

Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan

Cortland County, New York



Prepared By:



June 1, 2010

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Michael McDermott, Mayor

Village Board of Trustees

Michael Berry
Andrew Brush
Paul Gower
Genevieve Suits

LouAnne Randall, Village Clerk/Treasurer

Prepared by:



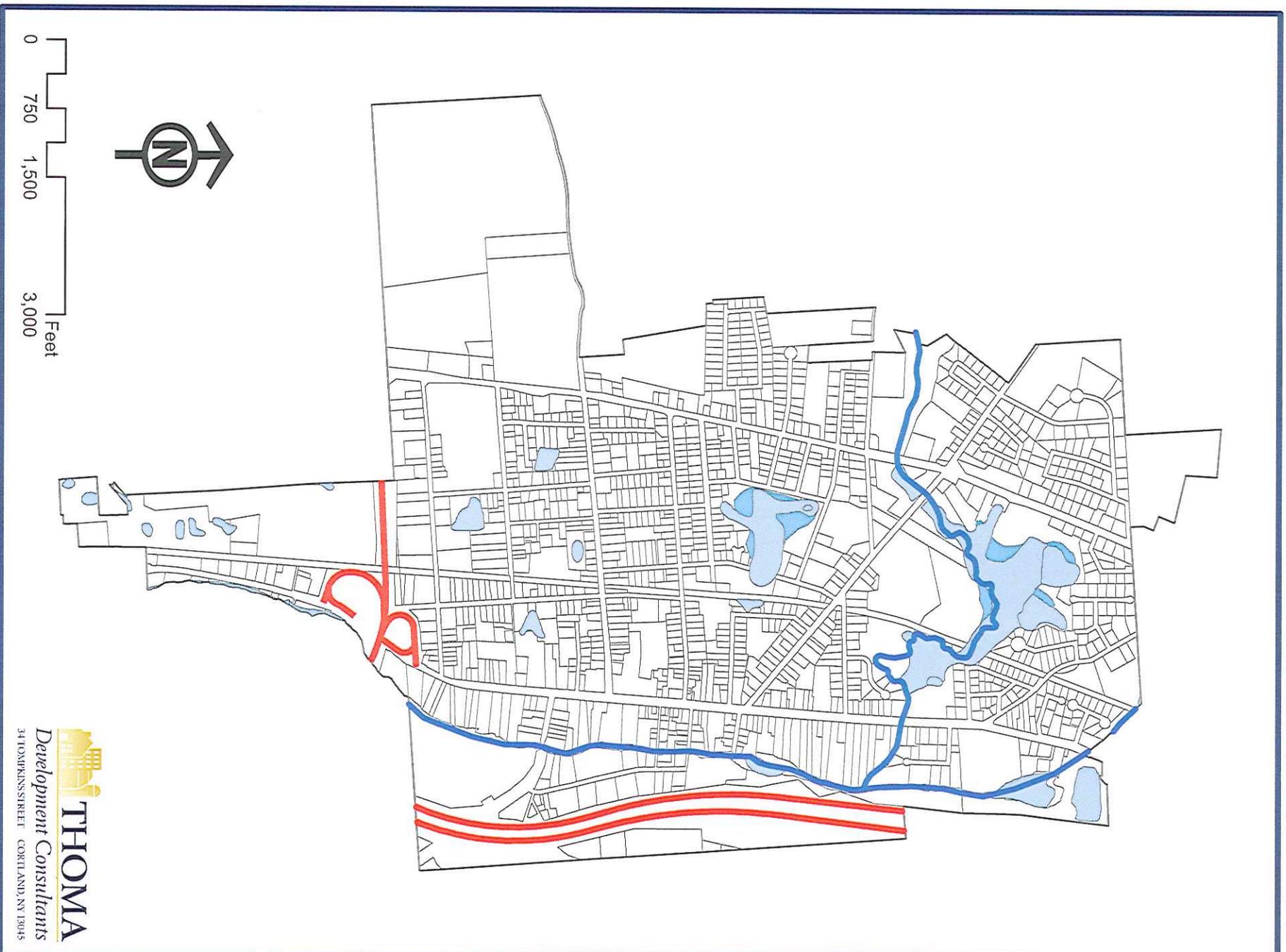
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Village of Homer Vision Statement

The Village of Homer, rich in heritage, will continue to be a safe and attractive small town community where successful businesses and residences co-exist, and goods and services are easily accessible. Our quality of life is enriched through community involvement, strong leadership, educational and recreational opportunities, well-maintained infrastructure, and thoughtfully managed development.

Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010



 **THOMA**
Development Consultants
34 TOMBRINNS STREET CORTLAND, NY 13045

Map Created: 4 November 2009

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I. INTRODUCTION

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

BACKGROUND

This Comprehensive Plan is a guide to promoting the health, safety, and the general welfare of the people of the Village of Homer. Comprehensive planning forms the basis of efforts by a municipality to logically guide the development of its natural and built environment and sustain and improve its quality of life. Significant decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and development can be influenced by the goals and implementation measures stated in its Comprehensive Plan. The completed plan not only serves as a guide in addressing key issues facing the community today, but will also assist in responding to new opportunities and challenges in the future. This long-range document provides recommendations for future action and helps prioritize choices for the allocation of resources.

The comprehensive plan also serves as the foundation for land use zoning regulations and any amendments made to such regulations. A comprehensive plan is not a regulatory document itself, although land use management and policy changes could be a result of implementation of the plan. A sound plan will serve as a legal defense of a community's land use management policies and decisions.

NEW YORK STATE STATUTES

Components of a comprehensive plan are suggested by New York State statutes that authorize local governments to prepare a comprehensive plan. The State recognizes that significant decisions and actions affecting communities are made at the local level. One of the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to local government is the authority and responsibility to undertake comprehensive planning. New York State's definition of a comprehensive plan, the suggested elements that it may contain, as well as procedural requirements for development and adoption, are found in Village Law §7-722 (Village comprehensive plan). The adoption of a comprehensive plan under these statutes is voluntary.

New York statutes require that all land use regulations be in conformance with a comprehensive plan. Adopting land use regulations that conform to an up-to-date comprehensive plan provides significant legal protection for such regulations. Land use regulations are not limited to zoning that separates the community into zoning districts and specifies land uses, building dimensions, and yard requirements in each zone; but may also include regulations that protect natural resources, slopes, historic districts, and view sheds, to name a few.



VILLAGE OF HOMER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

REASON FOR PREPARING THE PLAN

In every community, including the Village of Homer, various public agencies, private organizations, and individuals continuously undertake planning activities and make decisions that, individually and cumulatively, can affect a community's future and impact the quality of life. It is prudent to periodically review the big picture to evaluate the impact of emerging trends; deal with land use issues; ascertain the concerns of citizens and stakeholders; and, ultimately, decide whether policy changes are needed to chart the future desired course of the community.

This comprehensive planning process is the result of the desire of the Village of Homer to become more proactive in guiding the changing conditions in the Village. This plan will serve as a blueprint for future action by the Village Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the community as a whole as it deals with growth and change.

Homer's comprehensive planning process evolved over many months, beginning in Fall 2007. This plan is based upon the values, concerns, and feelings of Village residents and landowners. Community members were involved in the planning process by participating on the Steering Committee, speaking at a public hearing, writing a letter, attending planning workshops, and/or participating in a community survey. Public participation ensured the plan addresses the needs of the community. It allowed the Steering Committee and consultant to better understand the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and critical issues in Homer.

The public participation components of Homer's planning process are described in Section V.

PLAN PREPARATION

Thoma Development Consultants (Thoma) was hired by the Village of Homer through a competitive procurement process to assist in the development of the Village's Comprehensive Plan. Founded in 1980, Thoma is a community development consulting firm based in Cortland, New York.

In addition to analyzing the information gathered through public meetings, surveys, and Steering Committee meetings, Thoma also referenced pertinent U.S. Census data in preparing the plan. Also, Census projections and other relevant demographic information were obtained from Claritas, Inc., a reputable third party marketing research firm. Thoma provided input into the plan based on the experience and expertise of its staff. This information is referenced throughout the Plan and so noted.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Steering Committee

The Village of Homer Steering Committee, created by the local governing body, was composed of political representatives, Planning Board members, and non-elected community members. It designed the Comprehensive Plan, in part, by guiding the process through consultation, participation, public outreach, discussing and articulating possibilities, and serving as a setting for developing the common objectives and strategies that were ultimately placed in the Comprehensive Plan. Membership of the Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee included:



Mary Alice Bellardini, former Village Mayor
Jeremy Boylan, Resident and County Historian
Andrew Brush, Trustee, Village Board
Ward Dukelow, Resident
Douglas Larison, Supt. Homer School District
Alexandra Mulvihill, Village Planning Board
Genevieve Suits, Trustee, Village Board
Bruce Weber, Village Code Enforcement Officer
Margo Yager, Chairperson, Village Planning Board

Community Involvement

Community involvement in creating the plan was critical. A number of opportunities were created for the residents, property owners, business owners, government officials, and involved agencies in the Village of Homer to provide input into the plan. These opportunities are described under *Plan Process* following. Detailed public input data is included in Section V.

Mail Survey

In September of 2007, a Residents Survey was sent to randomly selected owner-occupied and renter households. The ratio of owner-occupants to renters was based on the percentage of these households as they exist in the Village per the 2000 Census (69% owner-occupants versus 31% renters). The Village sent a total of 478 surveys and received 233 completed surveys. This is a 48.7% response rate. The survey represented 535 persons. The survey instrument and compiled results are included in Section V.



The survey asked questions on the tenure of units such as the number of persons in the household, their age, and how long they have lived in the Village. It also questioned shopping habits and what residents in the Village value most in their community. Several questions focused on land use management and there were several open-ended questions which gave respondents the opportunity to voice their opinions on issues such as what they like most about living in Homer, whether Homer has become a more/less desirable place to live, and how did they envisioned the future of Homer.

Public Visioning Meetings

Four public visioning sessions were held in conjunction with the plan. The meeting topics centered on: Presenting information about the comprehensive plan process and allowing for public input on the positives and negatives of living in Homer; a community design presentation; a presentation on land use and zoning; and a visual preference exercise. Information compiled during these meetings is detailed in Section V.

Business Focus Group

An informal meeting of business owners with a membership in the Homer Business Association was held on May 21, 2008. This was an opportunity for business owners to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of doing business in the Village and what they hoped for the future business climate. Information related to that meeting is detailed in Section V.

PLANNING PROCESS MILESTONES

The following events took place from the time of project initiation for the development and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting (September 5, 2007)
- Village resident mail survey (September-October 2007)
- Village Visioning / Goal Sessions (May 2007)
- Visual Preference Survey (November 7, 2007)
- Land Use and Zoning Public Meeting (November 7, 2007)
- Community Design Meeting (December 5, 2007)
- Combined Steering Committee, Planning Board, and ZBA Meeting (January 23, 2008)
- Homer Business Focus Group Meeting (May 21, 2008)
- Regular meetings of Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (December 2007 - July 2009)
- Finalize Vision Statement (February 27, 2008)
- Review of draft plan by Steering Committee (September - October 2009)



- First Public Hearing for review of Comprehensive Plan (January 27, 2010)
- Recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan to the Village Board (February 24, 2010)
- Review of Comprehensive Plan by Cortland County Planning Department and County Planning Board (May 19, 2010)
- Final Public Hearing (June 1, 2010)
- SEQRA Determination (June 1, 2010)
- Adoption of Comprehensive Plan by Village Board (June 1, 2010)

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The *Goals* identified in the Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan are the result of significant deliberation provided by the Village's appointed Steering Committee. They are based on a careful review of the input provided by residents and property owners in the Village, organizations and persons with a vested interest in Homer, and the observations and experience of the Village's consultant. These goals are broad statements that reflect the ideal future conditions desired by the Village.

The *Implementation Measures* herein are a series of action steps or strategies that the Village should implement to achieve each goal in the Comprehensive Plan. The Implementation Measures are prioritized to provide the Village with direction regarding the desired timeframe to undertake each action. The Village acknowledges, however, that it is difficult to forecast future change and opportunities, and that it will be necessary from time to time to revisit and reorder its Implementation Measures.

As mentioned, in New York State the law states that all land use regulations be in accordance with a comprehensive plan. Once the comprehensive plan is adopted, failure to update the zoning code and other land use regulations renders a municipality vulnerable to legal challenges if the existing code is in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. It is incumbent upon the Village Board to adopt this plan and to update its land use regulations with immediacy.



II. SETTING THE SCENE

HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF HOMER



The Village of Homer was established in the late 1700's as a military tract and the original settlement, one of the first in Cortland County, began along the banks of the Tioughnioga River. The Village was officially incorporated in 1835.

Throughout the early-to-mid 1800's, the community thrived. Early businesses and industries included a cotton factory, a nail factory, distilleries, asheries, gunsmiths, furniture factories, tanneries, wagon factories, and the Great Western Store established by early resident Jedidiah Barber. The Great Western Store was Barber's second; built in the late 1800's after a fire destroyed the original. The imposing Barber Block remains a landmark in downtown Homer today. Early in the Village's history, six acres of land were given to the First

Religious Society of Homer for gospel and schooling purposes. Eventually an early school (the Cortland Academy) and several churches located there. This area has evolved into the present Village Green on the west side of South Main Street.

Earlier in the 19th century, the Village lost its bid to the nearby Village of Cortland to become the County's seat of government. When Cortland was selected, most new industry tended to cluster in and around the area that would eventually become the City of Cortland. While Homer had some industrial sites, they tended to be small in scale and employ less than 100 people. Traditionally, the Village has been characterized as a residential community. Today there is only a handful of Village industrial sites scattered throughout the community; many are vacant.

Cortland County and the Village of Homer prospered during the post-Civil War industrial expansion period. During this time, successful Homer Village residents constructed many beautiful buildings and homes and the commercial hub of the Village developed directly east and north of the Village Green. This area was eventually established through zoning as the Central Business District (CBD).

The Village of Homer's Central Business District is located primarily along North and South





Main Street, which is also U.S. Route 11. Both NYS Route 90 and NYS Route 41 intersect with Route 11 in the Downtown. Route 90 is a designated New York State Scenic Byway. The Tioughnioga River, Cortland County's main waterway, runs parallel to Main Street one block east.

Despite the passage of time, the downtown remains as a relatively unspoiled 19th century downtown. In 1972, the Village's "Olde Homer Village Historic District" was added to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. This historic district includes the entire Central Business District and a significant portion of the eastern half of the Village.



The western portion of the Village developed at a later time period than its eastern counterpart, with development starting in the early to mid-1900's. Farm fields were converted to housing developments and single site housing projects. There was also an infill of more modern, small commercial structures, primarily along the major north/south route in this area, Route 281. These commercial structures today house entities such as hair stylists, automotive repair shops, a chiropractor, gas stations, eateries, and a

bar, to name a few. Homer High School was constructed in 1954 on Route 281 in the Village. Directly across the street from the high school is the Village-owned Glenwood Cemetery which has existed since Civil War days and originally sat among the farm fields. Several annexations of land into the Village on its western side provide future opportunities for growth.

The southern and eastern boundaries of the Village have remained unchanged over the last 40 years. The southern portion of the Village is mainly zoned industrial and commercial. The eastern area of the Village is primarily residential and is bounded by Interstate 81. This eastern area of the Village also contains steep slopes which limits certain types of development.

HOMER TODAY

The Village of Homer, primarily located in the Town of Homer, is one of three villages, 15 townships, and one city that comprise Cortland County (a very small portion of the Village is located in the Town of Cortlandville). The Village includes a population of 3,368 (2000 Census). Cortland County is a rural-urban county located along Interstate 81 in the central part of New York State between the cities of Binghamton to the south, and Syracuse to the north. Cortland is the county's only city, with a population of 18,740 persons. Most of the rest of Cortland County is predominantly rural, with most persons



living in population centers of less than 2,500 persons. Despite having a population that is greater than 2,500, the Town of Homer still remains more rural than urban.

Respondents to the Residents Survey overwhelmingly enjoy living in “quiet, small town” Homer. There are many businesses in the Village that provide essential services to residents. There is a full time police department and a volunteer fire department. The Homer School District is located in the Village and is a well-respected educational resource.



While many residents enjoy living in Homer, many are dissatisfied with escalating property taxes. The challenge for the Village becomes how to generate greater revenues/tax base without cutting essential services and without significantly changing the character of the Village. To pay for many of its municipal projects, the Village has been aggressive in seeking grant funds to lessen the burden on taxpayers. This has benefited the Village in many respects, particularly from the standpoint that it remains a popular place

to live. Realtors report that for-sale homes in the Village sell quickly and maintain their value. While small businesses often struggle to survive, Homer is fortunate that its vacancy rate for commercial downtown properties is low.

One of the biggest challenges facing the Village today is the economic decline in Cortland County and the upstate New York region. This phenomenon has resulted in an overall decline in the Village population over the last two decades and in Cortland County as a whole. Many of the working class have fled the area, leaving behind an aging population, with a concurrent decrease in younger persons. At the same time, the County’s past over-reliance on a manufacturing based economy, combined with the struggle to create new job opportunities, compounded by a nation-wide recession, have resulted in Cortland County recently experiencing unprecedented levels of unemployment. This is discussed more fully in *Local Economic Climate*. In order to position itself for economic opportunities, the Village has undertaken a number of both major and smaller projects to increase its desirability as a place to live and work. For example, over the past two decades, the Village has made significant inroads in improving and expanding its water and sewer infrastructure, and roadways. Most of the Village includes connecting sidewalks, making it a walkable community. The Village has been a player in providing new sites for business and residential growth by annexing acreage that allows for future development. Development has been slow but there is evidence to suggest that new opportunities lie on the Village’s doorstep.





