that its infrastructure is capable of supporting the growing needs of existing and future businesses and school systems, including installation and provision of access to fiber optic cables.

Policy 122: Continue to provide for the local coordination of homeland security with all levels of government.

In January, 2003 Cortlandt established the position of “Coordinator of Homeland Safety” within the Department of Environmental Services. Cortlandt was one of the first local communities to establish a homeland security position on a “local level”.

The purpose of the Coordinator of Homeland Safety is to be responsible for the overall administration of a wide range of emergency planning preparedness and the integration of various policies involving Federal, State and County procedures with respect to emergency planning.

The Coordinator of Homeland Safety closely coordinates security matters with other department heads including the Director of Technical Services and the Director of the Department of Environmental Services. Currently the Town is completing a program to provide emergency generator services to all critical facilities including the Town Hall and security lighting and other safety measure at sensitive locations.

The Master Plan encourages the Town to continue to provide for these needed interactions with respect to emergency planning, response, recovery, mitigation and preparedness with all levels of government.

OBJECTIVE: Continue to provide programs and support that benefit senior citizens, veterans, teens and individuals with disabilities.

Policy 123: Continue to provide specialized services for our senior citizens such as shopping vans, nutrition programs, support of senior citizen clubs, support of the Operation Snowflake program and pharmacy pick-up programs.

Cortlandt has a long history of providing a variety of services to its senior population including those listed above. The Plan strongly encourages the Town to continue to support and fund these necessary programs and to remain open to ideas for new programs and services to meet the needs of our senior citizens.

Policy 124: Continue to assist our veterans by maintaining our Veterans Council and supporting property tax exemptions for Veterans.

The Town should continue its support of the Veterans Council and to support veteran’s events and continue to designate select sites for memorials in recognition of their contribution.

In addition, the Town should continue its support of veteran’s property tax exemptions. In 1984, NYS passed an “Alternate Veterans Exemption” which grants an exemption to

Veterans for all service back to 1916. The exemption consists of 3 areas:

1. War time active service – 15% max.
2. Combat zone – Additional 10% max.
3. Disabled – 50%.

Policy 125: Continue support of the NOR-WEST program

Nor-West Regional Special Services is a social service agency which was established in 1973 and serves residents living in Cortlandt Manor, Peekskill, Ossining and Yorktown, amongst others. Nor-West's mission statement reads:

“Nor-West provides recreation programs for persons with differing abilities, and as such, plays an important role in the habitation and normalization of the disabled. Our goal is not only to provide recreation, but also to develop emotional security, social skills, physical coordination and personal confidence in each individual.”

Nor-West program offerings are diverse and are designed for individuals ages five through adult who have a developmental disability, and who have recreation needs not met by the traditional municipal recreation departments and organizations in their community. Cortlandt has a long history of supporting NOR-WEST and should continue to do so.

Policy 126: Continue to support and encourage cultural and art based organizations throughout the Town.

Paramount Center for the Arts

For over the past 15 years, Cortlandt has provided annual financial support to the Peekskill based “Paramount Center for the Arts”. The Master Plan committee encourages the Town to continue this commitment to this vital regional arts center.

Croton-Cortlandt Center for the Arts

For over the past 10 years, the Croton-Cortlandt Center for the Arts has been located at the Cortlandt owned and operated Charles J. Cook Park. Cortlandt has been providing financial support to the CCA throughout this time including through in kind services such as the use of the building, insurance coverage and advertisement through the Town of Cortlandt Recreation Brochure.

The Croton Cortlandt Center for the Arts describes their program as follows:

“The Croton Cortlandt Center for the Arts has been serving the communities of Northern Westchester for 12 years bringing education, art, and cultural services to the region's diverse populations. We have successfully provided art and education for children and adults. one of our goals in the coming year is to increase programming for middle school and high school age children”.



Statues at Cortlandt Train Station

Policy 127: Continue to evaluate appropriate geographic locations for Youth Activity Center and Teen Center.

Currently the Town has a Youth Activity Center on Albany Post Road in Montrose and is considering constructing a larger facility on Memorial Drive near the Cortlandt Train Station. In addition, the Town is evaluating the feasibility of providing Teen facilities at the Cortlandt Community Room located at the Cortlandt Town Center on Route 6.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain the planning and development process at its highest efficiency and effectiveness.

Policy 128: Strengthen enforcement of building and zoning codes, environmental and other regulatory compliance. Make the development process more efficient, informative, and fair to the Town, the applicant and the general public.

Many of the policies outlined in all areas of the Master Plan work toward better defining the criteria to be used in planning for new development in the community. This better definition should aid in making the approvals process more predictable and informative for the applicant, the Town and the general public. In addition, certain procedural elements that could specifically further this goal are identified below.

- A.** Create checklists for applicants to follow for providing information required by the Town Codes to the planning, zoning, and architectural review boards.
- B.** The Town Board, in coordination with the Planning Board, should establish maximum limits on the number of time extensions on subdivisions and site development approvals.
- C.** Increase the public hearing notification of nearby properties to be a radius of 500 feet from the applicant's property line.
- D.** Require in the subdivision and zoning regulations that applications to the Planning Board that remain inactive (no required written information or plans submitted) for more than twelve (12) months are deemed withdrawn.
- E.** Provide the public with a brochure that contains information from the Town's various environmental, zoning and planning regulations and include the maximum penalties under each item.
- F.** Require in the subdivision and zoning codes that there be on-site notices posted for public hearings.
- G.** Strengthen the enforcement of the Town's Environmental Protection Regulations. (see policy under Natural Resources).
- H.** Coordinate and organize local environmental protection and preservation ordinances and regulations under one umbrella title (see policy under Natural Resources).
- I.** All Town Departments and Boards that receive applications and issue permits should be required to place this information on a computer data base by tax lot number which can be utilized in the Town's GIS system and readily available to Town staff, applicants and the general public.
- J.** Require administrative penalties, in addition to permit fees, to be paid by property owners who allow work on their property to take place without first obtaining required permits such as: a building permit, a wetland permit; a steep slope permit; a sign permit; and a tree permit.

- K. Enhance the role of the economic/business facilitator recently established by the Town to promote and assist business owners with property improvements, use changes and relocations.

Policy 129: The Town should continue to encourage the use of Concept Committees with independent facilitators to foster consensus in the development process.

Concept committees are a vehicle to foster consensus among the various interested parties that own property or live in the vicinity of a proposed project, including independent facilitators, the applicant, businesses, Town staff and Board members, and representatives from relevant Town committees such as the CAC and PRC.

For large or controversial projects, a well-organized process of utilizing Concept Committees may offer significant improvements in the overall development process whereby initial interaction and negotiation can lead to improved efficiency of the formal review process. The Concept Committee can take an active role in determining the development program and, where appropriate, in determining the EIS Scope of Work to be followed for the SEQRA review of the project.

The Zoning Code should include Concept Committees with independent facilitators as a part of all procedures for large projects requiring special permits and a change of zoning district.

Policy 130: Encourage the creation of the function of “Planning Advocate” within the Town government.

The Master Plan encourages the Town Board to create the function of “Planning Advocate” to assist in long-range proactive planning in Town. Some topics include enhancing the physical appearance of roads, watershed protection, development trends, economic development, and participation in regional planning with other municipalities. The Planning Advocate role can be a local committee consistent of Town staff which will provide professional planning, citizens, Town and Planning Board members and led by the Supervisor.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 8: VISUAL QUALITY **& COMMUNITY APPEARANCE**

GOAL: Enhance overall visual character by improving the appearance of established residential neighborhoods, commercial centers/corridors, and mixed-use hamlets.

A. INTRODUCTION

The visual nature and quality of our community is our most immediate connection to our environment. It is this very nature and visual ambiance that drew many of us to Cortlandt and continues to make our community such a desirable place to live. Protecting and enhancing this visual environment is a complex issue, as it involves the alteration of natural features with the construction of buildings and roads, both publicly and privately owned. The maintenance and enhancement of the visual environment involve important and sometimes controversial planning and administrative issues.

Maintenance and enhancement of the visual environment and community character was one of the single largest concerns reflected in the resident's survey conducted at the beginning of the Master Plan revision effort. It is clear that the importance of these issues is widely acknowledged across the Town.



Croton Reservoir

Cortlandt's unique visual and community character includes a combination of forested hillsides and river valleys, farmland, low to medium density residential areas, small hamlets, historic areas and commercial uses associated with major road corridors, the railroad and the Hudson River. Separating the developed areas of the Town are intervening open space lands composed of wetlands and wooded areas and a variety of scenic parkland including Blue Mountain Reservation, Croton Gorge, George's Island, Oscawana Island, Hudson Highlands Gateway Park and Harbour Landing. Other major scenic areas of the Town include the Croton Reservoir and the Hudson River and Hudson Highlands. Preserving the Town's scenic value and improving community character will continue to make the Town an attractive place for residents, businesses and visitors.

The goals and objectives contained in this chapter are two-fold: That existing areas of important scenic value should be protected; and that new development should be compatible with, and/or strengthen the character of surrounding neighborhoods.