Both the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census note that new construction in the Village was extremely low over two decades, with less than 10 new projects developed. Recently, a 24-unit senior housing development was built in the central area of the Village. The NYS Police constructed a police barracks on the Village's west side on Route 281. One condominium and one multi-family development are proposed, as is a convenience store/gas station, all near Route 281. The Town of Cortlandville, to the south of the Village has been a hotbed of commercial development in the County, but it is reaching total build out along Route 281. The Village of Homer, with developable land and quick on/off access to Interstate 81, is ripe for commercial and residential development. This area sits over a federally designated sole source aquifer. The Village must ensure that its land use regulations are adequate so that new development is properly managed, the character of the Village is maintained, and natural resources are protected.

At the onset of this comprehensive planning process, gasoline prices surged to well over \$4 per gallon in Cortland County, creating a significant economic impact on an area that has a weak public transportation system and a significant number of workers who travel more than 20 minutes to work. Home heating prices also climbed which challenged the ability of lower and middle class homeowners to heat their homes and increased the overhead of business owners. This is especially problematic in a community such as Homer, where so many larger, older, energy inefficient homes and buildings populate the landscape. As this document is prepared in 2010, the Village recognizes the deep concerns voiced by economists and environmentalists about the limitations of oil and gas supplies, the economic drivers of more recent decades. The Village also recognizes that the shortage of either or both of these resources will impact residents in ways that it may not be prepared for. It is hoped this plan communicates the sense of urgency that all citizens should feel in the face of diminishing natural resource supplies and that the plan offers a first step in how the Village might address these concerns in the future.

The Village has also been an advocate for preserving its historic architecture, and has relied heavily on entities such as the Homer Landmark Society to educate building owners on the benefits of historic preservation while gaining voluntary cooperation, particularly in its historic district. Residents Survey respondents overwhelmingly championed historic preservation and cultural heritage as a hallmark of the community. The Village must decide if voluntary cooperation will protect its historic structures in the future or whether it has to enact legislation related to historic preservation.

Homer has also been a large supporter of the arts, community events, and recreational offerings, resulting in a variety of public functions being held throughout the seasons. This contributes to the overall fabric of the community and is a component in making the Village an inviting community. It is essential for the Village to continue to support community efforts and encourage volunteerism wherever and whenever it can.



POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2000 Census, 3,368 residents live in the Village of Homer. This includes a total of 1,373 households, with an average household size of 2.4 persons. Additional demographics are noted below. In addition to Census data, information is also provided by Claritas, Inc. on 2012 trends.

POPULATION TRENDS 1970 – 2012

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2012
Cortland County	45,894	48,820	48,963	48,599	--
Homer, Town*	2,417	2,985	3,052	2,995	--
Homer, Village#	4,143	3,635	3,476	3,410	3,129

HOUSEHOLD TRENDS 1970 – 2012

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2012
Cortland County	14,759	16,324	17,247	20,116	--
Homer, Town*	726	914	1,021	1,073	--
Homer, Village	1,307	1,303	1,335	1,373	1,324

*Excluding the Village of Homer

#A portion of the Village is located in the Town of Cortlandville

VILLAGE OF HOMER HOUSEHOLD/POPULATION QUICK FACTS

- 29.2% of the Village's population is aged 35-54.
- 23.8% of the Village's population is under age 18. This percentage is projected to be 20.1% in 2007.
- The percentage of adults over the age of 65 is 17.8%. This percentage is expected to rise to 17.98% in 2012.
- The median age in the Village is 39.4 years.
- The 2012 estimated median age is 40.57 years.
- Of the Village's 1,373 households, 26.3% live alone. Of the two or more person households, 42% do not have children under the age of 18.
- There are 179 female-headed households with no husband present. 127 of these women have children under the age of 18.
- 35% of Homer's households include a member who is aged 60 or older.
- The Village's individual poverty rate is 9.7%.





LOCAL ECONOMIC CLIMATE

As noted in the *History of the Village of Homer* above, the original settlement of what would eventually become the Village was located along the banks of the Tioughnioga River. This early settlement established the Main Street area as the hub of commerce and trade for the Village and the surrounding Town of Homer which had its economic roots in agriculture. The County's other two villages, McGraw and Marathon, and the City of Cortland, also served as places where goods and services could be obtained by surrounding towns that were heavily reliant on farming.

The Industrial Revolution had a major impact on the economy of Cortland County and the small Village of Homer. The hub of industry in Cortland County was centered in the City of Cortland and eventually spread to the surrounding Town of Cortlandville. As previously mentioned, the Village of Homer was also the site of a number of smaller scale industries. This enabled many Homer residents to live and work in the same community. It is noted, however, that the Village remained predominantly residential in nature.

As the 20th century progressed, and mass production manufacturing took a stronghold, there was less of a reliance on local farms as the County's economic base. Post World War II, and the rising popularity of the automobile resulted in many residents seeking employment opportunities in the industrialized area of Cortland County. Manufacturing companies such as Smith Corona Marchant (SCM), a manufacturer of portable typewriters and employer of 4,000 persons; Brockway Motors, producers of the famed Husky truck; Wickwire Brothers, inventors of wire screen and employer of 1,500 persons, and many other manufacturing concerns, too numerous to mention, provided ample employment opportunities for County residents. These were areas where the transport of goods via railroad, and eventually by roads, was centered. This created an inextricable link between the County's economy and its individual municipalities.

Unfortunately, industrial retrenchment in Cortland County began in the late 1970's and continues to plague the Cortland County community even today. Although closings such as Wickwire's and Brockway Motors initially shocked the community, these job losses were negated by the startup of a Rubbermaid Corporation plant in the City of Cortland, and, at about the same time, the expansion of Buckbee Mears, also in the City. As Smith Corona began a long series of layoffs, Buckbee Mears and other manufacturing entities were there to take up some of the slack. Eventually Buckbee Mears employed 1,100 persons in 1997. It should be noted, however, that the County has never recaptured all of its former manufacturing jobs.

A second wave of industrial retrenchment occurred when Rubbermaid closed its plant in 1997 and eliminated 500 jobs; Smith Corona finally left the area in early 2001, ending a 100-year presence in the community; and Buckbee Mears closed its doors in 2005. Recently, with the local and national economy on a downward spiral, Cortland companies have been experiencing significant layoffs. The decline in number of businesses has also affected the Village. Jaline Togs, a manufacturer of children's clothing, closed in 1982, leaving an underused industrial building on Pine Street in the



heart of the downtown. Henkle (formerly R.H. Miller), a manufacturer of steel wire and wire drawing lubricants closed in late 2008. In 2006 Barden Homes, a residential and commercial builder, relocated from the Village to the nearby Town of Preble. In 2009, the company announced the closing of all manufacturing operations in Cortland County, leaving behind a new \$5M state-of-the-art building.



The December 2008 employment figures showed Cortland County registering an unemployment rate of 9.1%, which was the 4th highest in New York State. January's 2009 unemployment escalated to over 10% and February registered at 11%; three months of unprecedented unemployment. All of these aforementioned job losses and the resultant economic distress have had severe ramifications for all areas in the County. While unemployment data is not available for individual Cortland communities outside of the 2000 Census, the Homer Residents Survey revealed that 3% of respondents were unemployed.

Currently, the Homer Central School District and Albany International, with 409 and 120 employees, respectively, are the largest employers in the Village. The 2002 Economic Census reveals 70 business establishments exist in the Village of Homer. More than 40% of those businesses were identified as retail or food service.

The 2000 Census showed that the average commute for Village residents to their jobs was 20.8 minutes. A driving time of over 20 minutes takes a resident well outside the Village boundaries. The Census also revealed that 25.1% of those employed Village residents have jobs outside the County. This confirms that the Village is a desirable community in which to live, but not necessarily where most residents work.

On a positive note, Cortland County is located at the geographic center of New York State, with access to all other regions in the State, the neighboring Northeast corridor through Washington, DC, and Canada. The region is within a six-hour drive of 63 million U.S. and Canadian customers, 21% of American manufacturers, and a \$227 billion dollar retail sales market.

In 1999, Cortland County was designated as an Empire Zone by New York State, enabling businesses to take advantage of tax incentive and special job training programs, when investing in new job creation in Zone properties. Much of downtown Homer is a designated Empire Zone and the Zone continues south along Route 11 to the Village line. The Finger Lakes Business and Technology Park is located on Route 281 in the Village adjacent to Interstate 81's Exit 12. The Park now contains two buildings and has a number of vacant parcels that can





be developed. With this desirable location, the Village may be able to attract moderate job growth in the future.

Outside of traditional job creation activities, the Village of Homer benefits from the economic impact of recreational and tourist attractions. There are a number of events happening on the Village Green such as band concerts, Holiday in Homer, antique auto shows, Christmas on the Green, and the Route 90 Garage Sales that attract visitors and their dollars to Homer. The Center for the Arts located on Main Street has performances almost weekly that draw additional people to Homer. There are a number of Village parks and an abundance of other recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing that surround Homer. Visitors that partake in any of these activities will likely be a positive economic impact on local businesses.

VILLAGE OF HOMER INCOME/WORKFORCE QUICK FACTS

Income

- The average family household income in the Village of Homer is \$71,389 (2000 Census).
- The median family income is \$55,573.
- The highest percent of poverty stricken households is female-headed households with children (4.18% of all households).
- The percentage of persons in the Village who live below 80% of the County median income is 34.2% (HUD; 2000 Census)

Village Workforce

- 65.3% of the Village is employed and 32.06% are not in the workforce (children, retirees, etc); unemployment is 2.64%.
- 62.8% of the Village working population is white collar, with 27.8% in the Professional and Related Occupations category.



PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

A LAND USE PLAN FOR THE VILLAGE OF HOMER – CRANDALL ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS (1971)

The 1971 Land Use Plan is the document the Village has been using regarding its land use decisions. There appears to be some conflicting information as to whether or not an additional narrative was included with this plan, which is a fold out map accompanied by a limited amount of narrative related to Plan Objectives. Since the accompanying narrative can't be found, it is obviously not being utilized by the Village Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals as a reference when making land use decisions.



As indicated on the map provided with the Land Use Plan, the majority of the Village's land use was intended to be residential. Of the residential land use, it was the Village's intentions for most of the residential portion of the Village to include 1-3 family structures. The Land Use Plan development process included a residents survey and it was noted that one in four households were located in a multifamily dwelling. Most of the zoning districts that are established in the Village stayed loyal to the recommendations noted in the Land Use Plan.

Other notable objectives of the plan are listed below:

- *Control land use conflicts between industrial corridor and surrounding residential land use. Truck penetration into residential streets was undesirable. Utilize industrial zoned lands between Fulton and Grove Street before other land located in R-2 zoning is considered. Land use conflicts occur in the general area of the Village Center, housing that surrounds industrial zones, and the Route 281 Corridor.*
- *Another objective was to limit the development of undeveloped land where natural characteristics created limitations. It was recommended that in some areas that little or no construction be undertaken, and instead develop land for uses as the Town garage or recreational areas. For other wet areas, such as floodplains and wetlands, it was recommended that site plan review include recommendations by a qualified engineer regarding the impact to wet areas.*
- *It was recommended that commercial development along Route 281 be limited. Site plan for commercial development should include setback control, access, parking, and display signs.*
- *No homes in the R-2 zoning district should exceed three (3) units.*



- *Developable pieces of land were found on the south side of Albany Street; at the Clinton Street/Route 281/Hudson Street triangle; and on the west side of Route 281. Village expansion could occur to the west of the Village to Cosmos Hill (Town of Cortlandville) and to the northwest of the Village in the narrow valley between Hudson Street and Route 41.*

ODYSSEY 2010 (1996)

The Village asked its department heads to give a written overview of where the department stood in 1996 and where changes might be expected in the future. It then asked for Village residents to volunteer to sit on committees to discuss: (1) The Central Business and Historic District; (2) Beautification; (3) Recreation; (4) Public Safety and Codes; and (5) Business and Industry. Following is a brief summary of those issues that relate to the comprehensive planning process.



The Central Business and Historic District

- *Expand the use of the Village Green – expanding the use of the Village Green would bring more people into the Village to support retail establishments. Small businesses seemed to be challenged by finding support from the Village population alone.*
- *Create a Homer History and Memorabilia Museum/Develop a Historic Homer Brochure - It was noted that there was no central repository of historic information that could be shared with residents and visitors. There was no walking tour guide on people, places, and events. The library and the Town Hall were discussed as possibilities.*
- *Create a Budget for Marketing the Village – In order to create more public awareness of the various planned activities in the Village, and its historic resources, a marketing budget should be developed to allow for television, radio, and newspaper advertising. It was hoped that this effort would draw visitors from a larger marketing area.*
- *Promote Business Development of the Zoned Central Business District – Most of the growth in the Village's business activity appeared to be occurring in the Route 281 corridor and the committee felt that the Central Business District was being bypassed, threatening the historic character of the Village. The committee recommended that Water, Wall, Pine, and James Streets were underdeveloped with respect to businesses. Shops could be developed in preserved buildings, and a park like area and a river walk could be developed between the Tioughnioga River and Main Street.*



Beautification

- *Maybe the Village should acquire properties to develop approaches to the Village.*
- *Route 281 should have curbing and trees to give it the look of a Village street rather than a highway. Facades should look more like those of the Central Business District. Parking lots should be paved and there should be required landscaping. It is recognized that it may be financially difficult for owners to pay for landscaping so maybe the Village could donate trees/shrubs to new businesses as a “Welcome to Homer” gesture. Enlisting clubs and other organizations is also a possibility.*
- *There is a need for nice Village residences (condos or townhouses) to be available for retirees, possibly the North Main Street site owned by Joe Armideo.*
- *Bury power lines underground, at least in the downtown area; possibly in the sidewalk area under pavers so that it wouldn't be that expensive to access and avoid digging up entire streets.*

Recreation

- *Combine recreation departments to encompass the entire county. Purchase the junkyard (Contento's) and turn it into a park area and more sports field space.*
- *Prioritize Homer children or charge non-Village residents a higher fee for organized sports. Currently the Village pays a yearly fee for residents' use of Cortland parks, yet Cortland residents pay the same fee as Homer residents to participate in Village sponsored sports.*
- *Expand usage of school buildings for after school care, art classes, etc.*
- *Add biking and cross country trails along the river.*

Public Safety and Codes

POLICE

- *The Village's decision to expand police coverage 24/7 was applauded, even though the merger of other departments in other municipalities was being considered as a cost savings.*
- *Juvenile crime, especially drug and alcohol use, were concerns.*
- *The formation of neighborhood watch groups was encouraged.*
- *Police were encouraged to increase bicycle and foot patrols.*



- *Much of the attention in recreational pursuits was being focused on adults and young children. The committee thought it would be in the best interest of the Village to focus more attention on adolescents. In addition to the Village, churches, schools, businesses, and parents could assist in this endeavor.*

FIRE

- *Homer's fire department was viewed as excellent in providing protection for the Village and surrounding townships.*
- *Inspections of multifamily units by an outside consultant were viewed as a threat to the Village.*
- *The Village needed to place a tanker on the western side of the railroad tracks since trains could delay response times by 10-15 minutes.*

CODE ENFORCEMENT

- *Code enforcement efforts had improved in recent years. This was viewed as a positive step since the committee felt there was a correlation between substandard, overcrowded housing conditions and family problems.*
- *Heavy foot traffic in areas of the Village where there were no sidewalks was a concern.*

ZONING

- *Zoning restrictions were justifiable even though some felt their rights were being taken away. The code officer brings a high level of professionalism to the job even though he is only part time.*
- *The Village should modify its definitions of three and four family units allowed in the R-2 zoning district. This recommendation included a closer look at lot coverage for four units from 20,000 to 40,000 sf because of increased needs for parking and the close proximity of structures to the property line. Affordable living situations needed to be weighed against quality of life considerations.*
- *Some property owners are still unaware of the permitting process and the Village needed to use such venues as its newsletter to get the word out in the community.*



BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

- *Most of the entrances to the Village are a disgrace. Some of that may be solved by communicating with business owners and/or managers. Perhaps this could be addressed by volunteers from the high school or civic organizations.*
- *The Village should have its own Code Enforcement Officer instead of sharing him with the Town of Cortlandville.*
- *With respect to zoning and codes, they should be examined carefully since they may no longer be relevant today or in the future.*
- *The key is to have a Master Plan to determine what kinds of businesses the Village wants and where they should be located. The Village should have an inventory of properly zoned vacant land and buildings on file with the Chamber of Commerce. Economic Development Committee.*
- *Any economic development activity must be a coordinated community effort. The tourism industry was viewed as the best area of success. A couple of recommendations that would assist in this endeavor included: (1) tie the Village Green to Durkee Park; (2) link Route 281 to Main Street; (3) landscape all entrances to the Village; (4) promote theme events; (5) provide family entertainment; and preferred commercial opportunities may include antique shops, upscale restaurant, country store, ice cream/soda shop, and a gift/craft shop.*

TOWN OF HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2002)

One of the pervasive themes found in the Town of Homer's Comprehensive Plan is that the Town desires to preserve its agricultural character. The Town has the most acreage devoted to farming in the County (over 62%) and contains some of the most prime farming soil in the State. Some of the goals of the plan that impact the Village of Homer include the following:

- *The existing historical, archaeological, esthetic, and most importantly, the ecological (water quality, etc.) assets of the Town must be safeguarded and preserved. New housing construction and neighborhood rehabilitation must be encouraged and promoted in and around the designated centers for growth.*
- *Commercial activity has been concentrated over the years in and near the Village of Homer, Little York, and East Homer. Future commercial growth should be encouraged to continue in these areas.*





- *Light industrial development should be encouraged near compatible (usually commercial) land uses. Thus, light industrial development should be concentrated in and near the Village of Homer, Little York, and East Homer. Light industrial development includes industrial activities that are not objectionable to the general public because of noise, smoke, odor, etc., and do not result in substantial heavy equipment or tractor trailer traffic. A typical light industrial facility would have the exterior appearance of a commercial operation.*
- *The Town should consider developing additional recreational opportunities to complement the Tioughnioga River trail, such as acquisition of land for a Town park with a trail connection to the river trail.*
- *The sand and gravel aquifer in the Town of Homer is the water source for the majority of the Town's and Village's residents and businesses. If this resource were to become contaminated and no longer potable, securing an alternative source of water would be a great financial burden to the residents and businesses of the Town and Village. Therefore, aquifer protection must be a priority for all land use decisions within the aquifer or the aquifer recharge area. Wellhead Protection regulations provide measures of safeguarding those areas of the aquifer which directly impact public water supplies, through strict development guidelines.*

DOWNTOWN PLANNING STUDY (1996)

The purpose of 1996 Downtown Study was to identify and prioritize the needs of the Central Business District. The plan's priorities are summarized following with some annotations regarding successes achieved by the Village in implementing some of the prioritized projects:

- *Reverse the Physical Deterioration of Commercial Buildings – The preservation of historic buildings is imperative to retaining the unique character that is the Village. Deterioration of buildings presents a potential for tax loss, is not an inviting atmosphere for patrons, and discourages new investment. An incentive program to assist building owners should be developed (this was done). Since the Village has a high percentage of older residents, handicapped access should be addressed while this work is being undertaken. (Village developed a façade program during this time. Notable participants included Homer Men and Boys which purchased the building next door and completely re-did their façade; and the Barber Block (now Bev's) where the roof and cornice were repaired, bird/animal infestation was addressed on the upper floor, and painting was done).*





- *Improve Parking Facilities – Is there a shortage of parking spaces or an under-utilization of existing parking spaces? Survey revealed 160 public parking spaces and 69 spaces reserved for the banks’ customers. Conclusion: No lack of spaces but a lack of utilization. Under-use attributed to unawareness of municipal lots (new signage was eventually installed); security concerns; customers having a desire to park within the line of sight of their destination, therefore, the most desirable parking spaces are along Main Street. Municipal lots are not striped (This was done). Improvements were also done to provide handicapped curb cuts from parking spaces on Main Street to the sidewalk. It was recommended that physical improvements be made to parking lots and controls put into place to regulate Main Street parking.*
- *Security – Cobra lights do not provide enough light on sidewalks (they were replaced). Homer Village police go off duty at 11PM (this is now 24 hour coverage). Payphone on Main Street resulted in youth congregating on the street (since removed). Inadequate lighting and condition of Allen Lane discourages use of parking lot to the rear of Main Street after sunset (Allen Lane was improved).*
- *Aesthetic Improvements – Municipal parking areas are unkempt; the rears of buildings facing Briggs Memorial Parking Lot, located to the rear of Main Street buildings, are unattractive and unkempt. Dumpsters are clearly visible and typically overloaded. Allen Lane needs to be improved to encourage usage of the lot. The Central Business District has unsightly overhead lighting. Overhead utility lines detract from the historic character of the downtown. Individual business owners need to upgrade the quality of window displays.*
- *Creation of a Downtown Business Group – (There is now a Homer Business Association which includes the Village/Town).*
- *Public Facility/Amenity Improvements - The poor condition of Main Street sidewalks was noted, however, these were subsequently addressed. Wall, Pine, and Water Street sidewalks to the river are still in poor condition in some places. Benches were too close to the Main Street parking spaces on the east side and were removed.*
- *Continuation of Planning Activities – Build upon and update this report and focus on additional long-range goals, including but not limited to, riverfront development, a market study, business recruitment, and other planning activities.*
- *Other issues – The poor condition of Jaline Toggs building on Pine Street, Mel Simon rental property at the end of Pine Street, and the large wood frame building owned by Tom Niederhofer (since rehabilitated). The Village should prepare itself for downtown vacancies and identify missing “niches” in the business environment.*





Action Agenda – There was a detailed Action Agenda on the types of actions needed to address the activities identified in the plan, many of which have been accomplished.

DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLANS: CITY OF CORTLAND, VILLAGES OF HOMER, MCGRAW, AND MARATHON (2001)



Funding for this study was provided by the NYS Office for Small Cities (now known as the NYS Office of Community Renewal). With a renewed interest on the part of the State in revitalizing downtowns, this provided the impetus for selecting the Homer Central Business District as the boundaries for the Village's study area. On-site surveys of building conditions were completed as part of the effort. Building and business owners also provided information on building usage. Some notable conclusions:

- *46% of the structures in the Business District were residential homes. Residences comprised the greatest use in the downtown. The second most use was services businesses such as banks, professional offices, insurance agencies, etc.*
- *The average age of buildings was over 100 years.*
- *No residential buildings were used for commercial businesses and no commercial buildings were utilized as residences.*
- *There were little of no vacancies.*

Primary issues facing the downtown at the time:

- *The development of the Tioughnioga River Trail was viewed as a tremendous opportunity to strengthen the study area. The Village was encouraged to improve the area between the river and the downtown. Pine Wall, and Water Streets needed to be improved, especially the sidewalks.*
- *Better marketing was needed. It was recommended that the Village "brand" itself and that its web address be included in all marketing material. A December event, capitalizing on the Village's historic character, was desirable.*
- *The Village should continue to seek funds for continued façade improvements. The maintenance of older buildings would continue to be a challenge for the Village.*
- *The Village should initiate projects to get vehicular traffic to "discover" downtown Homer.*



- *Parking lots should be physically attractive and well lit. Existing dumpsters in the Briggs parking lot should be reduced in number and screened. Business owners should not park in the front of their businesses and restaurant owners hosting special events should encourage the use of off-street parking.*

LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLAN (LWRP) (2008)

The Tioughnioga River Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is a comprehensive land and water use plan for 11 participating municipalities, along the Tioughnioga River Corridor in Cortland County, including all of the Village of Homer. The draft LWRP was completed in late 2008 and is currently under review by the New York State Department of State. Once it is reviewed, a formal adoption process will be undertaken by the participating local municipalities. Once adopted, local comprehensive plans and zoning codes should be consistent with the LWRP.

The LWRP sets forth a series of policies and policy measures categorized as “Developed Waterfront Policies”, “Natural Waterfront Policies”, “Public Waterfront Policies”, and “Working Waterfront Policies”. These policies are intended to preserve



the River Corridor’s natural environment while capitalizing on the River’s unique assets. The plan recommends, among other things, that future growth and development occur in or adjacent to existing Villages and hamlets in order to preserve open space and agricultural lands.

The LWRP also recommends specific projects for the River Corridor as a whole, and for specific communities. Regarding the Village of Homer, two

specific projects are recommended, including project #1.3 to remove blighting structures along Route 11, and #1.4, to develop a restaurant along the river in the downtown, the Circus House, or other waterfront location. The plan also recommends the development of coordinated, progressive land use strategies, enhanced site plan review requirements, architectural design guidelines, historic preservation ordinances, and development of updated comprehensive plans for Corridor municipalities.

Lastly, the LWRP details specific actions/laws that each municipality needs to enact or amend in order to be consistent with the LWRP. For the Village of Homer, this is limited to ensuring that any new or amended zoning districts limit the height of structures to 40 feet or less. Once the LWRP is reviewed by the State, the Village will need to adopt a local consistency law in order for the LWRP to take effect. Upon adoption, the Village comprehensive plan and other land use regulations and decisions are required to be consistent with the LWRP. The LWRP was referenced in developing this comprehensive plan, and this plan is consistent with the established policies of the Tioughnioga River Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

Section III: Inventory and Analysis





III. INVENTORY and ANALYSIS

1. HOUSING

Respondents to the Village of Homer's Comprehensive Plan Residents Survey, and opinions voiced at various public visioning sessions held in conjunction with the plan, noted the desire to preserve the Village's small town atmosphere, its architecture, and its heritage. There is no question that the Village's historic housing structures play a vital role in defining the Village's sense of place and its character.



During the planning process for determining the Goals and Implementation Measures for Housing, information culled from the 2000 U.S. Census, the Comprehensive Plan Residents Survey, public visioning sessions, the Steering Committee, and other sources such as the Cortland County Board of

Realtors, was examined. Homer's housing stock is overwhelmingly comprised of single unit detached structures (70.8%) as noted in the 2000 Census. The total number of housing units is 1,453, with 1,373 (94.5%) being occupied. Of the occupied housing units, 69% are owner occupied and 31% are income property. The Village's housing stock is aged, with 87.6% built prior to 1960 and 48.6% built prior to 1939. The United States is about to undertake the 2010 Census. It is anticipated that the percentage of older structures in the Village will increase, as the number of housing units built in the Village between 2000 and the present is very low and few houses were lost. During this time period, only 24 units of income property were developed as part of a new senior citizen affordable housing project.

Despite the lack of new housing development in the Village and recent market downturns, the Village maintains a robust housing market. The Cortland County Board of Realtors notes that between January 2006 and July 2009, the average for-sale home in the Village was on the market for 69 days (larger single family homes were on the market for a longer time period). This is indicative of the Village's desirability as a place to live.



Residents Survey respondents in all age cohorts ranked the Village's housing conditions and housing choices as "good". However, the top three threats to the Village, as voiced at public meetings, were taxes, the need for consistent code enforcement, and rundown houses/absentee landlords. The mail survey also asked respondents to rank the types of development the Village should have in the future. The number one ranked



answer was, “Maintaining/rehabilitating the existing housing stock.” “Developing single family housing” ranked 5th out of 14 development areas, just after “Developing sidewalks throughout the Village.” Developing “rental housing” and “apartment complexes” ranked 13th and 14th, respectively. Converting single family homes to multifamily housing ranked second as a factor that would make the Village a less desirable place to live, only falling behind “neighborhood deterioration”.

It is also important to note that Village’s percentage of elderly persons (those aged 65 years or older) is presently the highest in Cortland County, with that percentage projected to be approximately 18% by the year 2012. Thirty-five percent (35%) of all Village households have a member who is aged 60 or older. Sixty-nine (69) out of the 72



(95%) survey respondents who were 65 years or older have lived in the Village for 30 years or more. This is an indication that a number of residents prefer to “age in place” rather than retire outside of the Village or leave the State entirely.

Cortland County’s assessor reported that there are 986 Village single family housing structures in its database. Approximately 22%, or 220 housing units, exceed 1,800 square feet and are 50 years

old or older. Large, historic homes are typically harder to maintain, consume high energy levels, and may not be handicap accessible, making it difficult, especially for older homeowners, to remain living in these dwellings as they grow older.

It recognized, too, that housing options should be kept affordable and accessible so that the Village maintains a diversity of income, age, and disability segments within the community. The Steering Committee was in favor of pursuing new housing development opportunities that would maintain this diversity rather than being aimed at a single target market such as the elderly or low income households, for example.

The Residents Survey indicated that 6.6% of the respondents used their domicile as a home business. This percentage excluded day care providers. With a national upward trend in telecommuting for employment and home occupations, the Village desires to promote the expansion of home businesses, while preserving the character of residential neighborhoods. This issue needs to be addressed by updated home business zoning regulations.

Survey respondents ranked “bicycle/pedestrian paths” and “sidewalks throughout the Village” as 3rd and 4th, respectively, out of 14 future types of development they would like to see. The Steering Committee agreed that incorporating sidewalks and/or pedestrian/bicycle trails in new housing development and linking them to the existing sidewalk and trail system was very important to the future of the Village.



In analyzing the above data, the Village recognizes the following with respect to its housing stock:

- Its housing architecture plays a prominent role in defining the character of the Village. The Village needs to develop safeguards to preserve this architecture.
- The Village's population is aging and many of its older residents are "aging in place", meaning that they are not moving out of the Village to enjoy their elder years. Alternative housing options that would allow this population to downsize and remain living in the Village are lacking.
- Village residents are in favor of rehabilitating the existing housing stock. Large single family homes are difficult for any household to maintain, especially older owners. Rehabilitation programs need to be developed to preserve the character and architecture of the structures, remove environmental concerns, and make the homes energy efficient. This increases housing affordability for individual households while meeting national energy goals.
- Per the results of the Residents Survey, new single family housing development is preferred over multifamily housing development. The Village needs to further examine emerging trends with respect to housing so that future development meets identified needs. There appears to be a need for developing smaller scale housing to accommodate seniors, empty nesters, and first time homebuyers. This could be accomplished through new construction or the rehabilitation of existing space such as developing the upper floors of commercial buildings, for example. This smaller scale housing development would provide opportunities to downsize, resulting in larger homes becoming available for sale for growing households.
- As technological advances are made, the Village needs to periodically assess the desires, needs, and impacts of home business owners.
- Requiring sidewalks and/or trails in new housing development and incorporating them into the existing multimodal transportation network is a priority for the Village.

GOAL 1.1: Ensure all dwelling units are in compliance with New York State Property Maintenance Code. There will be units in the Village, existing or proposed, which are affordable and accessible to all income, age, and disability segments of the population.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 1.1.1. Seek financing sources, such as State or federal funds, to renovate housing through rehabilitation programs. Particular emphasis shall be paid to homeowners who struggle financially. Income property rehabilitation programs, where the majority of tenants are lower income, should be conditioned on rent subsidy programs or affordable rents.



- 1.1.2. Continue to support comprehensive housing code enforcement efforts in the Village to maintain owner-occupied and income property units in compliance with the NYS Property Maintenance Code.
- 1.1.3. Partner with financing sources to provide financing for developers to create market rate housing. This housing will be created via new construction or the rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, or mixed commercial/residential structures.
- 1.1.4. Promote home ownership through programs that provide assistance to first time homebuyers.
- 1.1.5. Develop a proactive approach to the development of new rental units for all income, age, and disability segments of the population as demand and developable properties are identified. The Village will work with qualified developers who share a common vision with the Village in developing new living units to meet growing needs that are in keeping with the character of the Village.
- 1.1.6. Work with local, State, and federal housing agencies and organizations regarding the housing needs of special needs populations, including but not limited to, handicap access, visitability, the needs of the frail elderly, etc., and assist with advocacy efforts when needed.
- 1.1.7. Partner with Cortland County and other agencies devoted to housing related issues such as homelessness, lead based paint, radon, energy efficiency, and safety issues. The Village will be a part of the referral network.

GOAL 1.2: Future housing development, or modifications to existing housing, will be consistent with the size, scale, aesthetics, architecture, character, and historic nature of the Village and its neighborhoods.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 1.2.1. Enact minimum design guidelines that include all housing development so that new construction and significant rehabilitation/renovation of existing housing is in keeping with the character/architecture of the neighborhood in which the project is being undertaken. Incorporate design guidelines into site plan review.

GOAL 1.3: Periodically update land use regulations, particularly with respect to housing.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

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



GOAL 1.4: Promote energy efficiency for new or existing housing units such as green build standards, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, alternative energy sources, and/or new energy saving technologies. Energy saving or alternative energy appliances, technology, materials, or other apparatus shall be of such a nature that it will not interfere with any neighboring properties and/or will not negatively impact the Village environment, quality of life and/or aesthetics.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 1.4.1. Encourage development of housing that conserves energy, including such measures as green build components or higher density development that reduces the need for significant investment in infrastructure. Such development, and its benefits, will be detailed in new zoning regulations.
- 1.4.2. Remain cognizant of emerging housing and energy conservation trends. While the Village will promote energy conservation measures, it may be necessary to prohibit structures, appliances, and/or equipment that are harmful to adjacent properties, to the Village environment or aesthetics, or are determined to be unsafe.

GOAL 1.5: New housing development will be linked and connect to existing development via interconnected sidewalks, roadways, and/or trails.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

- 1.5.1. The Village will require sidewalks, trails or multimodal connections in residential areas so that the Village is a walkable community. Such infrastructure will be accessible by all.
- 1.5.2 Amend zoning to require sidewalks in new development.

GOAL 1.6: Encourage the development of home businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

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



2. CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Village of Homer's Code Enforcement Office (CEO) is charged with administering and enforcing all the provisions of the Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code and the Zoning Laws of the Village, including issuing and receiving permits and applications; reviewing plans and specifications; conducting inspections; providing technical assistance to property owners, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Planning Board; investigating violations and working towards voluntary compliance; and making recommendations to the Village Board for issues of non-compliance.