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

As identified in the Base Studies, an inventory of scenic resources was conducted to document those areas in the Town of Cortlandt that are of visual significance. The primary scenic vistas worthy of protection are those areas with views of the Hudson River from parklands along the shoreline and from inland higher elevations. Due to the Town's unique regional location in the scenic Hudson River Valley, its parks and open spaces are enjoyed by both Town residents and tourists. As a member of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, the Town of Cortlandt has worked to designate a portion of the Hudson River Trail which runs through the Town on its way from New York City to Albany as a Hudson River Greenway trail. In addition, the diverse local topographic provides a variety of vistas of mountains, hills and valleys throughout the Town. One notable area includes lands visible from, and associated with the Croton Reservoir area.

Within the semi-rural and established suburban areas of the Town, most of the roads are lined by a combination of mature trees, stone walls, wooded areas, fields and lawns. Within the last 10 years many of the homes constructed in single-family detached residential subdivisions have a uniform appearance because of limited use of different architectural models or materials. Some of the more recent subdivisions, particularly on lots less than an acre in size, lack trees and dense vegetation which is in stark contrast to the surrounding area. The newer subdivisions typically have relatively uniform lot sizes and setbacks and streets that are wide, compared to older developed areas. The uniform appearance is a result in part of the zoning and subdivision regulations. The commercial areas of Cortlandt (outside the hamlets) are characterized by modern strip development along the major transportation corridors of Routes 6, 9A and 202/35.

Although, recent changes in the Town of Cortlandt Zoning Code requires additional landscaping for new development, the lack of vegetation on older commercial sites along these corridors is further emphasized by “open” parking areas, signs, utility lines and a variety of building styles.

The hamlet areas are characterized by a mix of older residential and small scale, convenience type commercial uses. Commercial zoning changes made in the 1990’s in the hamlet areas included CC, Community Commercial while the commercial corridors are zoned either HC Highway Commercial, HC-9A Highway Commercial (Multi Family) or CD Designed Shopping.

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are intended to implement the goal of enhancing the overall visual character of the Town and protecting the character of all residential and commercial areas and protecting parklands and open space from development activities that might impact and detract from the visual quality of these resources.

OBJECTIVE: Improve the visual quality of developed areas and preserve historic resources throughout the Town.

As recommended in the 1991 Master Plan, the Town's Zoning Ordinance was replaced in 1994 with expanded and revised comprehensive standards for lot coverage, building size, buffering, and landscaping standards to promote better visual quality by creating better relationships between building lot coverage, building location, and the amount of area retained in a vegetated or undisturbed state. These standards were established consistent with the character of each zoning district and the uses and activities permitted in each district.

Policy 131: Maintain and Support the Cortlandt Architectural Review Committee (ARC) as a volunteer committee.

The Architectural Advisory Council was created in 1992 and advises the Planning Board on matters concerning site design and layout through its review of proposed site plans, signage and building elevation drawings for commercial development and multifamily structures. When requested by the approving authority, the ARC will have the responsibility to review the size of a house on a single lot and for cluster subdivision design.

The Town Board should continue to support and maintain its Architectural Review Committee. The Plan encourages the adoption of new regulations to provide for review procedures and architectural design guidelines for the Architectural Review Committee.

Policy 132: Develop an Architectural, Site and Landscape Design Manual

Develop an Architectural, Site and Landscape Design Manual (or manuals) to describe ARC procedures, design issues, and a vocabulary for further discussion. The ARC should participate in the development of the basic criteria needed to develop the Architectural, Site and Landscape Design Manual.

The purpose of these manuals would be to provide design guidelines to be utilized by Applicants and their Design Professionals. These manuals should not be developed to dictate limit or restrict any particular design “style”.

The Master Plan Committee recommends that the Town Zoning Ordinance be amended to include the following items:

- Create and Adopt an Architectural, Site and Landscape Design Manual prepared by a professional consultant.
- Create a single lot review committee consisting of internal staff between the divisions of Code, Engineering and Environmental Review.
- Extend the standard time frame from 3 years to 5 years for the maintenance security on subdivision and site plan approvals to provide additional time to monitor site maintenance.
- As a condition of any site plan approval, and in addition to a maintenance security require applicants to provide for long-term regular maintenance of landscaping, buildings, parking lots, lighting, drainage and all other improvements made to a site.
- Provide for continued enforcement staffing and equipment needs to enforce regular site maintenance, including a review and update of fines and penalties.
- As a condition of any site plan approval, require that the applicant designate a “site” representative that will handle and process all inquiries and complaints regarding site maintenance. A violation should be issued for properties that are not maintained properly.
- Incorporate conceptual approval by the Planning Board of site development plans as part of the Planning Board’s Site Development Plan approval process for new development.
- Strengthen the enforcement of the prohibition against the storage of goods or equipment in trailers, box trailers or similar vehicles registered or unregistered, and provide a specific phase-out date in the ordinance to discontinue the keeping of such vehicles, on properties in all commercial and residential districts.

Policy 133: Conduct a citizen's visual survey to assist in the creation of Architectural, Site and Landscape design guidelines to protect visual quality.

The Master Plan encourages the Town and the ARC to utilize citizen's input when creating the design guidelines to be used in the creation of Architectural, Site and Landscape design manual.

To that end, the Town is encouraged to conduct a citizen's visual survey which will help gauge citizen preferences with respect to various visual quality aspects of the Town. Citizens' preferences will be determined by comparing and rating photographic images of the community's present visual environment with images of other communities to arrive at recommendations for the desired design of future development.

The images are then translated into a set of design guidelines to be used by applicants/developers, Town officials, and other agencies and persons whose activities have an influence or impact the community's overall visual character. The Architectural Review Committee should work closely with the consultant conducting this survey and should insure that the survey findings are incorporated into the Design Manual(s) proposed above.

Policy 134: Improve location and design criteria for off-street parking.



Carbone Building - Route 9A

The Master Plan Committee recommends that the Town Zoning Ordinance be amended to include the following items:

- Provide a direct reference in the Zoning Code of the proposed Design Manual for the design and layout of parking lots under for Site Development Plan Approval. The manual should provide guidance on appropriate types of landscape materials, the use of other screening controls, i.e., fences and berms, and similar design recommendations to improve the aesthetics of parking areas.
- In Commercial and Industrial areas, provide for a sliding scale landscaped setback for parking lots from all side and rear lot lines and in combination with buffer strips. This sliding scale should be based on lot width and lot area.
- In the CC, Community Commercial Districts, provide for a landscaped setback for parking lots from all front, side and rear lot lines in combination with buffer strips where required.
- Enhance the pedestrian environment near parking lots by providing sidewalks, slowing traffic and providing landscaped and attractive barriers between pedestrians and moving traffic.
- Encourage cooperative parking through the use of shared parking lots (eliminating extra curb cuts) where appropriate and creation of regulations and agreements to reduce potential visual impact and the amount of impervious surfaces provided.
- Explore the use of alternatives to impervious (paved) parking lots.
- Provide for more flexible parking regulations in hamlet areas such as shared parking lots in favor of pedestrian connections and less paved surfaces.
- Revise parking requirements to prevent oversized parking lots.

Policy 135: Encourage improvement to existing pedestrian areas.

Existing pedestrian areas would be improved through the use of ‘streetscape design’ measures including the consideration of the burying of utilities wherever possible.

There are several areas of Town, particularly those older, more established hamlet areas such as Verplanck, Montrose, Annsville and Van Cortlandtville where there is significant pedestrian use of the roadways and public areas.

The Plan encourages pedestrian use of these areas and supports improvements to pedestrian areas by the addition of sidewalks, bikeways, pedestrian pathways. The Plan also encourages the use of “streetscape designs” such as decorative lighting, benches, signage and other appropriate visual enhancements to pedestrian and public areas. Where possible, provide a buffer between the sidewalk and the road to protect pedestrians.

In addition, the Town should seek to improve the streetscape and street side plantings along E. Main Street (Route 6) and consider the creation of a “Cortlandt Boulevard” where the possibility of a center median would be considered.

Policy 136: Establish guidelines in the subdivision regulations and zoning ordinance to preserve existing trees where possible, especially on hillsides with steep slopes and within and adjacent to water resources that contribute to the Town's scenic quality.

The standards for subdivision design should explicitly state that the preservation of wooded areas, hillsides with steep slopes, and within and adjacent to water resources are important to the character of the Town. The Town's Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 265) and or the Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include the following items:

- The removal of any roadside trees of over a specified caliber should be minimized (with the exception of road cuts, driveways and utility lines, as needed).
- Town standards require that new road intersections be located at a point that satisfies required sight distance standards. However, the removal of large trees, stone walls and other historical and environmentally important features should be discouraged.
- Building setbacks should be increased and wooded buffers/conservation easements should be used to separate existing homes from new residential developments and commercial buildings on adjacent property.
- Revise and strengthen the Town's Tree Ordinance (Chapter 283). See Chapter 4 Natural Resources for more details. Revisions should include the requirement that a permit be obtained for any cutting of trees over 12 inches (allowing for normal tree maintenance operations)
- Require a tree survey and a tree replacement formula for all subdivisions and commercial development.
- Establish a maximum percentage of lot area that may be disturbed for lawns; establish a minimum area to remain undisturbed.
- Provide for additional requirements in addition to those already required in the Westchester County Best Management Practices to control soil erosion and sedimentation in all new development in the site plan and subdivision regulations.
- Strengthen the monitoring and inspections of site work including increased penalties and site restoration for violations of Town Laws or approved site development plans.
- Provide general design guidelines for new residential subdivisions that encourage building design that works with the natural topography and features of the land, and avoid significant disturbances to accommodate buildings that are out of character with the natural site.
- Limit significant alterations to the natural topography, which require the introduction of significant retaining walls, which are out of character with the natural environs.
- Preserve old stone walls and associated trees including tree canopies where possible.