A lack of property maintenance and the perception that there is a lack of code enforcement is common in most communities. During one of the Village of Homer's Comprehensive Plan visioning sessions, code enforcement violations and/or unfavorable court decisions was ranked as the second largest threat to Homer. Unfortunately, as is typical in any community, there are owners that allow their properties/buildings to deteriorate. Some



properties gain a poor reputation because of the behavior of the inhabitants. These properties become out of character with the rest of the Village, resulting in slumming and blighting conditions. They also tend to devalue surrounding properties. Citizens are reliant on Code Enforcement, the Village Board and Counsel, and/or the Police Department to deal with these properties/owners.



The Village of Homer's CEO is staffed by one part time person, as it has been for decades. In addition to routine Code Office operations as noted above, the Village also contracts separately for required fire inspections for multi-unit residential units and places of assembly. Due to a lack of financial resources, the CEO is often reactive to code issues instead of being proactive.

Without more financial resources being allocated for Code Enforcement, the Village of Homer, in all likelihood, will continue to be reactive to building code violations. If the Village desires an enhanced code enforcement program, it will need to increase its budget. At present, the Village wishes to expand its code enforcement program in the following areas:

- Work with nearby communities or Cortland County to establish a housing court that would be devoted exclusively to dealing with housing issues. There has been criticism that prosecutions of violators are generally unsuccessful. There should be consistent prosecution so that there are real disincentives for repeat offenders.



- Develop an educational program related to Code Enforcement. This could include, but not be limited to, educational brochures, information posted on the Village's website, and informational workshops sponsored by the Code Office. Hopefully this would lessen the reliance on face-to-face meetings with the Code Officer and better inform the public on the legal constraints imposed on code offices.
- To provide disincentives for code violations, and to ensure its fees for such things as building permits are adequate, the Village needs to embark on a more frequent review of its charges for violations, permits, attorneys' fees, and for the overall review of projects, particularly when additional expertise is needed for adequate review.

GOAL 2.1: All properties in the Village of Homer shall be in compliance with all Village regulations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

- 2.1.1. Increase the financial resources for Code Enforcement as necessary to provide proactive Code Enforcement.
- 2.1.2. Include a citizen educational component as part of the Code Enforcement effort.

GOAL 2.2: The Village will adopt Code Enforcement policies that complement and enhance its Code Enforcement Program.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 2.2.1. The Village will conduct a comprehensive review of its Code Enforcement policies.
- 2.2.2. Stricter enforcement of all codes will be the centerpiece of policy changes.
- 2.2.3. Procedures will be developed to ensure a consistent prosecution of violations.
- 2.2.4. The Village will pursue the establishment of a Code Enforcement Court, if possible, in conjunction with other local governments.

GOAL 2.3: Review and update Village building code/local laws/policies, including monetary and other penalties for non-compliance, and make changes as needed.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 2.3.1. The Village will amend or adopt stricter/and better defined local codes, where necessary.
- 2.3.2. The Village will periodically review and update its penalties for violators of building codes/local laws.
- 2.3.3. The Village will periodically review its building code fee/permit schedules.



3. HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Highway commercial areas are typified by auto-oriented development as opposed to pedestrian oriented development typical in traditional downtowns. These areas are usually located along a major transportation route, such as a State highway, have detached commercial structures with on-site parking, and often have few pedestrian connections. The Village of Homer has two areas that can best be described as “highway commercial”. These include Route 281 on the west side of the Village and Route 11 located in its southeast corner, both of which are described in more detail below.

ROUTE 281

Route 281 runs north to south along the Village’s western boundary, connecting to the City of Cortland and the Town of Cortlandville to the south, and terminating in Tully, approximately 13 miles north of the Village. Interstate 81’s Exit 12 connects directly to Rt. 281 at the Village’s southern boundary. This is the preferred route for travelers to the City of Ithaca and the southern Finger Lakes. Both Route 90 and Route 41 intersect with Route 281 in the Village. These transportation routes are experiencing increased traffic patterns, with Route 281 leading the Village in traffic volume.

Moderate to large-scale highway commercial development, such as strip malls, grocery stores, and fast food restaurants, lines much of Route 281 in the nearby Town of Cortlandville. Due to significant development growth in the past 10-15 years, much of this portion of the highway is currently being widened from two lanes to three, four, and five lanes. Route 281 in the Village remains a two-lane highway, although this could change in the future.

Commercial development along Route 281 in the Village actually consists of two nodes of development at the northern and southern ends with residential development in between. Both nodes serve as gateways into the Village. Residential and commercial development tends to be small to moderate in scale. Most businesses tend to be locally owned, as opposed to chain stores or franchise establishments. There are no drive-through businesses in the area.

The southern node runs from the I-81/Route 281 intersection northward to approximately Grove Street. This area includes a New York State police barracks, the Homer High School, the Farm Credit Bureau, the Glenwood Cemetery, offices, gas stations, a realtor, and bars/eateries, to name a few. Commercial development is most heavily concentrated near to, and north of, the Routes 281/90 intersection, with some residential properties interspersed.

The northern node is centered on the intersection of Route 281 and Route 41. Development in this area is similar to that in the southern node. It includes two drive-up ice cream stores, a coffee shop, a car wash, a convenience store, and a U-Haul rental and impound storage facility, among others.



While the Route 281 corridor, along with the downtown, provides the community with needed goods and services, the Village is losing business to nearby communities. As detailed under 4. *Downtown* following, a significant percentage of residents leave the Village to shop elsewhere. This may be, in large part, to the lack of a large supermarket or pharmacy in the community. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that the Village's commercial areas are not providing the full range of goods and services desired by residents.

The Route 281 corridor does not have the sense of place and historic character as does much of the rest of the Village, and does not provide a suitable gateway, or entrance, into the community. In the Residents Survey, respondents listed "small town atmosphere", "community appearance", and "historic character" high among reasons to live in Homer. The Visual Preferences Survey (See Section V) showed that residents tended to prefer lower, monument signs, landscaped parking areas, and landscaped buffers between the street and parking areas. The Village's highway commercial areas are inconsistent with this vision for the community. The commercial buildings tend to lack architectural character, parking lots often lack landscaping and have large swaths of pavement, signs are often unattractive, medians have asphalt paving, and much of the streetscape is barren and unwelcoming.

Although efforts have been undertaken to improve this area, such as tree planting, the Village must work to create a welcoming sense of place for the Route 281 corridor that is more in keeping with the desired character of the Village. This includes upgrading the streetscape; adopting site plan regulations to infuse more greenspace and limiting unbroken expanses of parking; improving the quality of business signs; and developing minimum design standards to upgrade the architectural quality of commercial buildings. Preserving and improving the residential character of the corridor, particularly between the southern and northern commercial nodes, is also important.

The Conceptual Design on Page 34-A depicts a redesign of Route 281 for both new and existing structures. The Conceptual Design on Page 34-B shows a generic site plan for new development. Lastly, Page 34-C illustrates an improved site plan design for an existing commercial site.

ROUTE 11

This highway commercial area runs from the Interstate 81's Exit 12 off-ramp southward to the Village line. This is the most direct connection between the Village and the nearby City of Cortland, including the Cortland Regional Medical Center. Route 11 parallels the Tioughnioga River which lies just to the east. The character of Route 11 north of the Exit 12/Route 11 interchange quickly transitions from highway commercial to the large historic homes and charming downtown for which Homer is known. The Route 11 area, with its location directly off of I-81, serves as the gateway to the community and is the first impression most visitors have of Homer. It is, in effect, Homer's front door.

Route 11 includes two large businesses, Albany International and I.D. Booth, both located on the highway's western side. A large section of the I.D. Booth facility is



currently proposed for demolition due to contamination by a previous occupant. Other businesses include a pizza shop, a contracting business, gas station, auto repair shops, and several homes. There are no chain or franchise establishments and no drive-through businesses. The area is also home to the Circus House, a unique octagonal building built in 1906 to house the Sig Sautelle Circus. The building now houses an antiques shop, is in a state of disrepair, and is for sale. A new regional attraction, the Central New York Living History Museum (Brockway Museum), is currently being developed in a former retail complex just south of the Village line. Once completed, it will likely draw a significant number of visitors off I-81 and through the Route 11 corridor.

Despite the open, green areas nearest Exit 12, much of the Route 11 corridor suffers from many of the same problems as the commercial nodes in the Route 281 Corridor: unattractive buildings, little greenspace, and a dismal streetscape.

The roadway runs very close to the River's edge, in some cases leaving barely 30' between the edge of the sidewalk and the top of the riverbank. Several small businesses are crowded into this narrow strip of land, including at least two auto repair shops. This area is unattractive and the sites are overcrowded with vehicles. Their current uses are inappropriate given such close proximity to the River. Efforts to improve the physical appearance of the area and its buildings are needed to infuse a sense of place and create a gateway appropriate to the historic character of the rest of the Village. Efforts should be made to acquire these properties and relocate the business to a more suitable location, perhaps to the vacant property that will be left following demolition of the I.D. Booth building. The buildings should be removed and a linear park developed in their place. This will create a better connection between the River and the street, create a public promenade and a possible route for the Tioughnioga River Trail, and transform the Route 11 commercial corridor from an eyesore to a graceful entrance befitting the community (See design photos on Page 54-A).



GOAL 3.1: Improve the character of highway commercial corridors to create a sense of place consistent with the historic and aesthetic character of the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 3.1.1. Create a Highway Commercial Corridors Overlay zoning district within the Village zoning code which shall encompass all parcels contiguous to Route 281 between Clinton Street (Route 41) and Cayuga Street intersections and contiguous to Route 11 from Copeland to the Village line.
- 3.1.2. Amend the zoning regulations and zoning map to include the Highway Commercial Corridors Overlay zoning district.



- 3.1.3. For all properties within the overlay, site plan requirements shall be revised to limit the amount of unbroken paved areas, and to require landscaping and greenspace on street frontages and in parking areas.
- 3.1.4. For all projects within the overlay, site plan requirements may include, for example, curbed and landscaped medians along the edge of the roadway that are of consistent design (similar widths, plantings and trees) along the street frontage; protection of mature trees on site; planting of new trees (specifying minimum caliper) at both the roadway edge and within the lot, landscaped planting areas around the edges of buildings, and designated areas for snow removal/storage. Requisite items shall be shown on a site plan before permitting and approval.
- 3.1.5. Minimum design guidelines should be developed that govern new construction, improvements or redevelopment exceeding 50% of assessed value, or upon a transfer of ownership for all properties within the overlay. The guidelines should require pitched roofs; stone, brick, or clapboard siding, and other architectural features consistent with the character and predominant architecture in the Village. The maximum size of buildings should be limited to match the size and scale of predominant architecture in the Village.
- 3.1.6. Within the overlay district, primary site signage (not including directional signs) for commercial and industrial properties should be limited to monument style signs less than eight (8) feet tall. Such signs should be well designed and constructed, and be externally lit. Animated signage should be prohibited. Internally lit building mounted signs should be discouraged. The overall number and size of building and site signs should be limited. Non-conforming signs should be amortized for 10 years.
- 3.1.7. Within the overlay district, primary site signage for residentially zoned properties should be of a smaller scale than signage in commercial areas. Building mounted signs and internally lit and/or animated should be prohibited. Freestanding signs should be higher than six (6) feet. Non-conforming signs should be amortized for 10 years.
- 3.1.8. Within the overlay, the standards for home occupations should be relaxed to allow for more variety and larger scale businesses with appropriate signage and parking and also allowing a commercial use and residential use to occupy the same building.
- 3.1.9. Within the overlay, commercial uses shall be allowed within residential structures in residentially-zoned areas contiguous to the highway. Such commercial uses may occupy the entire building so long as the residential character of the building's exterior is maintained. The type of allowable commercial uses should be limited to those compatible with neighboring residential properties.



GOAL 3.2: Enhance the aesthetic character of Route 281 in order to develop a sense of place consistent with the character of the Village and to promote tourism, recreation, and business development within the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

3.2.1. The Village will seek funding for a streetscape improvement and beautification effort for the Route 281 Corridor, which shall include, as appropriate, removal of asphalt paving between the sidewalk and street and installation of paving blocks, removable street-scale planters, and appropriate landscaping and other design features such as lighting and sidewalks.

GOAL 3.3: Enhance the aesthetic character of commercially and industrially zoned areas situated along Route 11 in order to eliminate blight, develop a sense of place consistent with the character of the Village, and to promote tourism, recreation, and business development within the Village.

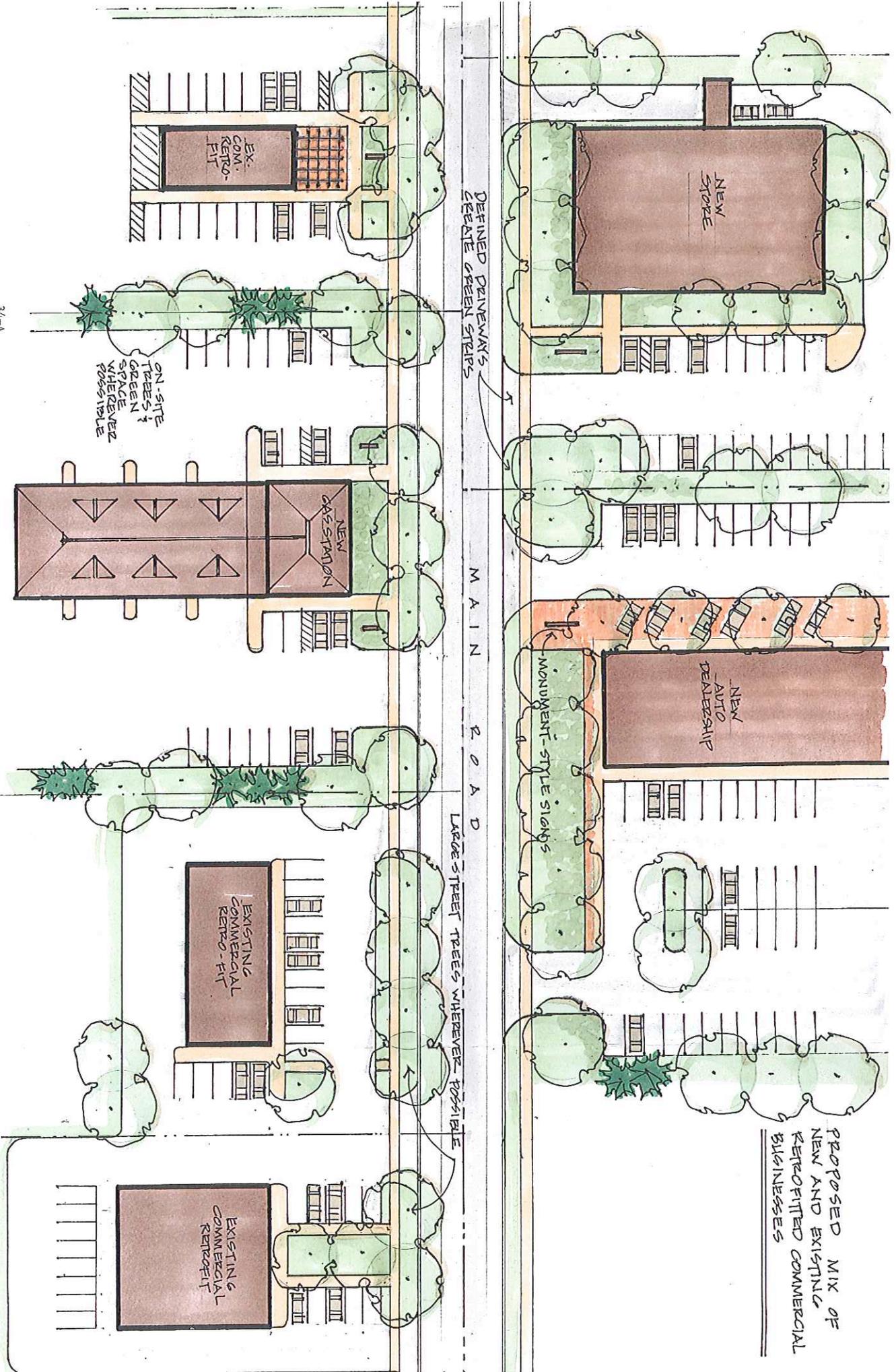
IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

3.3.1. The Village will seek funding for a streetscape improvement and beautification effort for the Route 11 (adjacent to and south of the I-81 interchange) to improve the aesthetics of the gateway, which shall include, as appropriate, removal of asphalt paving between the sidewalk and street and installation of paving blocks, removable street-scale planters, appropriate landscaping and other design features such as lighting and sidewalks. Particular emphasis should be placed on the area directly across from the I-81 off ramp.

3.3.2. Support efforts to restore the historic Circus House as an attraction in the community.

3.3.3. Encourage relocation of businesses located on the east side of the highway within the floodway and redevelop the area as a waterfront ribbon park.

PROPOSED MIX OF
NEW AND EXISTING
RETOFFICED COMMERCIAL
BUSINESSES



DEFINED DRIVEWAYS
CREATE GREEN STRIPS

MAIN ROAD

LARGE STREET TREES WHEREVER POSSIBLE

ON-SITE TREES &
GREEN SPACE
WHEREVER
POSSIBLE

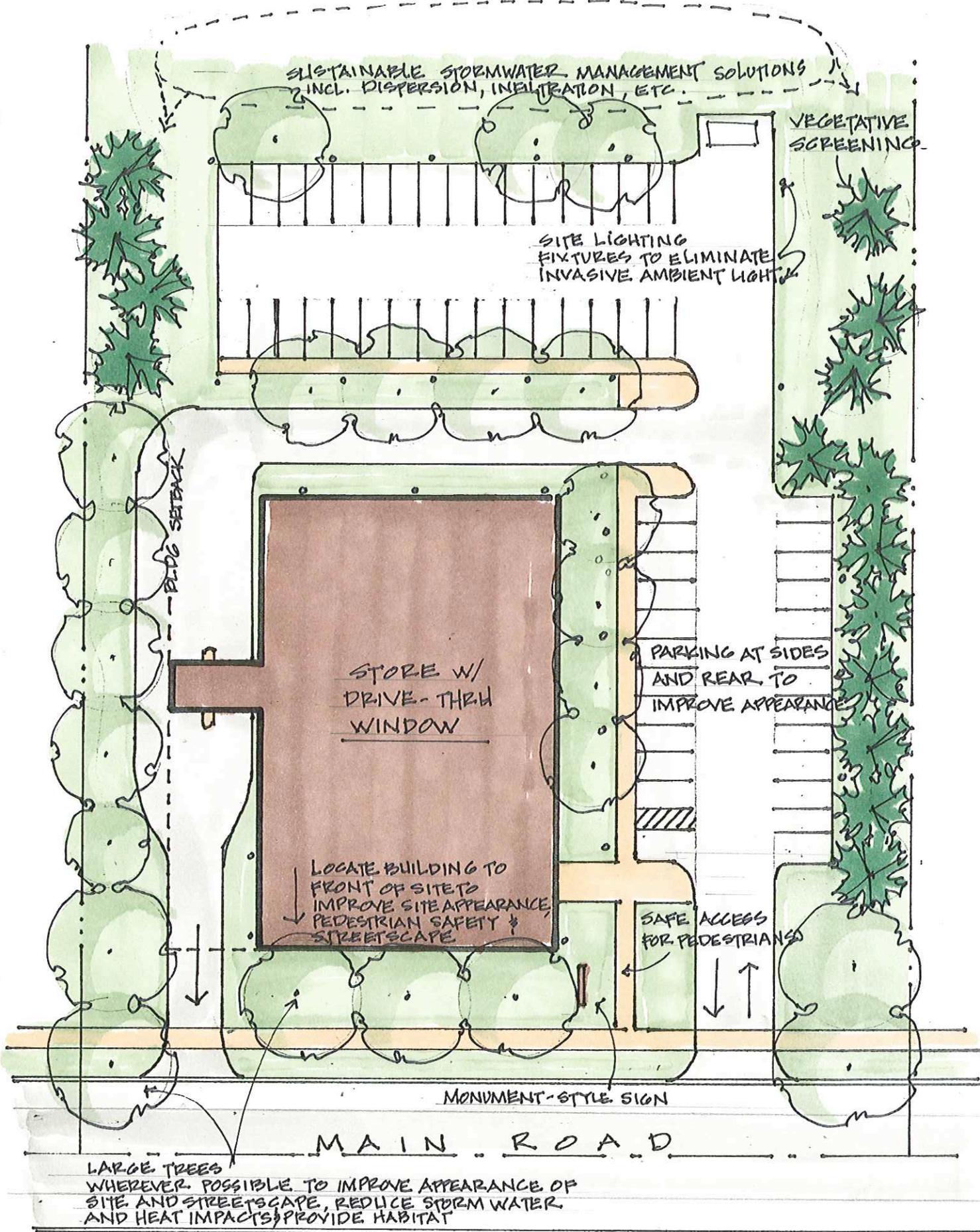
EXISTING
COMMERCIAL
RETRO-FIT

EXISTING
COMMERCIAL
RETROFIT

NEW
CASSANO

NEW
AUTO
DEALERSHIP

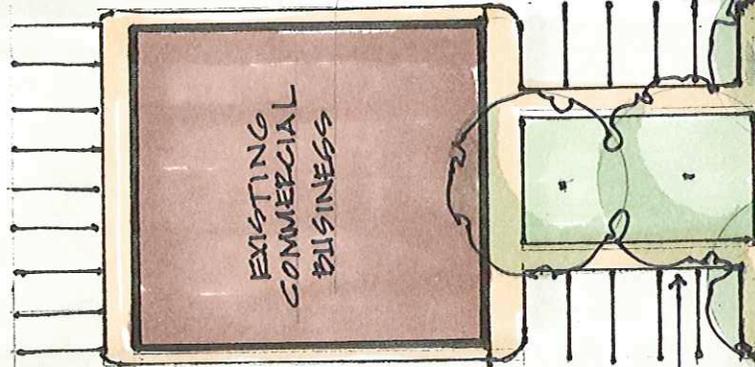
NEW
STORE



IMPROVED SITE PLANNING FOR NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

EXISTING

PROPOSED



REDUCE
UNNECESSARY
PAVEMENT,
REPLACE W/
GREEN SPACE
& TREES

IMPROVE
SITE & STREET
W/ TREES,
IMPROVE
STORMWATER
IMPACTS

RETAIN
OR INCREASE
PARKING
SPACES

IMPROVED
PEDESTRIAN
ACCESS
SAFETY

DEFINED DEWEAYS

STREET TREES (LARGE)
WHEREVER
POSSIBLE

MAIN STREET OR ROAD

IMPROVED SITE DESIGN RETRO-FIT FOR EXISTING COMMERCIAL BUSINESS



4. DOWNTOWN

The Village's downtown is defined on Village Zoning maps as the Central Business District (CBD), although the area typically considered "downtown" extends beyond this CBD zoning (See the attached Map 1 on Page 42-A). It includes Main Street (U.S. Route 11) between the Village Green on the southern end and Water Street to the north. This section of Main Street is the traditional heart of the business district. Its central intersection is James and Main Streets. Main Street is referred to as North Main Street north of James Street and South Main Street south of James. The CBD extends east from Main Street one block to the Tioughnioga River and a short distance west along James Street.



The downtown includes both Village and Town government offices, a post office, a library, fire station, several churches, an adult home, two banks, several eateries, a dry cleaner, a grocery store, and a number of other retail and commercial establishments. The Homer Elementary School is located on the Village Green adjacent to the downtown, as are several churches and the Center for the Arts.

The Village's "Olde Homer Village Historic District" was added to the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 1972. This historic district includes the entire Central Business District, the Village Green, and nearby residential neighborhoods. The architectural style of the commercial buildings and nearby residences includes fine examples of Early Settlement, Federal, Greek Revival, Romanesque, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Second Empire. The average age of buildings in the CBD is approximately 120 years old.

The character for which the Village of Homer is known is largely derived from its historic downtown, the nearby Village Green and surrounding churches, and the well-maintained homes that line Main Street. Results of the Residents Survey indicate residents place a great importance on the historic character this area provides. "Small town atmosphere" and "community appearance" were the two highest ranked reasons for living in Homer. "Historic character" also ranked highly. Interestingly, older residents ranked "historic character" higher than younger residents, for whom "proximity to relatives and friends" is the primary reason for choosing Homer. Clearly, though, the "Rockwell-esque" character of the Homer downtown and environs defines the image of the Village for both residents and visitors.





The Village's character, however, is probably in greater jeopardy than most residents are aware:

- There are no local laws protecting historic homes or commercial buildings from inappropriate alterations, incompatible new buildings, or perhaps even demolition.
- Due to the downtown's small size, a single fire in a downtown commercial building could threaten the entire block, forever alter the commercial district and, by extension, the community. Compatible reconstruction of commercial buildings in a downtown is often not financially feasible, and thus the Village would likely be left with a vacant lot. Nearby Cortland has experienced at least three significant fires in their downtown in recent years, demonstrating that such fires are not uncommon.
- An existing congregation could relocate, leaving an historic church empty and decaying. One congregation has already left their downtown church. Although the Homer Center for the Arts replaced it, it may be unlikely that another suitable reuse for an abandoned church could be located.
- The Post Office, which according to the Residents Survey is by far the largest draw of people to the downtown, could close or relocate due to changes in the postal service and the increased use of digital communication.

These, and a myriad of other threats, could easily result in the character, image, and sense of place that is so important in the hearts of residents being irretrievably lost. It is important that the community work to strengthen the downtown against the inevitable threats it will face in the future and to implement actions to safeguard its historic assets.

As noted in Section II, in 1996 the Village of Homer completed a Downtown Planning Study. Another plan was completed in 2002 that built upon the earlier plan. These two Strategic Plans identified strategies and projects designed to enhance the downtown and improve the local economy. Significant progress has been made over the years in implementing identified actions, including upgrading facades, sidewalk replacements, and new parking signs. As a result, the Homer downtown is in a stronger position than it was a decade ago. Despite these successes, the downtown faces a number of problems typical of many other small downtowns. These problems and issues are detailed below.

DOWNTOWN ECONOMY

A strong economy is the foundation of a healthy downtown. Homer is fortunate to have a number of strong retail/service anchors bolstered by the presence of non-traditional anchors such as municipal offices, the Post Office, and banks. Unfortunately, the economic strength of the downtown is weaker than it appears. Although the vacancy rate of first floor commercial businesses is extremely low, with almost a 100% occupancy rate, there is a tendency for many smaller retail businesses to come and go. As discussed above, many essential goods and services for local residents can be found



in the downtown, with the exception of a pharmacy. In addition, a number of downtown businesses attract customers from outside the community. The Residents Survey shows, however, that the downtown is not fulfilling its role as the community's central *business* district. In the survey, the Village tied with Ithaca, a community nearly 30 miles away, and ranked far below Cortland and Syracuse, as the top places residents shopped for goods and services. The highest number of respondents indicated that they only



purchase goods or services in the Village (including other commercial areas outside the downtown) once a week. Sixty-six percent (66%) of survey respondents ranked the variety of downtown businesses as either poor, fair, or satisfactory. When queried as to why they patronize the downtown, the greatest number of respondents, by far, stated it was to "go to the Post Office", followed by "go to the bank", and "walk". Shopping was a distant fourth.

For those survey respondents in the 18-35 age cohort, walking and exercise was the number one reason for visiting downtown (See Section V for complete survey results).

The growing use of electronic communication, e-business, and e-banking likely means that younger residents are relying less and less on the Postal Service and branch banks. In the future, these physical facilities, now the largest draw to the downtown, may cease to exist altogether. This does not bode well for the long-term economic sustainability of the Village's downtown. It is vital that the community work to strengthen retail and service businesses, including restaurants, in order to ensure that the downtown does not become obsolete and irrelevant for future residents.

BUILDING CONDITIONS

As aforementioned, the downtown enjoys a nearly 100% occupancy rate for first floors. Vacancies are more common on upper floors of commercial structures. In order for buildings to be maintained in good condition, they need to be economically viable. It is difficult to provide proper maintenance on an older structure when only half or a third of the building is generating income. Full occupancy and use of structures is important in ensuring their survival.

With only a few exceptions, the appearance of downtown commercial buildings is good. Most facades are attractive with new paint, awnings, and quality signage. This appearance belies that fact that many of the commercial structures are badly in need of repairs and renovations. Many buildings are older than they appear, with wood-frame structures and gabled-roofs hidden behind late 19th century facades. Many appear to have deteriorated roofs, missing siding, failing masonry, and other problems. It is reasonable to assume that many have older heating and electrical systems. Older buildings are generally grandfathered from the most current building codes, so only one or two buildings are serviced by sprinklers or have integrated fire detection systems.



These factors combine to create a very dangerous situation, and it is very possible that a fire in any one downtown building could take out other buildings or the entire block. It is surprising, in fact, that downtown Homer has not suffered from a serious fire in decades.

The Village must work diligently to ensure that buildings are well maintained and protected from deferred maintenance, decay, fire, and other hazards. The Village should strictly enforce all applicable building codes regarding downtown buildings, and assist property owners with undertaking renovations and upgrades, including sprinklers, by seeking financial assistance for property owners and developing programs to ease the financial burden of renovations.



PARKING

As is typical in most 19th Century downtowns, parking is a concern in the downtown area. A downtown survey completed as part of the Village's 1996 Downtown Strategic Plan showed nearly 160 public parking spaces in the CBD in addition to 69 spaces reserved for banking customers. Additional parking was located in areas immediately adjacent to the CBD. There appears to have been little change to the volume of parking in the intervening years. The 1996 Plan also stated that at no time during the survey were municipal lots filled to capacity. This also appears to be true today, although no formal surveys were completed.

Parking concerns are more an issue of the underutilization of parking located off of Main Street rather than a lack of overall available parking in the downtown. This underuse can be contributed to a number of reasons, including the fact that downtown patrons may have security concerns for themselves and their vehicles, particularly in the evening hours as the lots and their access points are not well lit (this is more likely the case in the Briggs lot as it is more isolated than the James Street lot). Consumers have a natural desire to park within the line of site of their destination, therefore preferring on-street parking to parking lots. The Village has made efforts over the past decade to address parking concerns, including better signage and improved striping. These efforts appear to have been successful.

There are actions that the Village should consider to further enhance the parking in the downtown. Physical improvements to municipal parking lots, such as curbed and landscaped planting areas, should be undertaken to promote usage and to create attractive urban spaces. Parking areas should be well lit, and have direct connections to the Main Street. The Village should remain cognizant of the need to properly manage parking as the downtown evolves and changes over the years.



RIVERFRONT

The Central Business District includes Wall, Pine, and Water Streets, which are small residential side-streets that lead from Main Street to the Tioughnioga River waterfront and beyond. All three streets have historic lenticular truss bridges, two of which are owned by the Town (Pine and Wall), one is owned by the Village (Water) and all are maintained by the Town of Homer. Currently, only the Wall Street bridge is open for vehicular traffic, while the other two are now limited to pedestrian use only. Numerous planning documents over the years, including Vision 2010, the Downtown Strategic Plan, and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan have noted that the Village does not capitalize on its waterfront location, that this area is underutilized, and that efforts should be made to redevelop and revitalize this part of downtown. Unfortunately, little has changed over the years.



Despite its Central Business District zoning, most of this area consists of single and multi-family residences and little commercial use. Many of the homes, particularly rental properties, are poorly maintained. The former Jaline Togs facility, a large manufacturing plant located on Pine Street, has been underutilized for nearly 20 years and is not being used for its highest and best use. An older wood-framed industrial building is located between Water and Wall Streets, although this structure is partially occupied and in good condition. Sidewalks are in poor condition. In addition, a number of existing properties are located in the floodway, and much of the area is within the 100-year flood zone. In order for the downtown to continue to be viable in the future, efforts must be made to revitalize and redevelop this area and capitalize on the waterfront location.

Since a number of existing properties lie within the floodway, there is a significant likelihood that they will receive considerable damage in the future. The Village should discourage or restrict renovations or reconstruction in order to alleviate flood dangers. Efforts should be made to acquire such properties with the goal of creating a linear park and waterfront trail between Water and Pine Street and beyond to Durkee Park. This park could take many forms, from a recreation trail, waterfront promenade, community garden space, or art park. This park could connect to other trails in the future as they are developed.

As aforementioned, many of the residential structures in this area are in poor condition and the Riverfront location is not used to its best advantage. While historic properties should be preserved and restored, this area should be significantly redeveloped and re-invented with higher-density, attached, market-rate townhouse development, with the potential for small shops with upper floor residential uses. Such townhouses should relate to the historic Victorian era architecture prevalent in the



downtown. (See Conceptual Plan on Page 42-B following and photos of similar development in other communities below).



Townhouse Development Options

This redevelopment would provide waterfront housing of a type not found in Homer or, in fact, the area. The need for alternative housing types in the community is detailed under Housing. Creating greater housing density in and around the downtown creates a market for downtown businesses, as nearby residents utilize the downtown for shopping and services. New development will also improve the physical connections between Main Street and the riverfront.

ORGANIZATION AND MARKETING

Compared to many other downtowns in upstate New York, Homer competes well. The downtown is attractive, has a series of annual events, and a number of businesses that serve local residents and draw customers from outside the area. There is not, however, a formalized marketing effort to promote and strengthen the downtown. The website, www.homerny.org, is a good start, but more robust and coordinated efforts would be advisable.

In order for positive and proactive change to occur, and for the strategies and recommendations of this and other plans to be implemented, an organizational framework for implementation must be established. Currently, The Homer Business Association is a loose-knit group of businesses from the both the Town and Village of Homer. The organization works to promote businesses in the community. The Village has been involved in implementing infrastructure projects, including the streetscaping and façade renovation assistance, but these are not part of a larger, coordinated revitalization program. It is important that the downtown be served by an organization with a focus on the downtown. This organization could be the Homer Business Association or new entity.

There are a number of organizational models that could be utilized for organizing the downtown, ranging from the current loose affiliation or network of existing groups to



developing an organization that is a highly structured, incorporated, and a non-profit organization with professional staff. Regardless of the level and type of organization, the community should follow the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Four-Point Approach. The Main Street model has been successfully used to revitalize downtowns throughout the nation, and is currently being implemented in the City of Cortland via the Cortland Downtown Partnership. The program outlines four broad areas important to downtown revitalization including Organization, Design, Promotion, and Economic Restructuring. It also stresses that revitalization efforts must be undertaken in partnership with the various downtown and community stakeholders, and that efforts must be incremental in nature. A formal Main Street Program usually has a paid staff person, a Main Street Manager, who runs the program. Due to the small nature of the Village's downtown, it may be unlikely that a highly structured Main Street program with staffing can be developed. Some type of organization, however, is vital to the success of the downtown and its businesses, and the Main Street Four-Point Approach should be followed. Due to the relatively small number of businesses and property owners in the downtown, a rather informal organizational structure is recommended as a starting point. As the organization gains successes, its structure can become more formalized.