Policy 137: Improve the visual quality and community appearance of existing hamlet areas through public improvements.

To further strengthen and preserve the visual quality and community appearance of existing hamlet areas the Town should provide for the following:

- Prepare comprehensive streetscape plans for hamlet areas that would serve to guide and coordinate future private and public improvements as they occur.
- Provide for aesthetic and functional streetscape designs by creating/introducing village greens, landscaped areas, sidewalks, street lights and other improvements with linkages to parks and open spaces.
- The Town should develop photometric design standards to ensure that residential areas adjacent to commercial sites are not adversely impacted by glare or impacts from off-site lighting while ensuring that adequate light in the commercial site.
- Continue to provide for adaptive reuse of existing structures, particularly of historic interest, while preserving architectural character.
- Encourage land uses and pedestrian friendly improvements that are village-like and small scale in the hamlet areas.
- Establish a Town wide signage system to identify and promote hamlet areas.

OBJECTIVE: Identify ways to improve signage throughout the Town.

The Town's Sign Ordinance was replaced in 1995 with more comprehensive regulations for the use and display of signs. Sign limits and standards were established consistent with the character of each zoning district and the uses and activities permitted in each district. While these regulations have improved standards associated with the size, type, number and location of signs relative to their applicable location in a particular zoning district, the Master Plan Committee seeks to further improve the aesthetic design of these structures. These policies are in addition to the concepts detailed in the 1999 Sign Design Manual prepared to provide guidance to property owners to improve the design and placement of signage as regulated by the Town Sign Ordinance.

Policy 138: Revise the Sign Ordinance.

The Master Plan Committee recommends that the Sign Ordinance should be amended to reflect the Zoning Board decisions related to the numerous appeals filed since 1995 and to provide for adequate signage for multi-tenant properties. Our recommendations include the following items:

- ❖ Regulate the use of neon lighting on signs, windows and building facades.
- ❖ Provide for formulas resulting in adequate signage for commercial tenants in multi-tenant properties. Require that property owners and tenants utilize the Sign Design Manual for the design and placement of proposed signage.

- ❖ Encourage and educate homeowners and businesses to better control the use of special sales signs, tag sale signs, banners and window signs.
- ❖ Provide for continued enforcement, including a review and update of fines and penalties.
- ❖ Provide for the uniformity of signs in their design and location at key road intersections in commercial areas.

As required by the Sign Ordinance the Town should pursue having pre-existing non-conforming signs, which do not meet the provisions or standards contained in the Sign Ordinance, either made to conform or be removed within a three (3) year time frame.

**OBJECTIVE: Protect those areas that contribute to
the visual quality of the Town.**

The following policies are intended to protect the scenic quality of open space and environmentally sensitive lands. Note that open space preservation and associated policies are addressed in Open Space Section of the Master Plan.

Policy 139: Preserve scenic shore-land areas through the adoption of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP).

Along the Town's Hudson River waterfront, George's Island and Oscawana Island County Parks are designated Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance (SASS). Other SASS areas in Cortlandt include the entire Camp Smith New York State Military Reservation and Wallace Pond and its environs.

Through the cooperation of various agencies including the Town, County and State, recent large acquisitions of waterfront open space include: Steamboat Waterfront Park, Harbour Landing, and the adjacent Koplring Society lands by the State. These acquisitions expand the possibilities for waterfront access and revitalization of the Town's shoreline

To establish a comprehensive strategy for the protection and improvement of the unique Hudson River coastal area, the Town should prepare and adopt a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program pursuant to the Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act of New York State.

Policy 140: Continue to support the efforts of the Open Space Committee.

In early 2003, the Town established an Open Space Committee comprised of volunteers for the purposes of evaluating open space parcels within the Town and make recommendations to the Town Board for the acquisition of open space or the purchase of conservation easements on said parcels. The Master Plan encourages the Town to continue to support the efforts of the Open Space Committee.



DiMaria Farm

Policy 141: Protect scenic roads. (see also Historic Preservation)

Many roads within the Town exhibit outstanding visual qualities, including vistas, landscapes, vegetation, stone walls and geological features not found on or near other traveled ways. These roads serve as a link to the Town's rural past and provide a unique visual resource for residents to enjoy.

Potential development may threaten to deprive future generations of the cultural and aesthetic opportunities afforded by these resources. Protecting scenic roads will serve to:

- stabilize and improve property values;
- foster civic pride and identity in the Town's appearance;
- preserve some of the remaining rural qualities of the Town's past;
- improve pedestrian safety.

It is recommended that the Town of Cortlandt provide for a scenic roads protection through the creation and adoption of a Historic/Scenic Road Ordinance which would include, among others, the following:

- A procedure for the Town Board to identify and designate certain roads within the Town as scenic roads;
- Designation criteria such as dense forest and rock outcrops at the road's edge, scenic vistas, a rural or historic past and old stone walls;
- Regulations to protect designated scenic roads such as required buffers, public improvements and a system of reviews and permits from the Town.

Once adopted, the Historic Road Ordinance should be extensively utilized by the Architectural Review Committee in their review of all applications.

Policy 142: Protect scenic vistas

Due to local topographic changes, a variety of scenic vistas of mountains, hills and valleys are provided throughout the Town. Potential development may threaten and change the character of these visual resources.

It is recommended that the Town create and adopt a Scenic Vista Protection Ordinance that would include, among others, the following:

- A procedure for the Town Board to identify and designate certain scenic vistas within the Town to be protected;
- Designation criteria such as scenic quality, viewshed and scenic characteristics to be evaluated;
- Regulations to require that all new development applications evaluate potential impacts on scenic vistas.

Policy 143: Conduct educational and promotional activities to further protect, enhance, and preserve visual quality and community appearance.

In order to further protect, enhance and preserve visual quality and community appearance the Town of Cortlandt should:

- ❖ Create incentives for cleaning up litter through methods such as “Adopt a Road Program” and sponsor and encourage citizen clean up days.
- ❖ Promote tourism by publicizing Cortlandt’s location as the Gateway to the Hudson Valley and encourage recreational enjoyment of the Town’s open spaces and unique unencumbered access to the Hudson River.
- ❖ Sponsor free educational and promotional activities to make the public aware of the importance of design in the community and to provide design guidance.
- ❖ Promote the establishment of local homeowner and business associations to encourage enhanced visual character of properties and neighborhoods.
- ❖ Continue to expand and maintain landscaped areas on public lands throughout the Town and provide funding from the Town’s operating budget to continue maintenance.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 9: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

A. INTRODUCTION

GOAL: Identify and protect the historic and archaeological resources of the Town to preserve its unique history and sense of place.

History can be defined as a "narrative of events" or a "story". There are many buildings, structures, places and features that provide residents and visitors alike with a sense of the history of the Town of Cortlandt. Certain places and buildings within the town are linked to events of county, state and even national significance. A goal of the Master Plan is to identify and preserve Cortlandt's historic and archaeological resources that give the Town its unique sense of place.

As noted in the base studies, research has been done on historic places in Cortlandt and some historical societies have formed to help document Cortlandt's history. This has helped to preserve the historic integrity of some buildings and structures. However, some other historic buildings have been remodeled, with important architectural features and detailing lost in the process.



Bear Mountain Toll House Visitor Center

The Master Plan proposes to address Historic Preservation in the Town with a multi-faceted program to include:

- ❖ Development of historic preservation guidelines
- ❖ Listing historic properties, roads and neighborhoods
- ❖ Promotion of appreciation of Cortlandt's heritage

It is well established that dealing proactively and positively with Historic Preservation issues has a positive effect on property values. Continued inaction on historic preservation will contribute to the deterioration of historic quality in neighborhoods.

B. BASE STUDIES SUMMARY

Cortlandt has a rich history that dates back to settlements by the Kitchawanks, an Algonquin-speaking sub-tribe of the Mahican tribe. These Native Americans inhabited an area extending from the Croton River north up the Hudson to Anthony's Nose, and east from the Hudson River to the Connecticut/New York border. During the summer, the Kitchawanks inhabited the Town's shore line and during the winter, the tribe retreated inland to Blue Mountain and beyond. "Pre-historic" artifacts of the Kitchawanks continue to be unearthed today.

Henry Hudson would have encountered Kitchawanks as he sailed up the Hudson River in 1609; history recounts that he anchored his *Half Moon* off Verplanck's Point. In the late 1600s, Stephanus Van Cortlandt was granted a Land Patent from the English Crown to lands that include most of present-day Cortlandt. The Ryck's patent and DeKay's patent also covered areas in the Town in the vicinity of Peekskill and present day Camp Smith. Dutch and English settlers came to the Town to settle its lands. In 1703, construction commenced on the Queen's Highway, later called the Kings Highway and Albany Post Road, opening up territory in the Town along what is now Route 9A. Settlers relied largely on the Hudson River for transport and trade during this time period. Fishing and agriculture were the mainstays of the economy.

During the Revolutionary War, Cortlandt was visited by a number of important personages, including Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, the Marquis de LaFayette Baron von Steuben, and George Washington. After the Revolutionary War, Cortlandt became a town in 1788. Philip Van Cortlandt was its first Supervisor and the Town would acquire its name from this founding family.