GOAL 4.1: Preserve and enhance the historic character of the Central Business District.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 4.1.1. Seek funding sources and other incentives to assist owners of commercial properties in the CBD to renovate buildings, upgrade facades; install appropriate signage; and redevelop interiors for housing, retail, and commercial office use. Market rate rental housing should be encouraged.
- 4.1.2. Develop incentives to encourage property owners to utilize "green" building techniques or to seek LEED certification to improve energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the Village's built environment.
- 4.1.3. Develop an Historic District Overlay zoning district for the CBD. Within the overlay, new construction should maintain existing architectural styles in scale, proportion, composition, materials, and design.
- 4.1.4. Establish an architectural review commission to ensure that renovations on existing buildings maintain historic materials, designs, and treatments.
- 4.1.5. Revise the sign ordinance to ensure that signage in the CBD is consistent with the historic character of the downtown.

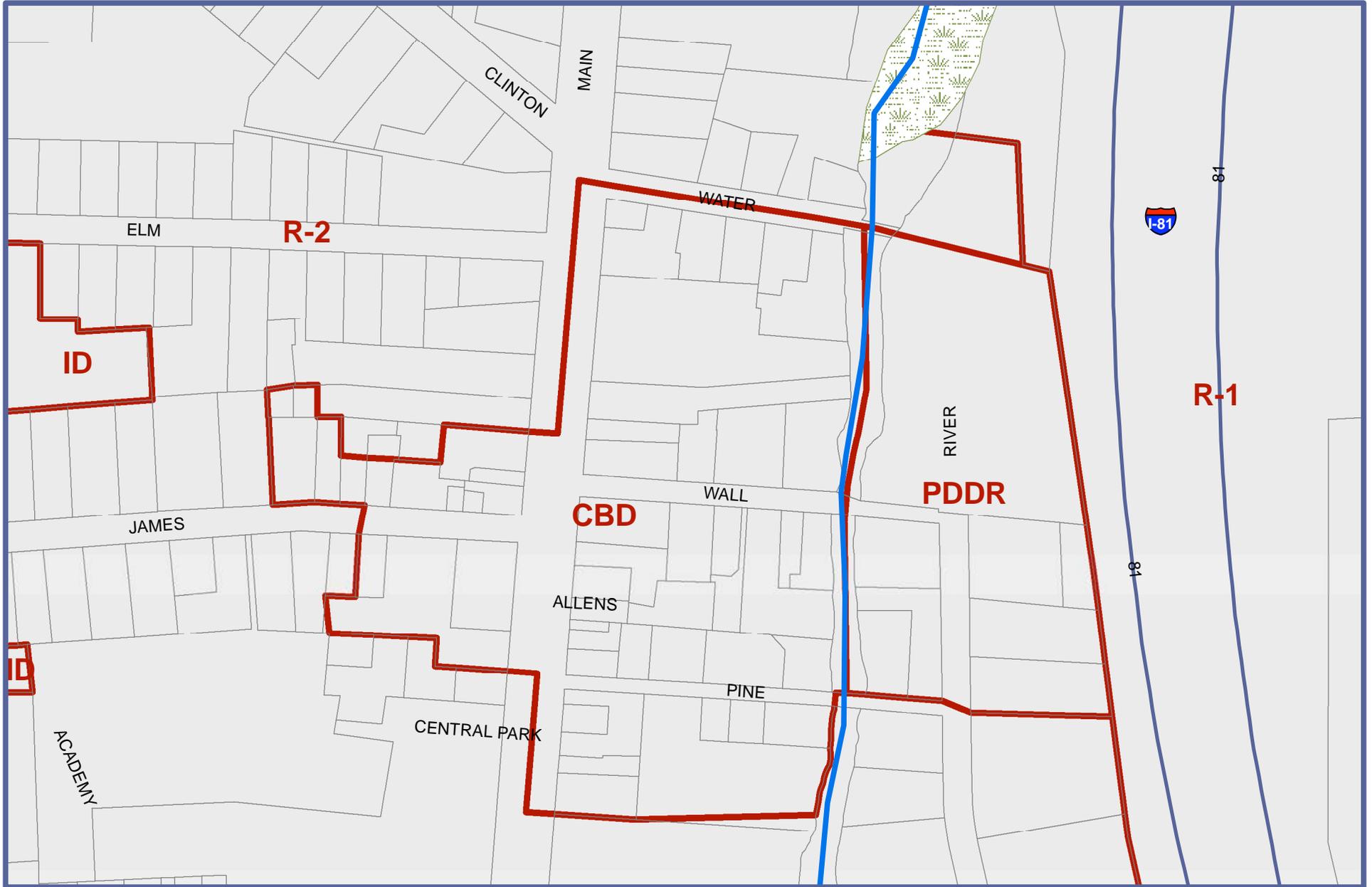


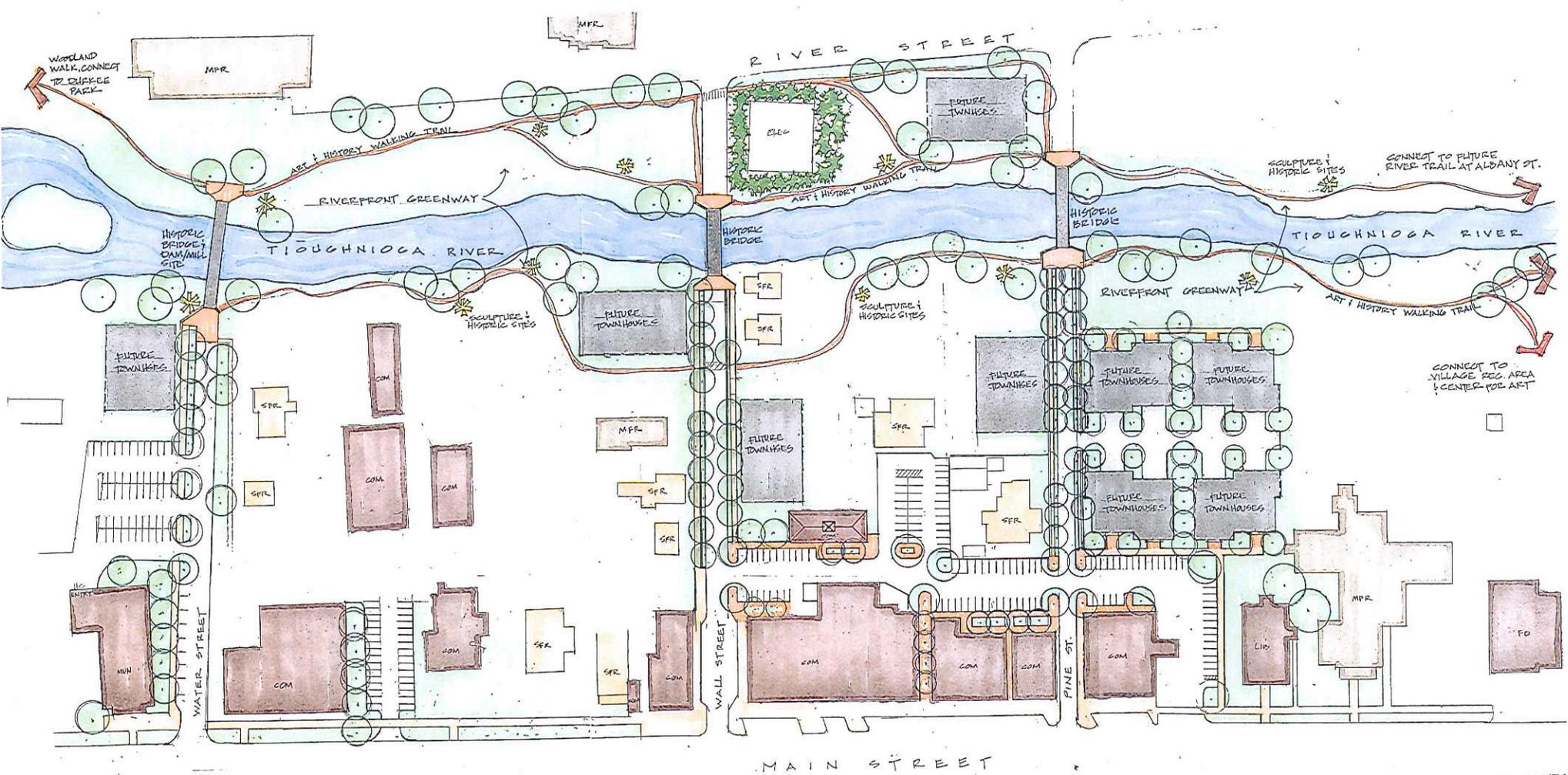
GOAL 4.2: Improve the area of the downtown between Main Street and the Tioughnioga River by minimizing flood hazards and providing public access to the waterfront.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 4.2.1. As properties in the floodway are damaged, removed, or otherwise available for redevelopment, property should be acquired (or easements obtained) and redeveloped for a downtown waterfront promenade, trail, or ribbon park. Reconstruction of damaged properties within the floodway should be prohibited.
- 4.2.2. In cooperation with property owners who own property facing the Tioughnioga River, seek partnership with conservation organizations that might wish to purchase waterfront properties outright or obtain easements to preserve these lands.
- 4.2.3. Revise zoning regulations to allow for development of cluster housing, including townhouses or mixed use buildings on residential lots within the CBD zone. Mixed use buildings may have retail, service, or professional office establishments on the first floor, as appropriate, with housing on upper floors. These dwelling units will provide a local market for downtown businesses and could be attractive to both young professionals and aging residents looking to downsize. Views and access to the River would increase the desirability of these units. Housing choices should include ownership and rental opportunities.
- 4.2.4. Seek funding to provide financial incentives to renovate historically important properties located outside of the floodway on Water, Wall, and Pine Streets for residential, commercial, and/or mixed use.
- 4.2.5. Encourage the development of businesses in the CBD that service and support river activities or otherwise capitalize on the riverfront location.
- 4.2.6. Seek funding to preserve, renovate, and beautify the historic lenticular truss bridges crossing the River to ensure that the bridges are maintained for pedestrian and perhaps vehicular traffic.
- 4.2.7. Improve public parking areas with new landscaping in order to increase the amount of greenspace.

Map 1: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010, Central Business District





LEGEND:

- COMMERCIAL, MUNICIPAL & COMMUNITY BUILDINGS
- EXISTING MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- PROPOSED INFILL DEVELOPMENT (ATTACHED RESIDENTIAL TOWNHOUSES)
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (EXISTING)



5. TRANSPORTATION

Any assessment of the transportation system within the Village of Homer must be considered from two perspectives. First, logistical information identifying exactly what the system is, roads, railroad, trails, and sidewalks; who has jurisdiction over these elements, County, State, or Village; and who uses them, private or public. Second, the condition of each component must be considered and evaluated.



ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

The Village of Homer has a full network of roads that are within the jurisdiction of two levels of government. First, there are four primary routes through Homer, all of which are New York State highways (Route 11 is technically a U.S. route which is under the jurisdiction of the State). These NYS highways primarily move traffic in all directions through the area. Traveling north on Main Street through the downtown Main Street area, the majority of the roadway is the combined Routes of 41 and 11. At the Clinton Street intersection, Route 41 bears off to the left heading northwesterly towards Skaneateles after crossing Route 281. Route 11 continues due north towards the Village of Tully and beyond.



Along the more westerly limit of the Village is Route 281, running north to south, connecting to both Cortlandville (to the south) and Preble and Tully (to the north). The last State route is Route 90, which originates in Homer at the intersection of Main and Cayuga Streets. From there it continues westerly towards Locke in Cayuga County and then along the eastern shoreline of Cayuga Lake.

The vast majority of all the other roads within the Village are maintained and controlled by the Village, with selected others maintained by Cortland County. For other roads, there is a maintenance agreement with the Town. As with any public thoroughfare, all of these roadways are shared with various public utilities and are utilized by the traveling public. It should be noted that portions of the Village are still undeveloped, with a significant amount of land that contains no public streets or other infrastructure. With recent development proposals brought before the Village, it is likely that both the infrastructure and network of public roadways will increase.

The overall condition of NYS routes and local streets within the Village is satisfactory with no obvious problems. As a particular road begins to deteriorate, it is



slated for an upgrade such as milling, resurfacing, and new shoulders. Every attempt is made to also include other infrastructure improvements such as water or sewer main replacement. If other types of construction projects for roads are anticipated, other than routine maintenance, it is strongly recommended that they be evaluated for improvements to the drainage and shoulders of the area to be impacted, and to determine whether buried utilities such as sewer and water need replacement.

The Village Street Department has a policy of earmarking three streets that are in the worst condition for rehabilitation every construction season. This results in a full rehabilitation cycle being completed approximately every 10 years. For the immediate future, there is one particular location targeted as needing improvement and that is the flooding condition which routinely occurs at the intersection of Copeland Avenue and the railroad tracks. A more comprehensive remedy must be developed to adequately address this problem.

A future project that was recently announced is a NYS DOT plan to fully reconstruct Clinton Street (Route 41) between Route 281 and North Main Street. This portion of the roadway has long experienced poor drainage in two particular locations: at the intermediate/junior high school and where the roadway intersects North Main Street. This project will not only address the runoff issue, but will also result in a complete rebuild of the pavement system, including new curbing.

A general concern relative to the transportation system in and around the Village of Homer is the volume and type of traffic that passes through. With NYS Routes 11, 41, 90, and 281 serving as key routes connecting the Cortland/Homer area with destinations to the north, south and west, traffic volume is likely to continue to increase for all types of vehicles. With increasing traffic, at a certain point a road will reach the limit of how much traffic volume it can safely move. This is particularly relevant for NYS Route 281 along which there is already considerable commercial development and which has the potential for significant additional growth.

A related concern is the continuing practice of many tractor trailers exiting from Interstate 81 at Exit 12 and then traveling through the Village to connect with Route 41, which leads them to the Auburn/Skaneateles area, and reconnects them to the NYS Thruway heading west towards Buffalo. Although this issue is fully understood by the NYS Department of Transportation, there are, at this time, no long range capacity projects being considered. A capacity project is a road or highway project that addresses inadequate capacity due to increased volumes of vehicles and might include adding a center turning lane or other similar improvement to keep traffic flowing safely and efficiently. If increased truck traffic continues unabated, the issues and concerns associated with driver and pedestrian safety, as well as overall traffic congestion, will mount.

It is important for the Village of Homer to remain on top of these transportation issues. Particularly, if Route 281 continues to develop, there will be pressure placed on the Village to widen the roadway. This would have the potential to segregate the western portion of the Village from the rest of the community. The Village must be diligent in working on developing service roads and shared access roads/lanes to limit curb cuts on Route 281 and any other route that may become more heavily traveled in



the future. The Village needs to work with the NYS DOT and make sure that all street improvements are pedestrian friendly and include amenities such as crosswalks, walk signals, sidewalks, and bicycle access.

SIDEWALKS

While major streets such as Main, Clinton, Cayuga, and James, for example, all have sidewalks on both sides, many of the Village's streets have either no sidewalks whatsoever or only on one side. Many of the single family residential areas located in the western and northern portions of the Village have no sidewalks. In looking at the neighborhoods where sidewalks are missing, it is evident that the suburban-style development occurring during the 1960's and after were not required to include sidewalks and consequently many areas are still without this amenity.

Overall, the condition of the Homer's sidewalks is satisfactory. The Village has maintenance and replacement responsibility for only those sidewalks that are located along municipally-owned Village properties. The remainder of the sidewalks in the Village is the responsibility of the landowners along whose frontage the sidewalk is located. In certain instances, this causes problems when a homeowner allows the walk to deteriorate. Code enforcement should consistently address this issue.

Serious consideration should always be given to incorporate sidewalk improvements into any infrastructure and roadway type projects. Relative to the connectivity of the sidewalks within the Village, it would be a clear improvement to extend and fully connect the sidewalks in the Village to any and all recreational trails and parks. To a large extent, these connections are already in place.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The only public transportation system currently available to the Homer community on a regular basis is a bus transportation system (Route 3), which provides service between Homer and the City of Cortland. This service is provided by the Cortland Transit Company, which only operates from 6AM to 6PM Monday through Friday. By utilizing this service, a resident can also travel to some of the outlying communities in the County as well as to nearby Tompkins County. If gas prices continue to rise, there will be an increase in the number of people interested in accessing bus transportation. With a limited schedule, the bus service is not a reliable mode of transportation for most people. The Village should work with Cortland County to increase the visibility of the bus service, advocate for increased services, and build bus shelters in the community.

There is no regular commuter rail service in the Village even though the line is still active. Some proponents of rail service want to see high-speed rail linking Central New York to New York City. Other rail service proponents would like to see expanded Amtrak service in Central New York, and in particular, a service linking Syracuse and Binghamton, which could include a stop in the Village of Homer. Although the federal



government has directed billions of dollars to transportation initiatives, including expanded intercity rail service, expanded passenger rail service in Central New York is presently being studied, but no actual plans have been made.

Students at SUNY Cortland who conducted a federally funded study that was completed in July 2008 examined the prospect of expanding tourist rail service on the NY Susquehanna, and Western Railway between Cortland and Binghamton. The study focused on passenger preferences and the passenger experience riding the train to the Central New York Maple Festival. The study concluded that passenger interest in a tourist rail service between Cortland and Binghamton is very high and that expanding the service to include other community events is supported.



Additional discussions related to rail service can be found in *13. Land Use and Zoning*.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRAILS

The other transportation elements are those related to pedestrian traffic and bicycles. Falling into this category is the sidewalk system located within the Village which was previously discussed, and the proposed first phase of the River Trail, which is slated to commence in the Village at the intersection of Albany Street and continue to the east bank of the Tioughnioga River to Yaman Park in the City of Cortland. This is a hard trail and is meant to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. Respondents to the Residents Survey overwhelming support the development of a connecting trail system in the Village to increase the Village's walkability and to increase one's ability to safely ride a bicycle not only in the Village but to other connection points such as Yaman Park in Cortland and the Lime Hollow Nature Center in the Town of Cortlandville.

GOAL 5.1: Enhance and encourage pedestrian and bicycle routes that promote connectivity and good health while reducing our reliance on vehicles.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 5.1.1. Identify gaps within the Village's existing sidewalk system that could serve as key links to destinations in and around the Village (parks, schools, shopping, jobs, etc.).
- 5.1.2. Identify gaps within the Village's existing bikeway system that could serve as key links to destinations in and around the Village (parks, schools, shopping, jobs, etc.).
- 5.1.3. Construct needed improvements to the Village sidewalk and bikeway systems.



- 5.1.4. Promote and support the completion of a river walk that will link the Village of Homer to the City of Cortland.
- 5.1.5. Promote and support development of a designated bicycle trail from the Village to the Lime Hollow Nature Center.
- 5.1.6. Include requirements, as part of the Site Plan Review, for all new projects to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle routes and facilities as part of the new development, as may be appropriate.
- 5.1.7. Develop maps for public distribution to increase public awareness of designated sidewalks, trails, and bicycle routes. Include details of the health and environmental benefits of using non-motorized forms of transportation.

GOAL 5.2: Improve, develop, and promote the use of public transportation.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 5.2.1. Work with representatives of the City of Cortland, Cortland County, and Cortland Transit to improve service and to provide incentives to increase the use of the system.
- 5.2.2. Support an evaluation of both Cortland and Tompkins County's public transit systems that will examine the potential benefits and efficiencies that could be realized by coordinating and/or consolidating the systems.
- 5.2.3. Support the continued evaluation, promotion, and development of commuter rail service linking Syracuse, Cortland, and Binghamton.
- 5.2.4. Seek grant funding for the installation of bus shelters within the Village.
- 5.2.5. Pursue capital improvements program that increases opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle usage and safety thereof.

GOAL 5.3: Reduce the number of large trucks passing through the Village which have "out of town" destinations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 5.3.1. Support all NYS DOT efforts to create a workable approach to controlling truck traffic through downtown Homer.
- 5.3.2. Support additional roadway signage that will aid in re-directing truck drivers from using the downtown route.



GOAL 5.4: As part of overall capital improvements program, continue to target existing streets in need of repair.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 5.4.1. Pursue capital improvements that remedy stormwater flooding; and address infrastructure repair and replacement as part of the project.
- 5.4.1. Identify streets and locations where improvements/maintenance are most needed.
- 5.4.2. Evaluate flooding at streets and railroad crossings.
- 5.4.3. When applicable, coordinate designs with other agencies that are involved (DOT) that meet the needs of the Village.
- 5.4.4. Seek outside financial assistance to funding needed capital improvements.

GOAL 5.5: Institute access management planning within the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 5.5.1. Develop regulation governing and requiring access management plans for multiple-family residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment.
- 5.5.2. As part of access management plan requirements, reduce the number of curb cuts allowed on Route 281.
- 5.5.3. As part of access management plan requirements, evaluate allowable widths of curb cuts.



6. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE



The Village of Homer has six parks, school athletic facilities, and play areas, as well as privately owned open spaces and cultural and recreational facilities, which together comprise a comprehensive system of sports, recreation, and fine arts amenities and programming in the Village. Although some respondents to the Residents Survey observed that the Village does not have enough parkland, the Village has approximately 38 acres of public parks and recreation land, excluding private facilities and schools, which, as detailed below, is

considered adequate for a community of this size. The perception that more parkland is needed may exist because most of the parks are dedicated to specified uses and, as survey respondents noted, there is a lack of bicycle and pedestrian trails in the Village.

Durkee Park is a 15-acre park located in the far northeast corner of the Village of Homer. Briggs Pool and its surrounds constitute approximately one half of the park area. At one time the pool was used for swimming, but it is now a handicap accessible recreational fishing facility. A variety of factors contributed to the conversion of Briggs Pool from a swimming pool to a fishing facility but, ultimately, it was too costly to maintain for swimming. Village residents are able to swim in City of Cortland pools and the Village offers free swimming lessons for Village residents through the YWCA in Cortland. Durkee Park's location along the west branch of the Tioughnioga River enhances both the ambience and recreational opportunities in the park. It is the largest picnicking and recreational facility in the Village. The park/fishing area has bathroom facilities that are open to the public for special events.



There are five other parks in the Village of Homer. Centrally located Newton Park, at 0.67 acres, is a neighborhood recreation area with swings, a slide, and kickball diamond oriented to younger park users. On the east side of the Village, in the downtown, George Venum Memorial Park is located behind the Recreation Department building and hosts a lighted basketball and tennis court complex with off street parking on approximately 0.33 acres. Venum Park also hosts a community building that is available



for rent. On the west side of the Village is Harry A. Calale Park, located off of Route 281, with 4.6 acres that are used for playing softball, tee-ball, lacrosse, and football. Just north of Calale Park, also off of Route 281, is the Newton Water Works, a picturesque 13.6 acre area with pavilions and picnic tables used by local residents and organizations for group events. Griggs Memorial Field is a 3.8-acre park located on Hudson Street with facilities for playing softball, baseball, and tee-ball. The Griggs playing fields are regulation Little League fields. The three schools (elementary, intermediate/junior high school, and high school) also have additional recreational facilities and playing fields that are sometimes used for Village-sponsored recreational programming.

Each year the Village, through its Recreation Department, offers a variety of recreational programs for children including lacrosse, wrestling, and basketball camps. Organized sports include the Homer Little League, tee-ball, soccer, golf, basketball, and volleyball. Adult programming includes swimming, aerobics, tennis, softball, lacrosse, and senior walking. These sports programs take place at different venues including local parks, the Cortland YWCA, and the high school. These programs are not restricted to Village residents, though non-residents must pay an additional fee. The Recreation Department, through the Recreation Committee, periodically reviews the services offered to ensure that programming meets the needs of the community. Independent recreational programming is also available throughout the year in the Village. In addition to Village facilities, there are other facilities located nearby where specific recreational activities can be accessed such as indoor swimming at the YWCA and YMCA in the City of Cortland and an indoor ice hockey facility at the J.M. McDonald Sports Complex, which is available right at the Village's doorstep in the Town of Cortlandville. Other offerings include babysitter training classes and a craft mobile.

The Village Green, along with the Center for the Arts, serves as the hub for many of the educational and cultural affairs of the Village. Homer's First Religious Society owns the Village Green. It is a 4-acre open space, including a Village-owned gazebo, located across from the Central Business District. Annual family events sponsored by the Village regularly take place on the Village Green. The Village Recreation Department provides in-kind and financial support for community events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Christmas on the Green, and summer concert series.

The Center for the Arts held its first public event in 2001, and in 2005 the organization purchased the First Baptist Church on Main Street (across from the Village Green) to serve as a permanent home for the arts facility. In addition to offering a full season of performing and visual arts each year, the Center also serves the community by offering a variety of dance and other classes, crafts, and musical instruction.

The Village has several natural resources that contribute to open space and recreation. The west branch of the Tioughnioga River runs along the east side of the Village, while Factory Brook, a tributary of the Tioughnioga, connects the east side to the west side of the Village, crossing through wetlands and the Newton Water Works. Two large, but privately owned, state-regulated wetland areas are situated in the Village. The larger of the two is situated in the northern reach of the Village behind the intermediate/junior high school. Factory Brook forms the southern boundary of this 19.7-acre site. The other wetland is 11.6 acres and is situated adjacent to the Town of Homer highway garages. These natural spaces offer recreational opportunities in the form of fishing, bird watching, and wildlife viewing.



A variety of entities own facilities and offer recreational services in the Village. With the exception of the community building in Venum Park, which is overseen by the Fire Department, scheduling, reservations, and programming for Village-owned facilities is managed by the Homer Recreation Department. The Village does not have a recreation master plan; rather, the Recreation Department has a mission statement that governs its operations. Additionally, the Village has a reciprocity agreement with the Homer Central School District, which enables the Village to schedule some programming at school facilities and enables the school to use Village-owned facilities for school-sponsored organized sports. A master calendar reflects scheduling among these facilities. All reservations, programming, and scheduling for the community building is conducted by the Fire Department. The Village Green Committee and professional staff at the Center manage scheduling and programming for The Village Green and the Center for the Arts, respectively.

The adequacy of parkland and open space in a given jurisdiction is calculated based upon the population. Both the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD) recommend a ratio of approximately one acre of parks and open space per 100 persons. The Village of Homer population according to the 2000 U.S. Census was 3,368 (108 fewer residents than counted in the 1990 U.S. Census). With 38 acres of parkland (not counting school facilities, vacant Village-owned land, and private facilities) there is adequate parkland and open space in the Village to meet the needs of the population. Because there is vacant Village-owned land situated near the Tioughnioga River there is an opportunity to expand the facilities and programming. The issue in Homer is not a dearth of parkland and open space, but instead a need for making sure that all segments of the population are fully served by the available facilities and programming. By surveying the available facilities, usage, and service delivery, the Village could assess, on a regular basis, whether there is adequate programming to meet the needs of any changing demographic within the Village, such as expanded programming and activities for the aging population or for young children.

Although adding significant aesthetic appeal to the Village, the Tioughnioga River is an underutilized asset in the Village. Development of the Tioughnioga River Trail, also recommended in the recently developed Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (See also Section II), would enhance the Village's appeal as a tourist destination and could be used as a tool for focusing public attention on conservation and passive recreational use of the river. The Village owns 7.4 acres of vacant property running along the east side of the Tioughnioga River, from Durkee Park to Water Street in the Central Business District. This property could be developed to include a trail connecting Durkee Park to downtown. This area of the downtown is proposed for significant redevelopment as detailed previously in *4. Central Business District*.

Although the Village has ample parkland and open space based on Village population figures, the parks have somewhat narrow usage opportunity. Calale Park and Griggs Memorial Park are primarily oriented to organized ball sports and therefore limited in terms of inviting other types of recreation. Neither of these facilities are open to the public, rather, they are used exclusively for Village and the Homer Central School District sports programs. Newton Park is a small, square-shaped neighborhood park that is oriented primarily toward younger users. George Venum Memorial Park is also a small park with basketball and tennis courts, but with extremely limited opportunity for other activities. Durkee Park and the Newton Water Works are prime spaces for



picnicking, fishing, and family gatherings. Both of these facilities are available to the public and are usually booked on weekends for the entire season.

Because Griggs Field and Calale Park are not open to the public for booking or recreation outside of organized sports programming and because Venum and Newton Parks are small spaces with limited facilities, Durkee Park and the Newton Water Works are the only large public park spaces that are accessible to the public on a regular basis. However, both Durkee Park and the Newton Water Works are fully rented out throughout the season on weekends. While these bookings don't prohibit use by other park-goers, the layout lends itself to make others feel as if they might be intruding on someone else's gathering. The exclusive use of some parks for organized sports and heavy weekend booking at others no doubt creates a perception that the Village lacks adequate parkland.

The Village does lack a linear park or walkway that would invite passive recreation opportunities such as walking, biking, running, and rollerblading. In addition to eliminating visual blight along Route 11 south, creating a river trail along this segment of the Tioughnioga River would serve the dual purpose of enhancing the southeast gateway into the Village and providing a linear recreational space that is currently lacking in the Village (See also Linear Park Conceptual Design on Page 54-A following).

The Village of Homer does not have a Community Garden. As more people raise their ecological consciousness, become interested in purchasing organic produce, or grow their own food, the need for a Community Garden becomes more acute. Aside from the notion of creating a more sustainable community, Community Gardens serve a greater purpose than growing flowers or vegetables. In addition to the garden itself, a Community Garden can include other features such as places of quiet reflection or places where children can rock climb. Community Gardens can beautify neighborhoods, provide opportunity for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections, and create a living space for recreation, exercise, and education. A Community Garden can be the centerpiece or starting point of a community's sustainability initiative, as well as becoming a focal point for community development and social interaction. A Community Garden can be one community plot, or it can be many individual plots. It can be at a school, hospital, or in a neighborhood. There are endless varieties of Community Gardens. Although most of it is privately owned, the Village has more than 100 acres of vacant land, some of which might be available for a Community Garden or gardens.

GOAL 6.1: Identify underutilized spaces and facilities that have potential to create additional and/or improved recreational opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 6.1.1. Update the inventory of all existing recreation facilities and open spaces.
- 6.1.2. Conduct use survey to ascertain program usage and public use of all existing recreational facilities and open spaces within the community.
- 6.1.3. Conduct a condition assessment of all existing recreational facilities and open spaces within the community.



- 6.1.4. Conduct review of the present recreation delivery system, programs, and distribution of facilities to insure coverage for all interests and ages.
- 6.1.5. Conduct a needs assessment to match identified recreational needs with available facilities and open space.

GOAL 6.2: Increase recreation and open space, and preserve scenic resources, within the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 6.2.1. Improve connectivity between Durkee Park and downtown via the undeveloped Village property between the park and the Water Street pedestrian bridge.
- 6.2.2. Develop phased plan to construct a trail between Durkee Park and downtown via the undeveloped Village property between the park and the Water Street pedestrian bridge.
- 6.2.3. Oversee and organize local community organization, citizens, schools, and colleges to each participate in implementing the trail plan, with minimal assistance by the Village.
- 6.2.4. Develop programming or educational brochure to focus public attention on understanding, conservation, and increased usage of the Tioughnioga River.
- 6.2.5. Seek cooperation from landowners adjacent to the Tioughnioga River to obtain easements for a multi-use riverfront recreation trail.
- 6.2.6. Create overnight camping opportunities at Durkee Park.
- 6.2.7. Investigate the possibility of establishing a conservation area/nature preserve in and around the wetlands near the Town garage.

GOAL 6.3: Minimize the environmental risks of commercial development and improve pedestrian and traffic safety along the Tioughnioga River at the Village “gateway” along Route 11 (south). Create a ribbon park/green space along the Tioughnioga River in this location.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 6.3.1. Identify properties to be considered for relocation.
- 6.3.2. Identify potential alternate sites for commercial properties including the present I.D. Booth/Verizon parcel.
- 6.3.3. Seek funding sources or other assistance to relocate existing commercial properties adjacent to the river to more suitable locations.



6.3.4. Allow only commercial uses that enhance the riverfront location and Route 11 (south) Village gateway.

GOAL 6.4: Support and promote the development of school and/or community gardens which will not only educate but also reduce the community's reliance on imported goods.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

6.4.1. Investigate all legal and/or Ag & Markets issues related to community gardens to understand the possibilities and limits.

6.4.2. Provide input and assistance for locating sites for community gardens including Village properties that are underutilized.

6.4.3. Coordinate with the schools to insure continuity of community gardens during the summer months when school is out.

6.4.4. Seek grant funding to establish community gardens.

GOAL 6.5: Increase and provide accessibility for all population segments to essential services, schools, Village offices, and recreational facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

6.5.1. Require installation of sidewalks and street connectivity for all new development to enhance the walkability, sustainability, recreational opportunities, and aesthetic appeal of the Village.