During the 1800s, Cortlandt became an "industrial" community that relied on the Hudson River for trade; the Hudson River Railroad would further fuel the Town's economy by increasing accessibility to New York markets. The Town's population diversified with industry. The construction of the Croton Dam and Aqueduct in the mid-1800s saw an influx of Irish, Swedish, Italian, and European settlers.

Brickmaking was established primarily in Verplanck at the waterfront, later supplanted by icemaking, ironworks, a wire mill, a plaster factory, shirt factory, and a variety of other businesses. A state camp was established near Annsville for the National Guard. In the 1920s and 1930's Cortlandt witnessed the growth of summer colonies including the "New Thought" summer colony for artists and writers along Mount Airy Road, Mohegan Colony in Crompond, and Croton Park Colony, among others.

After World War II, modern conveniences such as new highways opened up Cortlandt to suburban residential development. To control development, the Town adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1951. Ten years later, the Town enacted its first development plan. Single family residences, apartments, and new commercial centers to serve the needs of the suburban community, were established. This pattern is largely in place today. Scattered among new buildings and structures are prehistoric and historic buildings, structures, places and other reminders of the Town's unique past.

The Base Studies contain a substantial amount of data that describes the Town's unique places, buildings, and features that contribute to the Town's history. The objectives and policies that follow are intended to preserve the historic and archaeological resources that have been identified, as well as to continually expand the Town's list of resources that it deems are worthy of protection.

Table IV.A-1 identifies historically important places in the Town. This list has been developed from the following primary sources:

- ❖ National Register of Historic Places
- ❖ State Register of Historic Places
- ❖ Westchester County List of Historic Sites
- ❖ History of the Town of Cortlandt

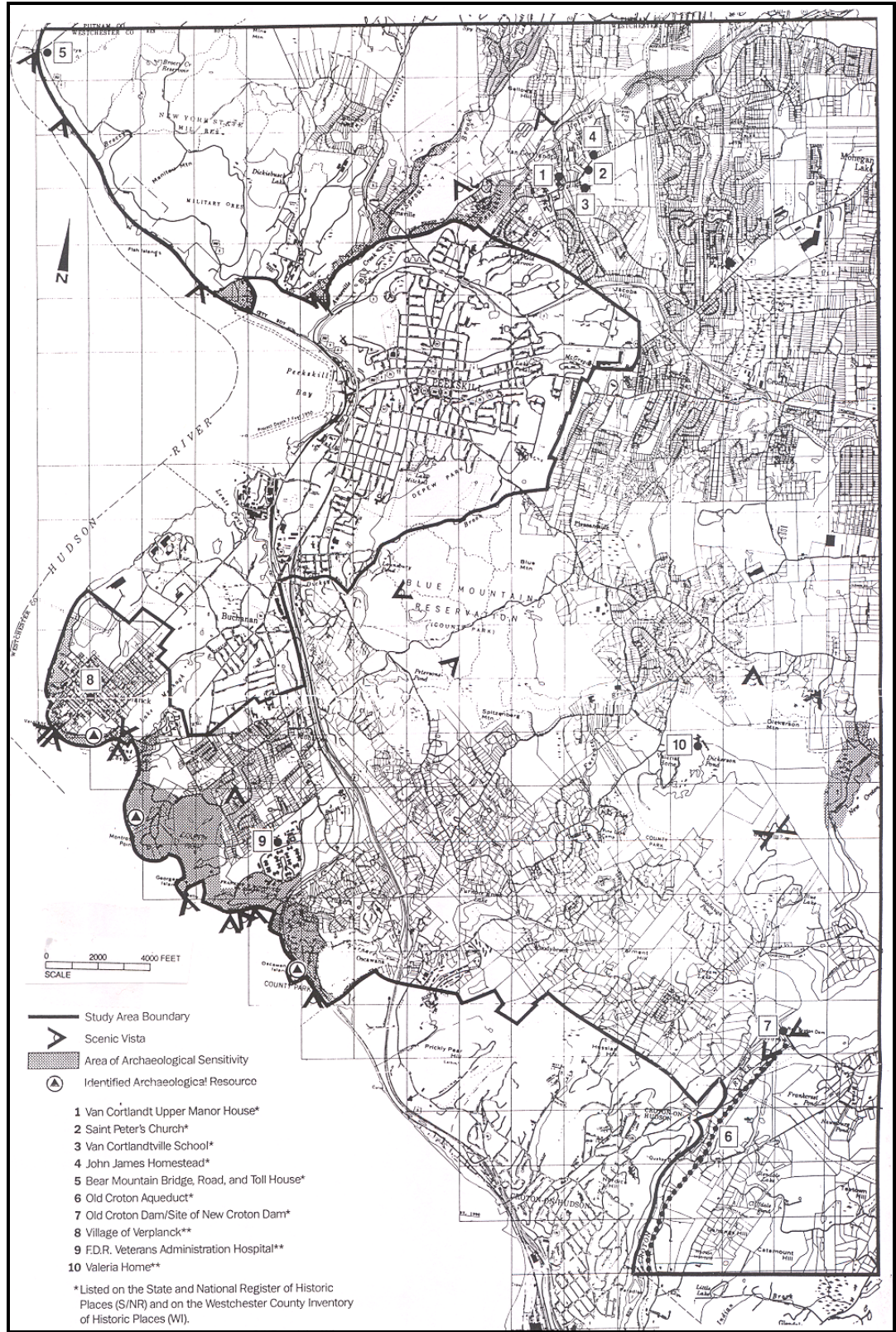
Figure IV.A-1 illustrates the location of historically significant resources on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic significant resources are categorized as follows:

- ❖ National Register of Historic Places: The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established the National Register of Historic Places. Listing on the National Register is a federal designation signifying that a building or site has historic or archaeological significance to the nation. Such designation does not trigger any restrictions on private property owners. It may, however, call upon federal agencies to consider the impact of their activities on federal sites before proceeding with federally funded or licensed projects. In addition, a National Register listing may make tax credits and grants available for restoration and rehabilitation.

The major function of a listing is simply to recognize and identify the historic significance of a resource. It is important to note that the National Park Service will not list an individual, privately-owned property for which it has received the owner's objection. Table IV.A-1 identifies properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- ❖ **New York State Register of Places:** The New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 created the New York State Register of Historic Places. The State Register is a listing of sites, districts, structures, buildings, areas or objects above or below the surface of the earth, whether on land or in the waters of the State, with any designated improvements thereon, significant in the history, architecture, archeology, or culture of the State, its communities or the nation. Such designation does not trigger any restrictions on private property owners. However, Section 14.09 of the act established a review process for state agency activities affecting historic properties, requiring state agencies to consult with the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). If a project requires any permit or funding/grants or any other approvals from a state agency, review by the State OPRHP is required. All historic places within the State listed on, or nominated by, the Commissioner for inclusion on the National Register is listed on the State Register. More importantly, the provision that prohibits listing on the National Register when a property owner objects does not apply to nominations on the State Register. As a result, properties could be listed on the State Register but not subsequently listed on the National Register.
- ❖ **Westchester County Listing:** Westchester County maintains an inventory of properties that the County considers to be significant to its history. Such designation does not trigger any restrictions on private property owners. The major function of a County list is to recognize the historic value of the resource and consider its significance when reviewing County actions.
- ❖ **Town of Cortlandt Potentially Significant Properties:** The Master Plan Committee, through consultation with a number of sources, including the Cortlandt, Van Cortlandtville and Croton historical societies, the Town Historian, and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, has identified properties and locations that it has determined are significant to the Town's history. Note that these properties include all properties listed on the National and/or State Register of Historic Places, as well as the County's Historic Resource list.

Please see Map & Table IV-A-I on the next page which is taken from the Base Studies.



Historic, Scenic and Archaeological Resources
Figure IV.A-1

Town of Cortlandt
TABLE IV.A-1
LIST OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
TOWN OF CORTLANDT

Ma p No.	Name	Address/Tax Lot, Block No.	National Register of Historic Places	NY State Register of Historic Places	Westchester County Inventory of Historic Places	MPC Historic Place of Importance
1	Old Croton Aqueduct N.H.L		X	X	X	X
2	New Croton Dam		X	X		
3	St. Patrick Church		X	X		
4	Little Red Schoolhouse		X	X		
5	John Jones Homestead		X	X		
6	Van Cortlandt Upper Manor House		X	X		
7	Old St. Peter's Church		X	X		
8	Quaker Bridge Road Bridge		X	X		
9	Bear Mountain Bridge and Toll House		X	X	X	X
10	Cortlandt Furnace (Furnace Dock Rd.)				X	X
11	New Croton Dam Spillway		D			X
12	Anthony's Nose					X
13	Camp Smith					X
14	Pumphouse					X
15	Colonial Terrace					X
16	Town Hall – Old Van Cortlandtville School		X	X		X
17	The Community Church					X
18	50th Milestone					X
19	Gallows Hill Mile Marker					X
20	Gallows Hill Road Monument Gallows Hill					X
21	Lent's Cove					X
22	Verplanck Community Center					X
23	Steamboat Dock					X
24	Old Cortlandt Town Hall					X
25	Lake Meahagh					X
26	Post Hannocho House					X
27	Corne/Kennedy House					X
28	Boscobel Methodist Church					X
29	St. Christopher's Catholic Church					X
30	The Church of Divine Love					X
31	Catholic Kolping Society Property					X
32	College Hill Road					X
33	Reformed Church of Cortlandtown					X
34	George's Island					X
35	FDR VA Hospital		D			X
36	Lieutenant Benjamin Dyckman House					X
37	Belmont					X
38	Oscawana Island					X
39	McAndrews Estate					X
40	deGraaf Estate					X
41	Spook Rock					X

Ma p No.	Name	Address/Tax Lot, Block No.	National Register of Historic Places	NY State Register of Historic Places	Westchester County Inventory of Historic Places	MPC Historic Place of Importance
42	Railroad Pond					X
43	Valeria					X
44	First School in Furnace Woods					X
45	Cemetery (by Furnace Woods School)					X
46	Cortlandt Grange					X
47	Pleasantide Chapel					X
48	Hercules Lent House					X
49	Todd House					X
50	Crompond Post Office					X
51	Toddsville School					X
52	Verplanck Hamlet, including					X
53	134 Sixth Street		I			X
54	Little Lake Historic Sites #1 and #2		I			X
55	Old Trolley Hotel at Oregon Corners					X
56	Stone pump house on Oregon Road					X
57	Paul Robeson Concert in 1949, Oregon Road					X
58	Old Curry Homestead on Oregon Road					X
59	Aaron Copland House			X		X
60	The Old Cemetery (Van Cortlandtville)					
61	Anthony's Nose					
62	McCoy Homestead, Camp Smith					
63	Lafayette Avenue graveyard					
64	Quaker Bridge Road Bridge(aka Block Rock Bridge)					

I = Individually Eligible but not yet listed
D = Eligible as part of a district but not yet listed

Source: New York State Historic Preservation Office, 2001 and Town of Cortlandt Master Plan Committee Members.

C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES:

The following objectives and policies are intended to implement the goal of protecting the Town's historic and archaeological resources.

OBJECTIVE: Create a Historic Design Manual

A set of suggested design criteria should be created in order to guide proposed activities which might be detrimental to a historic property or properties within a historic district. Standards need to be established to determine whether activities would be compatible with the landmark's existing character, or the character of a historic area. The design guidelines should generally include consideration of the following:

Policy 144: Prepare design guidelines appropriate to historic areas, and guidelines appropriate to landmarks.

The Town is encouraged to seek grant funding to help with a Historic Design Manual. Design guidelines will vary depending upon the historic resource intended for protection. To guide activities, it is useful to distinguish the unique features of a particular resource that would be impacted by inappropriate activities. Design guidelines should be prepared by a professional consultant working with the Architectural Review Committee. Design guidelines should give consideration to the following:

- Building scale, massing, and proportion between building height and width and its relationship to nearby buildings;
- Building setbacks, roof shape, the number and spacing of doors and windows on a facade, and materials and architectural details including colors and textures.
- The nature and relationship of open spaces, e.g. yards, around the buildings.
- Existing and proposed trees and other landscape features.
- Proposed lighting and signage.
- Traffic and pedestrian circulation in terms of driveways, parking lots and walkways.



Upper Manor House - Oregon Road

Objective: Identify and List Historic Roads

Policy 145: Preserve the character of the Town's historic roads through the creation and adoption of a Historic Roads Ordinance.

There are a number of scenic roads within the Town that date back to the Town's settlement during the pre- and Revolutionary War Period that are graced by colonial residences, stone walls, and mature tree rows planted along the roads and driveways that gave access to these historic properties. The following roads are considered "historic" and their existing alignments, pavement widths, stone walls, and mature trees should be retained to the maximum extent by a Historic Road Ordinance: Furnace Dock Road; Kings Ferry Road; Albany Post Road; Gallows Hill Road; Oregon Road; Watch Hill Road; Red Mill Road; Croton Avenue; and Teatown Road. This list should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the Historic Review Council. The historic mile markers found along Albany Post Road and elsewhere in the town, should also be protected and maintained.



Teatown Road

OBJECTIVE: Identify and List Historic Neighborhoods

Policy 146: Any approval or permits with respect to historic areas of the Town should consider the historical richness of the area and incorporate the same into any building design or land use in those areas. such as Verplanck, Van Cortlandtville, Oregon Corners and Pleasantside.

Major areas of historic significance in the Town are:

- ❖ **Van Cortlandtville:** *The Van Cortlandtville hamlet* possesses four State and National Register listed properties in close proximity to each other. These properties could serve as the core properties of a larger historic district. These properties include St. Peters Church, the Old Van Cortlandtville Cemetery and the Little Red Schoolhouse located near the intersection of Locust Avenue and Oregon Road. Just northeast of this location is the John Jones Homestead on the corner of Durrin Avenue and Oregon Road and the Curry Homestead on Oregon Road. To the west on Oregon Road at Pump House Road is the Van Cortlandt Upper Manor House. Other historically significant properties in the Van Cortlandtville hamlet are the old Peekskill pumphouse on Pumphouse Road, the Colonial Terrace on Oregon Road and the Cortlandt Town Hall on Heady Street. There are concerns that new construction, or redevelopment activities, may introduce structures or improvements that will negatively impact the character of this area.
- ❖ **Verplanck:** *The hamlet of Verplanck*, located on the historic Hudson River, is significant for its associations with the events of the Revolutionary War and as an early planned community. The hamlet has an urban grid street system unusual for its setting and contains many early-1900 structures constructed from locally-manufactured bricks. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) made an informal determination, based on a 1979 survey by students from the Columbia University Historic Preservation Program, that the hamlet may be eligible for listing on the National Register.
- ❖ **Oregon Corners:** *Oregon Corners* is a hamlet located in the northeast area of Town on the Putnam Valley border and may be historically significant for sites such as The Old Trolley Hotel, the Lockwood House, and the Old Toll House and Trolley stop.
- ❖ **Pleasantside:** *Pleasantside* is a small area that is centered in the vicinity of Lafayette and Maple Avenues. Pleasantside Chapel and farm are located in a rural setting that should be protected.



Broadway - Verplanck

The Master Plan Base Studies and the Historic Resources Appendix provides a description of the significance these areas have had in the Town's history. Figure IV.A-1 is a map of the Town of Cortlandt which generally shows historic, scenic and archeological resources. The above areas should be surveyed for nomination and at a minimum, be inventoried and historic designation sought for individual landmarks.

OBJECTIVE: Promote Activities that Maintain and Improve Publicly Owned Historic Properties

Policy 147: Complete Improvements to Steamboat Riverfront Park and continue to maintain this unique waterfront area.

As recommended in Historic Preservation Policy #6 in the 1991 Master Plan, the Town of Cortlandt implemented a program to enhance public use of historic Steamboat Dock, due to its scenic location along the Hudson River and its historic significance as a Revolutionary War site. Since 1990, the Town of Cortlandt, with the assistance of the Verplanck Waterfront Preservation Committee, created and implemented a Steamboat Dock Riverfront Park Master Plan.

The Town has received numerous grants and donations to acquire and improve the park. Latest construction plans call for the development of the Verplanck Pedestrian Trail that will become a section of the Hudson River Greenway Trail and will include significant streetscape type enhancements to Broadway Boulevard through the creation of sidewalks and a pedestrian trail.

Future recreational improvements are planned for the area surrounding the Clay Pond and the Martin Trailer Park property when this property becomes available pursuant to

the terms of the Martin life estate when it is deeded to the Town. Future uses envisioned for this site include a significant public boat launching facility, extension of the Riverwalk, and a seaplane themed playground. In addition, the Town is considering the acquisition of two historic waterfront properties in the Verplanck area. One located near the former Harbour Landing property and off 6th Street near Madeline Avenue.

Policy 148: Continue to maintain and expand the use of historic sites such as the Toll House, the Aaron Copeland home and the Cortlandt Museum and identify historic properties for public acquisition and /or preservation

On-going efforts to preserve and improve historic sites throughout the Town of Cortlandt will continue to maintain the Town's historic character and promote tourism (see Table IV.A-1 for a listing of properties with historic significance).

Consider other locations throughout the Town for tourist-related centers similar to the Toll House on Bear Mountain Road. As was accomplished with Steamboat Riverfront Park, historically significant sites may be acquired by donation or acquisition and potential funding sources should be identified to help finance any needed site improvements. Potential public ownership and use of historic properties should also be focused within historic districts to promote tourism and preservation of their historic character.

OBJECTIVE: Promote Appreciation of Cortlandt's Heritage

The following policies may be accomplished by several organizations working together or separately, including the Historic Review Council, the Town Historian, the Cortlandt Historical Society and the VanCortlandtville Historical Society and Historic River Towns of Westchester.

Policy 149: Sponsor educational forums and publish historic preservation brochures and driving tour guides.

The Town should work cooperatively with local historic groups to sponsor educational forums with school districts and others in order to educate residents and visitors of the Town's unique history and its significant places.

The Town should publish a historic preservation brochure that identifies the historic sites within the Town of Cortlandt as a method to promote tourist-related activities. The brochure could be modeled after Dutchess County's program that describes driving routes to pass-by historic places.

The driving tour or brochures could be sponsored by local businesses that would advertise their business on the brochure, particularly if they are in close proximity to, or are located within a historic structure or place. These brochures could be distributed at

Town Hall, local realtors, businesses, the train station, and other locations readily available to the public.

Policy 150: Sponsor walking tours and special events in historic neighborhoods.

As a means to encourage interest in the Town's historic resources, and as way to promote tourist activity, the Town, in cooperation with local businesses, residents, historical societies, should sponsor special events with historic themes. For example, many communities sponsor winter or spring "open houses" where visitors can tour historic homes decorated in-season.

Communities also host "festivals of lights" or other seasonal events where the streetscape and properties within historic districts are decorated and special events are coordinated. Another example was the VanCortlandtville Revolutionary War Skirmish held in March 2002. These activities promote visitor interest in the community and can stimulate economic development.

Policy 151: Sponsor a Historic Plaque Program

The installation of a commemorative plaque is one method to recognize historic properties. In one community with such a program, a homeowner obtains a plaque application and conducts research on the history of their property. A plaque is custom-made for the structure, and includes the historical society or town logo, the date of initial construction, the original owner or architect's name, and four or five words describing the significance of the property, e.g., former blacksmith shop.

Neighborhood pride has been generated by the plaque program, and it has acted as an incentive for homeowners to maintain and rehabilitate their residences. The data gained by way of the application process allows a community to develop "house histories" of each property. The information is also used for a self-guided tour. A brochure and map provide a description of the location and historic significance of each site.

Alternatively, an application can be filled out and a fee paid for a historic resource specialist to conduct an inspection of the property after the application is received. A committee can review an application and determine its eligibility for historic designation. If selected, the property is awarded a bronze plaque with the historic society logo imprint. Historic structures are identified on a Registry, and photos accompanying the application can be used in a booklet published by the society. In addition, the information contained in the application can be used for historic booklets or brochures. Custom-made bronze plaques are approximately \$100 per plaque. Prices are reduced if ordered in groupings, e.g., 25 plaques, with uniform imprints - these can cost \$50.

Policy 152: Conduct interviews with Cortlandt's residents and others who are familiar with Cortlandt's history

The Town should establish a program where Cortlandt residents and others who have knowledge of the Town's history are interviewed in order to catalog the events, activities and places that have been instrumental in shaping the Town. This oral history is one means of gathering the supporting data to support historic designation.



TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 10: ADDENDUMS

BIODIVERSITY IN CORTLANDT

The majority of the following information is taken from a report entitled “Planning for Biodiversity in the Town of Cortlandt” written by Michael W. Klemens and Nicholas A. Miller of the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society.

Biodiversity in Cortlandt

The rich tapestry of species, genes, ecosystems, and their interactions are collectively referred to as biological diversity, often shortened to “biodiversity”. Cortlandt and neighboring communities are home to significant habitats and rich assemblages of wildlife, due to a unique convergence of factors:

1. The diverse geological variation within Cortlandt serves as a foundation for a wide variety of habitat. Wetlands, streams and elevation gradients combine to create many distinctive habitat types, which in turn support unique and rare species. Cortlandt’s biodiversity is influenced by both the Hudson Highlands and the more low-lying river valleys.
2. The geographic position of Cortlandt and neighboring communities is at an ecological crossroads, which contributes to the diversity of plants and animals found with the town. At the close of the Wisconsin glaciations (ca.15,000 years ago) plants and animals moved into and repopulated southern New York from a variety of routes, including the Wallkill valley, the Atlantic Coastal Plain, and from the Midwest via the Mohawk Valley. These routes converged in southeastern New York’s lower Hudson Valley.
3. Northern Westchester County has experienced lower density development than communities in the southern half of the County. Because of this many of the ecological treasures of northern Westchester County are still intact. The pattern of small hamlets with intervening open space composed of wetlands and second growth forest has fostered both scenic and biodiversity values. Although we recognize that the *status quo* is changing rapidly in some areas, large tracts of relatively pristine habitat remain in portions of Cortlandt.

4. Cortlandt's biodiversity is represented by both widespread species and species that are declining in Westchester County and throughout the region, including many that are on New York State's list of endangered, threatened and special concern wildlife. Species such as the marbled salamander and box turtle which are at the northern limit of their natural range in the lower Hudson Valley. Stewardship of these and other species within Cortlandt has conservation values that extend far beyond the town, adding value to both regional and State-wide conservation efforts.

Importance of Biodiversity

It is often argued that biological diversity has its own inherent value, that it is our obligation to preserve biodiversity for its own sake. However, it is important to note that communities directly benefit in many ways from their biological resources, and that these services can often be measured in economic terms. For example, wetlands are often extremely biologically diverse. But wetlands protected for their biodiversity also provide a variety of other functions, including flood abatement, water quality improvement, aquifer recharge, stream base flow maintenance, recreational opportunities, and more. Other vital ecological services provided by wildlife (bees, butterflies and others) include pollination of a wide variety of plants, including food crops and many garden flowers.

Biodiversity provides important recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, hiking bird watching and photography; it also provides a scenic backdrop to the daily activities of Cortlandt's populace. The forests, wetlands, fields and associated wildlife and plant communities serve as an important outdoor laboratory used by schools and nature centers.

The diversity of wildlife populations within a town or region is a direct measure of ecosystem health and consequently, the ability of these ecosystems to provide important services to our communities. The benefits to maintaining Cortlandt's biodiversity are far reaching. Issues of water quality, rural aesthetics and human health are all closely tied to biodiversity. A biologically diverse landscape is resilient to change and provides ecological services to our communities, now and into the future.

Importance of Including Biodiversity in the Local Land Use Planning Process

Biodiversity receives some protection through State and Federal regulations. These laws, however, are not designed to protect the ecological function of Cortlandt's landscape. Federal and State species protection encompasses a small subset of biodiversity – those species that are at great risk of disappearing. These threatened and endangered species are akin to critically ill patients. It will take an extraordinary allocation of resources to recover these species.

Work by the Wildlife Conservation Society has demonstrated that as much as 75% of Cortlandt's wildlife species are in a long-term non-cyclical decline. To protect Cortlandt's biodiversity will require proactive action at the local decision making level.

Apart from sustaining biodiversity at the local level, a scientifically informed approach to biodiversity management will prevent site-by-site conflicts over the ecological value of lands. This approach will help focus development into areas where it will have a lesser impact upon the ecological fabric and function of Cortlandt. By planning with nature, Cortlandt can create a quality community for future generations where human progress is more in harmony with the natural world.

To achieve these goals, the towns of Cortlandt, Yorktown, New Castle and Putnam Valley have entered into a partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society's Metropolitan Conservation Alliance to address biodiversity and land use planning issues at a locally-based, inter-municipal scale.

This project, known as the Croton-to-Highlands Corridor project (CHC) is based on several years of *de novo* field surveys and integrates the topics detailed within this section. The final project report will be delivered to the four towns on April 22, 2004 and will constitute an addendum to this section on biodiversity in the Town of Cortlandt Master Plan. This report will include specific recommendations and options for maintaining biodiversity, ecological function and landscape connectivity within each of the four towns, as well as strategies to manage biodiversity on an inter-municipal basis.

Preliminary Strategies to Plan for Biodiversity

There are a variety of measures that towns can take to ensure that biological resources are considered as their communities continue to develop and grow. The following briefly describes some of these measures. By undertaking these measures, towns can maintain biodiversity while attaining tangible benefits for present and future generations

1. *Master Plans*: Ideally, a community's desire to protect its biodiversity should be incorporated into its Master Plan as a planning goal. The protection of biodiversity then becomes a baseline planning layer – a layer that builds upon a regulatory foundation, but goes beyond regulation in its geographical reach.
2. *Innovative Regulations*: Regulations such as those that protect wetlands, limit development on steep slopes, or promote clustering help control environmental deterioration. However, regulations alone are insufficient to protect biodiversity; they must be supplemented with proactive planning efforts. Despite this, the development of innovative regulations that build upon a town's home rule authority can maintain biodiversity while respecting a community's right to grow and prosper. For example a "conservation area overlay zone" could be adopted by Cortlandt in order to redirect development away from ecologically sensitive areas and toward areas that can sustain such development.

3. *Baseline Inventories:* Communities can simultaneously protect their existing biodiversity and plan for economic growth. However, this can only be accomplished by gaining an understanding of where a town's biodiversity exists. With this information, it is then possible for towns to plan around their natural resources keeping them relatively intact instead of pitting environmental concerns against development concerns on a site by site basis. Through baseline field inventories, it is possible to distinguish areas within a town that require more sensitive ecological management from those areas better suited for development. Such information is rarely available at site specific or town specific scales. Data obtained from local baseline inventories can be combined with data from broader, regional sources, such as the New York Natural Heritage Inventory, to make biological sound decisions during the planning process.
4. *Incorporating Biodiversity into Open Space Planning Efforts:* Parcels are often prioritized as part of open space planning efforts. This prioritization is traditionally based on factors such as accessibility, economic feasibility and potential for recreation activities. Biodiversity concerns should be woven into this prioritization process. By considering factors such as habitat quality, habitat diversity, habitat connectivity and known locations of wildlife populations, the preservation of open space can help to maintain biodiversity in Cortlandt.
5. *Working at an Inter-Municipal Scale:* Ecosystems exist at the scale of thousands of acres and some at tens of thousands of acres. And yet, most of our decisions are made at a scale of a hundred acres or less, which is a small fraction of any given ecosystem. Despite extensive environmental review through the SEQRA and local decision making authorities, most of these decisions contribute to biodiversity loss by fragmenting large ecosystems into smaller, less functional units. Cumulatively, these site by site reviews have a major impact on biological resources within Cortlandt and surrounding communities. Ecosystems that have been fragmented by decisions made at scales of hundreds of acres or less cannot be re-assembled back into ecosystems totaling thousands of acres. To adequately protect biodiversity requires that communities plan at a scale which will protect these resources. This requires cooperation among neighboring municipalities, since most ecosystems span multiple political jurisdictions. Organizing around watersheds and other resources that are shared in common is a valuable way to approach ecosystem planning. Cortlandt should consider forming an inter-municipal council with neighboring communities based upon an inter-municipal agreement to address planning issues at broader scales.
6. *Generic Environmental Impact statements:* A GEIS enables towns to plan for development at a broader scale than is possible with traditional site by site environmental impact statements. In the GEIS process, Cortlandt can address the shortcomings of reviews done at too small of a scale (see previous paragraph). This is accomplished by conducting an overarching impact assessment on a large area, ideally an entire natural system or large tract of undeveloped land. As individual development projects are proposed within this area, they are evaluated against the findings of the GEIS.

If biodiversity concerns are adequately assessed during preparation of the GEIS, it is possible to avoid wildlife declines and habitat fragmentation, which are often the cumulative result of individual, site by site reviews. The Town can recover the costs of the GEIS through pro-rated fee assigned to each proposed development project.

7. *Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines:* The SEQR process requires that towns consider the impacts of proposed development on natural resources, including wildlife populations. Many towns have adopted standards for certain aspects of the SEQRA process (e.g., wetland assessments and delineations), but have no such standards for wildlife or biodiversity assessments. Assessments are usually conducted by biologists working for the developer. Because there are no standards or guidelines, these assessments often fail to supply the level of detail that is required to make informed decisions. Information based decisions are necessary to ensure the continued integrity of Cortlandt's natural resources.

In this regard, the Town of Cortlandt Planning Board recently adopted guidelines requiring wildlife and plant biodiversity assessments included with applications for proposed development that enhance the town's ability to make better planning decisions and maintain biodiversity as growth proceeds. Such assessments are prepared by a Town Biodiversity Consultant and paid for by the applicant.

8. *Training Opportunities for Land Use Decision Makers:* Land use decision makers (e.g., town planners, elected and appointed municipal officials, land trust personnel, and concerned citizens can make use of a number of training opportunities. For example, the Glynwood Center and Pace University's Land Use Law Center conduct the Community Leadership Alliance Program, which focuses on innovative land use planning and policy at town and inter-municipal scales. NYS DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program conducts biodiversity assessment workshops within counties and towns near the Hudson River estuary in partnership with various organizations. The Wildlife Conservation Society conducts workshops that address biodiversity as it relates to land use planning within target communities; one on one technical support is also provided to town planning staff on a limited basis.
9. *Specific Tools for Integrating Biodiversity into Planning Process:* The Wildlife Conservation Society has developed a series of publications with the explicit goal of bringing conservation science and innovative land use policy directly to those that shape our landscapes: municipal planners, elected and appointed officials and other land use decision makers. Based on the recommendations in the Croton to Highlands Biotic Project, the Town may want to adopt a local Wildlife and Vegetation Preservation Ordinance to provide for the evaluation and protection of wildlife and vegetation habitats and corridors in new development.

The Town should also participate in the Westchester County Endangered Species Program which will include among other things, an inventory of wildlife and plant species on Town and County property/parkland and a wildlife and plant preservation plan. A local Wildlife and Vegetation Preservation Ordinance can establish guidelines for new development that reduce and mitigate the potential impacts and risks on the town's biodiversity resources.

Such guidelines should include: ecological standards for proposed mitigation of impacts on native plant species, soil types, slopes, drainage, water resources and wildlife habitats. Depending on the nature of each individual site as determined by a biodiversity assessment, certain biodiversity features deemed to be important can be preserved as a result of the application process for new development.



Glossary of Terms For the Comprehensive Master Plan

The following are brief definitions of the Glossary of Terms that are used in this Master Plan. It should be noted that all of these terms are defined in more detail in various ordinances in the Town of Cortlandt Town Code which are subject to modifications or changes as those laws are amended.

ACCESSORY APARTMENT – An accessory use consisting of a separate dwelling unit, complete with its own sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities, that is contained within an owner-occupied single-family dwelling or contained within an accessory building.

AFFORDABLE UNIT – A housing unit available for purchase or rent that costs no more than 30% of the gross monthly household income of a household whose income is below 80% of the Westchester County median income as determined by the Westchester County Planning Department at the time the unit is sold or rented. In the case of a housing unit for sale, costs include mortgage, taxes, insurance and condominium or association fees, if any. In the case of a housing unit for rent, costs include rent and utilities.

APPLICANT — The person, owner, agent, corporation or other party filing an application.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY - The Zoning Board, the Planning Board, the Town Board, the Director of Technical Services or the Deputy Director of Code Enforcement.

AUTOMOTIVE BODY AND PAINT SHOP – A building or part thereof used for body repair or painting of motor vehicles for remuneration which may include surrounding yard area that is used for storage accessory thereto.

AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR SHOP – A building or part thereof used for the repair of motor vehicles for remuneration, excluding body repair and painting, which may include surrounding yard area that is used for storage accessory thereto.

BED-AND-BREAKFAST ESTABLISHMENT – An owner-occupied dwelling in which no more than four bedrooms are available as overnight accommodations for paying, transient guests to whom a morning meal may be served.

BEDROOM – Any habitable space other than a living room, dining room, kitchen or bathroom or other than a closet, vestibule, corridor or storage room of less than 80 square feet in floor area, primarily used for sleeping with an accessible bathroom.

BIODIVERSITY — A variety of living things (plants and animals), their interrelationships, their interdependence with the environment in which they live.

BOARD OF APPEALS – The Zoning Board of Appeals of the Town of Cortlandt, as duly constituted pursuant to Article 16 of the New York State Town Law.

BUFFER – An area of land on a lot intended to protect uses on an adjoining lot from the impacts of uses on the lot containing the buffer strip. Such strip shall include natural or planted vegetation or fencing, or both, sufficient to provide a visual and noise buffer as required by this chapter and shall not be paved nor used for buildings, accessory buildings, parking, storage, sewage disposal areas or any structure. (See also Wetland Buffer).

BUILDING – Any structure, either temporary or permanent, having a roof or other covering and designed or used for the shelter or enclosure of any person, animal or property. Structures fabricated in whole or in part in a factory and transported to a site shall be deemed "buildings," provided that any wheels, wheel mounts, rollers or skids have been removed.

BUILDING, ACCESSORY – A building, the use of which is customarily incidental and subordinate to that of the principal use or building and that is located on the same lot as that occupied by the principal use or building.

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT – A subdivision plat or plats, approved pursuant to § 278 of the New York State Town Law in which the applicable zoning regulations are modified to provide an alternative permitted method for the layout, configuration and design of lots, buildings and structures, roads, utility lines and other infrastructures, parks and landscaping in order to preserve the natural and scenic qualities of open lands.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC)- The body established by the Town Board pursuant to the General Municipal Law.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT — Land set aside on the subject premises for preservation and protection and/or the right of use or enjoyment.

CONTRACTOR'S YARD – Any space, whether inside or outside a building on a parcel of land, used for the storage or keeping of construction supplies, materials, equipment, machinery or vehicles or parts thereof, whether they are in operable or inoperable condition or in active or inactive use by a person or other entity. [Added 7-15-2003]

CONTRACTOR'S YARD IN A RESIDENTIAL ZONE – Any space in a residential zoning district, whether inside or outside a building, used for the storage or keeping of construction supplies, materials, equipment, machinery or vehicles or parts thereof, whether they are in operable or inoperable condition or in active or inactive use by a person or other entity subject to the following:

- A. Such space, if less than a total of 100 square feet if contiguous and/or in aggregate on a parcel of land in a residential zone, would not be considered a contractor's yard.
- B. Such space, if greater than a total of 100 square feet if contiguous and/or in aggregate on a parcel of land in a residential zone, is prohibited unless the storage or keeping is in connection with an unexpired building permit.
- C. Fully enclosed vehicles or materials are acceptable up to 400 square feet, with no side dimension greater than 20 feet, and no height dimension greater than 14 feet.
- D. As defined herein, existing contractor's yards in residential zones shall be removed within one year of the effective date of this amendment.
- E. The storage or keeping of construction supplies and materials shall not exceed six feet in height and be maintained in a safe and secure condition and location.
- F. Such storage area is restricted to the side and/or rear yard on a parcel of land.

COVERAGE, BUILDING – The percentage of the area of a lot occupied by buildings, including accessory buildings.

COVERAGE, LANDSCAPED -- The percentage of the area of a lot unoccupied by structures, parking, paving or storage, including land left in its natural state, undisturbed and unimproved, and land planted with lawns, trees or other plants or enhanced by other natural and decorative features as may be required by this Plan.

DISTRICT – Any of the zoning districts established by this Plan.

DWELLING – A structure designed or used primarily for residential occupancy, with a minimum of 900 square feet of habitable floor space, containing one or more dwelling units, but not including rooming houses, hotels, camps, mobile homes or other structures or equipment for temporary lodging. (See also DWELLING UNIT)

DWELLING, MULTIFAMILY – A dwelling containing three or more dwelling units. The term "multiple dwelling" shall have the same meaning as "multifamily dwelling."

DWELLING, SINGLE-FAMILY – A dwelling containing one dwelling unit or one dwelling unit and one accessory apartment, whether located in a principal building or an accessory building, for which a special permit has been issued pursuant to this Plan.

DWELLING, TWO-FAMILY – A dwelling containing two dwelling units or as defined for the R-40A District.

DWELLING UNIT – A single unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES — Those species, flora and fauna, including those on federal, state and county lists, that are present in such small numbers that they are in jeopardy of becoming extinct.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITOR— The Environmental Monitor of the Department of Technical Services, Town of Cortlandt or an approved outside environmental consultant who works on behalf of the Town of Cortlandt.

FAMILY – An individual or two or more persons related by blood, marriage or adoption living together as a single housekeeping unit or a group of persons not so related living together as a single housekeeping unit which is the functional equivalent of a family of related persons.

FLOOR AREA, NET: The actual floor area, excluding the thicknesses of exterior walls.

FLOOR AREA RATIOS – a/k/a “FAR”: The total net floor area of single or multi-story building divided by the lot area.

FRONTAGE – The length of a lot line which divides a lot from a street or highway.

GARAGE, PRIVATE – An accessory building or part of a principal building used primarily for the storage of vehicles.

GASOLINE SERVICE STATION – Retail establishment primarily engaged with selling gasoline and lubricants and which may sell other merchandise or perform minor repair work as secondary activities.

HEIGHT (OF BUILDING) – The vertical distance measured from the average elevation of the finished grade within 20 feet of the structure to the highest point of the structure.

HISTORIC STRUCTURE – A building listed in the National Register of Historic Places or other governmental listing of historic places, such as State, county or Town listing.

HYDRIC SOIL – A soil that is saturated, flooded or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part, as set forth in the Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands, dated January, 1989, prepared by the federal government and as updated from time to time.

HYDROPHYTIC VEGETATION: plants which are dependent upon seasonal or permanent flooding or sufficiently waterlogged soils to give them a competitive advantage over other species. These plants may include wetland trees and wetlands shrubs.

LOT – A parcel of land contained within one continuous legal boundary established in accordance with all laws and ordinances in effect at the time of establishment.

LOT COUNT FORMULA: A formula establishing the maximum permitted number of lots or dwelling units for a proposed major subdivision, as defined in our Code. Among other things, the lot count formula subtracts out wetlands, and 50% of the wetland buffer area, steep slopes areas, flood plains and 10% of the net parcel area for roads from the gross parcel area. This sum is then divided by the minimum lot area of the zone in which the parcel is located.

LOT DEPTH – The mean distance between the front and rear lot lines.

LOT LINE – A line that divides one lot from another lot or from a street or highway.

LOT WIDTH – The mean width of a lot, computed by dividing the lot area by the lot depth.

MARINA – A facility for storing, servicing, fueling, berthing and securing of pleasure boats and may include eating, sleeping and meeting facilities for owners, crews and guests and one dwelling unit for a caretaker.

MITIGATION PLAN — The plan prepared by an applicant to compensate for unavoidable wetland, water course and wetland buffer area impacts pursuant to the standards and requirements of the Town Code, upon determination that either losses or impacts to the wetland, watercourse or regulated wetland buffer area are necessary and unavoidable and have been minimized to the extent practicable as determined by the approval authority.

MOBILE HOME – A vehicle, whether or not self-propelled, which is used or designed to be used for living purposes, with its wheels, rollers or skids in place and having only temporary connections, if connected, to any water, electric or sewage disposal system.

PARKING SPACE – An off-street space available for the parking of one motor vehicle, which may be located within a garage, with minimum dimensions specified in § 307-33 of this Plan and having direct access to a street, except that a parking space serving a single- or two-family dwelling may be configured in tandem fashion.

PLANNED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT (PVD) – The development of an area of land as a single entity in which a mixture of uses, including residential, open space, public and commercial, are provided and which the Town Board determines will be sufficiently beneficial to the Town to warrant a departure from the requirements of the district in which the "PVD" is to be located.

PLANNING BOARD — The Planning Board of the Town of Cortlandt, New York.

PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE – A parcel of land open to the public, with structures and/or other facilities owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization and dedicated to the promotion of greater public understanding, awareness and appreciation of the natural environment through environmental and/or agricultural education programs and passive recreation activities.

PRIVATE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY – A parcel of land open to the public without any buildings, owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization and dedicated to the protection of wildlife habitat and offering passive recreation and education activities.

PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION – An association which is organized in a development to own, operate and maintain facilities for residents of the development.

PUBLIC UTILITY FACILITY – Uses, structures and rights-of-way constructed, altered or maintained by utility corporations, either publicly or privately owned, or governmental agencies necessary for the provision of electricity, gas, heat, steam, communication, water, sewage collection or other service. Such uses, structures and rights-of-way shall include poles, wire, mains, drains, sewers, pipes, conduits, cables, alarm and call boxes and other similar equipment, but shall not include office, administration, service or storage buildings.

RESTORATION PLAN — The plan prepared by an applicant to restore, mitigate and otherwise correct unauthorized activities or existing conditions, as approved by the approval authority.

SCHOOL, PUBLIC – A tax-supported academic institution providing elementary or secondary education operated and controlled by a local governmental agency.

SEQRA — The New York State Environmental Quality Review Act - A law pursuant to Article 8 of the New York Environmental Conservation Law providing for environmental quality review of actions which may have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

STABLE – An accessory building in which one or more horses are kept.

STEEP SLOPE: Ground areas with a slope greater than 15% with a minimum area of 500 square feet which possesses one dimension of a minimum of 10 feet. It should be noted that steep slopes in the lot count formula only include existing land over 20% grade.

STORY - That portion of a building included between the surface of any floor and the surface of the floor next above it or, if there is no floor above it, then the space between the floor and the ceiling next above it. A basement shall be counted as a "story" if the finished floor immediately above is more than seven feet above the level from which the height of the building is measured or if it is used for business purposes other than storage or for dwelling purposes by other than a janitor or watchman.

STRUCTURE – A combination of materials constructed for use, occupancy or ornamentation, whether installed on, above or below the surface of land or water, including but not limited to the following: building, bin, bridge, deck, fence, framework, platform, pier, reviewing stand, retaining wall, shed, shelter, sign, above- and below-ground pool, tank, tent, tennis court, tower, wall and wharf. The term "structure" shall not include paving on streets, sidewalks and patios.

STRUCTURE, ACCESSORY – A structure devoted exclusively to an accessory use and on the same lot as the principal use to which it is accessory.

TENNIS CLUB, YACHT CLUB or SIMILAR MEMBERSHIP SPORTS AND RECREATION CLUB – A privately owned and operated area containing land and recreational facilities for use by its members, such as courts, swimming pools and boating facilities and clubhouse and accessory uses, which may include a restaurant and bar, and which is open to members and/or members and the general public.

TOWN – The Town of Cortlandt, Westchester County, New York State.

TOWN BOARD - The Town Board of the Town of Cortlandt, New York.

TRANSITIONAL LOCATION – A lot in a residential district whose side lot line is contiguous for at least one-half (1/2) of its length with a lot in a commercial or industrial district or a lot in a residential district whose front lot line is directly across a street for more than one-half (1/2) its length from a commercial or industrial district.

UNIT – (Refer to DWELLING and DWELLING UNIT)

USE – The specific purpose for which land or a structure is designed, arranged or intended or for which it is occupied or maintained.

UNDERUTILIZED PARCEL: An improved residential parcel which can be further subdivided; or commercial or industrial parcels containing structures which can significantly enlarged in accordance with the Town Code.

VERNAL POOL— confined depressions, either natural or man-made, that hold water for at least two consecutive months out of the year, and are devoid of breeding fish populations. Vernal pools provide habitat to many species of amphibians, insects, reptiles, plants, and other wildlife. The absence of fish is the essence of these ecosystems.

WATER BODY — Any body of water which exists at least three (3) months of the year.

WATERCOURSE - Any identifiable channel through which water flows continuously or intermittently.

WATERSHED — The geographic region within which water drains to a particular wetland, water body, or watercourse.

WETLAND and WETLANDS – Wetlands possess three essential characteristics: (1) Hydrophytic vegetation, (2) hydric soils and (3) wetland hydrology, all of which must be present in an area to be considered a wetland as set forth in the Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands, dated January, 1989, prepared by the federal government and as updated from time to time.

WETLAND BUFFER AREA — The land area within one hundred (100) linear feet along the surface, away from, and around the perimeter of the outermost boundary of a “wetland” or “watercourse” or “waterbody”, which area serves to lessen the impact of human disturbances to, and is an integral component of, said wetland, water body or watercourse ecosystems.

WETLAND FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT: A functional assessment may be required by the approval authority. The purpose of the functional assessment is to identify the various functions that a particular wetland provides, which will influence mitigation requirements associated with disturbances within wetland and buffer areas.

WETLAND HYDROLOGY: The dynamics of water movement and changes in water supply to areas that are inundated or saturated during the growing season long enough to support a dominance of hydrophytic vegetation.

YARD – An open space of uniform width or depth on the same lot with a building or group of buildings, which open space lies between the building(s) and the nearest lot line and is unoccupied and unobstructed from the ground upward except for the certain features specified in § 307-18 of this Plan. In measuring a "yard" as hereinafter provided, the line of a building shall be deemed to mean a line parallel to the nearest lot line, drawn through the point of a building or group of buildings nearest to such lot line, exclusive of the respective features specified in § 307-18, and the measurement shall be taken at right angles from the line of the building to the nearest lot line.

ZONING BOARD — The Zoning Board of Appeals of the Town of Cortlandt, New York.