6.5.2. Construct sidewalks (at least on one side) on all streets within the Village that currently do not have them.

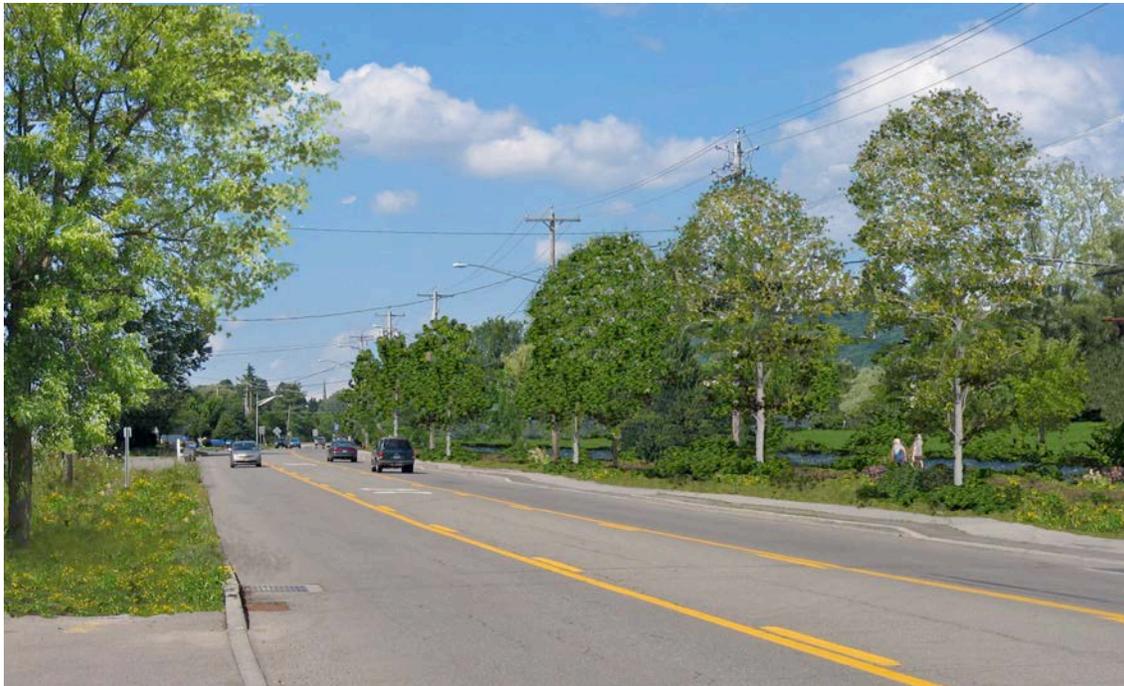
GOAL 6.6: Coordinate use of sports facilities and events between the Village, Schools, Towns of Homer and Cortlandville, the McDonald Sports Center, and regional community events.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

6.6.1. Initiate and implement quarterly meetings between agency representatives and local government to coordinate planned events, so as to avoid scheduling conflicts, and for increased efficiency.

6.6.2. Through the Village Recreation Department, initiate computerized scheduling and post schedule on Village website.

Conceptual Design Route 11 Linear Park





7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

The Village of Homer's infrastructure is typical for a community of its size. This infrastructure also provides the potential for future opportunities, improvements, expansion, and change. Infrastructure and utilities' elements are categorized into five primary groups as detailed following: water supply/fire protection system, wastewater disposal, fuel sources, stormwater management, and electricity/telephone/TV.

WATER SUPPLY AND FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM



The Village of Homer provides public water throughout the entire Village and has done so for many years (the earliest documented meter readings are 1895). All of the water is produced by the Village at the Newton Water Works facility located just west of Route 281, north of Hudson Street. All of the properties located within the Village limits comprise the official water district. There are approximately 1,251 services, with just a few homes within the Village that are not presently served. Relative to serving "out-of-district" users,

water is provided by the Village to only a very few homes. The Cortland County Environmental Health Department has strongly advised the Village to develop a secondary water source. Some work was done years ago on Hooker Avenue where a new well was drilled but there is no pump or pump house and the quality of the water has not been fully evaluated.

The source of the Village's water is two separate wells located at the Newton Water Works, both of which are used equally. Both wells are 12 inches in diameter, are approximately 75-80 feet deep and utilize gas chlorination for disinfection. Well #2 is capable of pumping 750 gallons per minute (GPM), while Well #3 produces 900 GPM. Under normal usage conditions, the pumps will operate approximately ten (10) distinct times per day. Based on previous aquifer investigations, each of the wells draws from the highly productive Scott-Factory Brook arm of the Cortlandville-Homer-Preble Sole Source Aquifer which is part of the entire Homer-Cortland valley and its typical sand and gravel deposits.

There is more than sufficient water capacity to meet the present needs of the Village. The average daily production rate for the wells in the Village is typically 450,000 gallons per day (GPD), with a typical static pressure of 85 psi found throughout the system. Based on metered usage, the typical range of documented consumption is approximately 250,000 to 300,000 GPD. There are three above ground storage tanks connected to the system. One is the recently completed (2004), 750,000 gallon Wolfe Road concrete tank which is located above the Glenwood Cemetery, just west of the



Village. The two other tanks are welded steel tanks with capacities of 146,000 and 206,000 gallons, respectively. Both of these tanks are located on the eastern edge of the Village on Carroway Hill Road. These tanks have served the system since the 1930's and have been refurbished and/or repaired several times during their lifespan. Continued maintenance is considered critical so as to provide much needed storage of water to fight a fire, particularly in the downtown area of the Village, which is located closest to these two tanks.

The size of the network piping through the Village varies from four inches to 12 inches. In general, fire flows are adequate, with approximately 148 fire hydrants located along these mains. Because of the proximity of the Village to the Town of Cortlandville, with its extensive network of public water, there are two physical connections between the two supplies that would allow for a reciprocal service to both municipalities in the event of an emergency in either.



There are no urgent issues regarding the overall condition of the system, but there are several items that need to be monitored and/or addressed in the future. Some of the more important are: (1) the amount of "lost water" that continues to be documented even though the Village has actively addressed this issue for many years; (2) the need to continue to replace the old original cast iron water mains; (3) consideration of an alternative well site; (4) continued compliance with all mandated requirements and regulations and (5) implement zoning protection of water sources.

WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

Homer has one sewer district which encompasses the entire Village. The wastewater generated in Homer is collected and delivered to the City of Cortland for treatment. On average, approximately 600,000 gallons of wastewater is disposed of daily. During the wet season of the spring, the volume will spike up to approximately one million gallons per day. The only areas within the Village presently not served by public sewer are the very upper end of Albany Street and the outer portion of Creal Road.

The vast majority of the collection system was installed around 1970-71 and consists of both transite pipe and more recently, PVC. The network of pipes is primarily eight inch in diameter with some small six inch spurs. The down gradient portion of the collection system increases up to 12 inch pipe, and ultimately 24 inches along Route 11/Homer Avenue. There are numerous small pump stations located throughout the Village (Clinton, Wall, Albany, North Main, Hooker, Brentwood, Willow Park, and Fulton) due to the flat topography. Just prior to entering the City of Cortland, there is one major pump station (North Homer Avenue near Fisher Avenue) with an 18 inch force main located at the Village's southern boundary with the Town of Cortlandville.



The collection system is relatively new (+/-35 years), and there are no obvious issues of concern. It is critical that proper maintenance practices remain in place, particularly in light of the many pump stations. The other issue that is typical in most wastewater systems, and should be aggressively addressed, is the amount of inflow and infiltration (I & I) which enters the sewer collection system and is transferred to Cortland for treatment. It is critical that this volume be minimized to the greatest extent possible since the basis of billing from Cortland is the volume of wastewater accepted. With approximately 300,000 GPD of water used each day, and with 600,000 GPD of sewerage discharged, the overage is a significant cost.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

As mentioned throughout this plan, there are two waterways passing through the Village of Homer. The larger of the two is the West Branch of the Tioughnioga River and the second is Factory Brook. In general, Factory Brook and the Tioughnioga River seldom cause flood damage to properties and homes. However, they will, on occasion, spill over onto adjacent low lying land and then slowly recede.

Within the Village, the major streets and state highway routes are served by a closed stormwater collection system (catch basins, culverts, etc.) Ultimately these systems discharge the runoff into either open ditches or other pipes which finally outlet into the Tioughnioga River. In general, these systems work satisfactorily with the exception of occasional temporary flooding along Clinton Street at the intermediate/junior high school, and where it meets North Main Street. Another problem area is where Copeland Avenue crosses the railroad tracks. The Clinton Street situation is presently being evaluated and the design for the full reconstruction of the street (new drainage system, curbing and paved roadway) is underway which should significantly improve the problem.

FUEL SOURCES

At present, the Village of Homer is served by a network of natural gas piping provided by NYS Electric and Gas. Consequently, most, if not all, homes and other establishments are connected to the system and do not rely on any combination of fuel oil, propane gas, coal, and/or wood as the primary source of fuel energy. However, with significant increases in fuel costs, more people are considering and implementing alternative energy sources.



ELECTRICITY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS



The Village of Homer is served with electricity, telephone, and cable TV by National Grid, Verizon, and Time Warner, respectively. There does not appear to be any unique problems or particular issues with any of them. With continuous technological development, many alternatives are now available compared to these traditional services. For example, more and more people are now only utilizing cell phones and no longer have land lines to their homes. Cell phone coverage in the Village is adequate and high

speed internet service is available. The Village wants to investigate the possibility of wireless internet on a community-wide basis.

GOAL 7.1: Insist that adequate fire protection is available and that additional proactive measures are taken to insure that the downtown area, in particular, will not be subject to a destructive fire.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 7.1.1. Conduct a comprehensive “worst case scenario” evaluation of the downtown fire protection system (location and number of hydrants, fire flows, pipe sizes, etc.).
- 7.1.2. Inventory existing buildings to determine which fire safety equipment is presently installed, such as sprinkler systems, alarms, construction materials, and their present uses to determine the fire risk.
- 7.1.3. Promote and assist in the installation of sprinkler systems, firewalls, and alarms in the buildings where needed.

GOAL 7.2: Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing water system.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

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



GOAL 7.3: Insure the long term safety and reliability of the public water system.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 7.3.1. Continue to evaluate the “upgradient” risks associated with the present well location and continue to coordinate with the Town of Homer.
- 7.3.2. Coordinate with the County Health Department in recognizing and adopting the Wellhead Protection Zone in the Village and incorporate required restrictions into the zoning.
- 7.3.3. Conduct a definitive pump test on the alternate wells along Hooker Avenue to determine suitability for use.
- 7.3.4. Consider “out-of-district” extensions to serve other nearby properties that have inadequate or marginal sources.
- 7.3.5. Adopt aquifer protection overlay zoning district that extends Area 1 Aquifer Protection District as established by the Town of Homer into the Village of Homer. The purpose of the overlay is to protect the aquifer by allowing development that is consistent with protection of the ground water resource.

GOAL 7.4: Continue to repair and replace sewer mains and investigate “unauthorized” discharges so as to reduce inflow and infiltration.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 7.4.1. Regularly review most recent “inflow and infiltration” data and develop phased approach to reduce.
- 7.4.2. Continue to TV sewer mains and prepare a phased plan to repair priority locations.

GOAL 7.5: Seek creative alternative uses for storm water runoff that can benefit the community.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

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



GOAL 7.6: Seek alternative power sources to generate electricity and develop a phased program to initially serve small Village facilities (Village Office, downtown lights, etc.)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 7.6.1. Investigate the upcoming legislation associated with the new law increasing the “Net Metering” for businesses and municipalities who utilize renewable energy sources.
- 7.6.2. Become informed on all forms of renewable energy sources that could benefit and be applicable to the Village.

GOAL 7.7: Relocate overhead power lines to underground locations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 7.7.1. Develop regulations to require or encourage installation of underground power lines for new development and major redevelopment projects.
- 7.7.2. Pursue funding source to bury/relocate overhead power lines within the Village.

GOAL 7.8: Provide Wi-Fi (wireless internet) on a community wide basis within the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

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



8. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Village of Homer is fortunate to have a wide variety of historic and cultural resources which are detailed below. As mentioned previously, a portion of the Village includes a federal and State listed historic district. These resources are highly valued in the community. The Residents Survey ranked historic character highly, and also positively noted cultural resources such as the Phillips Free Library and Center for the Arts. The results of a photographic exercise, which was completed as part of this plan, showed that the Village's historic architecture is considered an important asset.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Village of Homer has a large and varied collection of historic properties, including a National Register Historic District, which is described below. A community's architecture, perhaps more than any other single trait, defines its character, tells the story of its history, reflects its socioeconomic standing, and demonstrates its values. Homer's character, which is prized among many residents, is largely derived from its historic architecture, ranging from grand commercial buildings to simple homes. The maintenance and preservation of Homer's older architecture is important in communicating a positive image of the community to residents and visitors alike.



Many architectural styles dating from all eras of Homer's history are represented in the Village, including Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival, to name a few. A number of these buildings, particularly along Main Street, are "high-style" buildings that exhibit a more elaborate version of their architectural style, as opposed to simplified, vernacular versions. Fortunately, much of the Village's historic architecture and character has not been lost due to demolition, fire, lack of building maintenance, or inappropriate renovations (although all have happened in the Village to some degree). The Homer Landmark Society is a local non-profit organization that works to preserve historic resources in the community through education and, in some cases, limited financial assistance. They do not, however, have any formal enforcement capabilities, and the Village's historic resources are largely unprotected. Due to the age of these buildings it is a necessity that the Village work with building owners to preserve these important structures or they may be lost to the community.

The Village's National Register historic district, the "Olde Homer Village Historic District", as mentioned, was formally designated in 1972. Some of the important contributing structures in the district include:



- Jedediah Barber House, 18 North Main Street: One of the Village's most influential early settlers built his 32-room Federal style home in 1826. Barber was responsible for the development of many prominent Homer buildings and businesses including the Cortland Academy, a bank, a church, roads, a railroad, and his Great Western Mercantile.
 - Lenticular Truss Bridges: Three such bridges span the Tioughnioga River in the Village of Homer at Water, Wall, and Pine Streets. They were built in the early 1880's. Tension rods were combined to produce a metal version of the wooden truss. The bridges are individually listed on the National Register.
- 
- Homer Town Hall, 31 North Main Street: This building was built in 1908 from drawings completed by the noted Syracuse architect, Charles F. Colton. It was a joint effort between the Town and the Village and has been the site of government offices for both since its construction. It is a three-story cast and concrete, rectangular building with dome and pedimented portico supported by Corinthian columns. Probably the best-known use of the building was the portion dedicated to the Capitol Theater. In use for 20 years, the 698-seat auditorium showed scores of films and held numerous benefits. Remnants of the theater still remain. At present, the building is undergoing significant renovations, including handicapped accessibility.
 - 20 Clinton Street: Very few of the structures built in the Village before 1815 remain. The earliest extant frame house was built by Asa White in 1799. It was moved from Main Street to 20 Clinton Street circa 1826.
 - 26 Clinton Street: The octagonal house located here is one of less than 23 such houses remaining in the State out of the 2,000 that were originally built. Typical of this style is the cupola, the paired chimneys, and the smooth stucco walls over gravel. This property also includes a board and batten barn in the rear.
 - Former David Harum Restaurant, North Main Street: Jedediah Barber built this building in 1853 to be used as a bank. It has cast iron window hoods and is a unique commercial building.
 - Barber Block, South Main Street: The arrival of Jedediah Barber in 1811 to the Village of Homer was the beginning of great prosperity in the Village. Barber bought land running from Main Street to the Tioughnioga River on Wall Street and built his Great Western Mercantile. Some of the architectural features include a mansard roof and decorative cast iron surrounds on the first floor windows. The still intact, but deteriorated, Keator Opera House is located on the third floor.
 - James Street Train Station, 43 James Street: This station replaced the original 1854 structure around 1900. Its present use is the Homer Police Station.



- **Homer Village Green:** The Homer Village Green rests in the center of the Village's commercial business district. Its original design included the centrally located green surrounded by churches and schools. It was reflective of the New England heritage of the first white settlers. By the 1830's, the green was flanked by four churches and the Cortland Academy, which operated for 50 years until it was destroyed by fire. Of the original structures, only the Episcopal Church building remains today. The present green contains a bandstand and is the site of the Homer Elementary School. A number of the original maple trees planted in the 1860's have withstood the test of time.
- **Phillips Free Library:** The library is located at 27 South Main Street and was donated to the Village in 1902 by George W. Phillips and his daughter, Ellen. It was designed by famed Central New York architect, Archimedes Russell, and is a fine example of Romanesque architecture.
- **David Harum House:** The David Harum house is located at 80 South Main Street and is a Federal style home with a three bay blinded arcaded façade with Ionic pilasters, hip roof, and balustrade. Its former famous resident was an enterprising horse trader and self-promoter who was born in the Village in 1823. With P.T. Barnum, David Harum helped to perpetuate the myth of the Cardiff Giant. Harum was the inspiration for Edward Noyes Wescott's novel, *David Harum*.
- **81 South Main Street:** The residence located here was built in 1819 under the Federal style and was remodeled in the 1880's in the second French Empire style. It has a steep mansard roof, projecting dormer windows, and bracketed eaves. Andrew Dickson White, co-founder and first president of Cornell University was born here in 1832.
- **83 South Main Street:** Taverns were numerous in the 1820's and 1830's in Homer, when four stagecoaches per day ran through the Village. This Federal style building was once a temperance tavern called *Wisdom's Gate*.

It should be noted that many buildings not officially designated as historic nonetheless contribute to the character of the community and are worthy of preservation. Two other Village historic sites worth noting include:

- **Cherry Valley Turnpike, Albany Street:** Also known as the Albany Post Road, this east/west route passed through Truxton, over the east hill, down Albany Street to Cayuga Street and westward. It was built circa 1797.
- **Glenwood Cemetery:** Paris Barber, son of Jedediah, sold 30 acres of Lot 44 in 1869 at the foot of West Hill on Route 281 to be used exclusively as a cemetery. The land was originally part of his farm. Bodies from a cemetery near the present elementary school site were exhumed and moved to Glenwood. Today the cemetery contains almost 15,000 plots including the remains of both Revolutionary and Civil War soldiers.



CULTURAL RESOURCES

For a community of its size, Homer is fortunate to have a number of cultural facilities and events that enhance community life. There are numerous events that occur throughout the year, including but not limited to, Concerts on the Green summer music series, a Chautauqua series, Holidays in Homer, and varied school events. These are more fully detailed in *Local Economic Climate*. There are two cultural facilities worth mentioning. These are:

PHILLIPS FREE LIBRARY

The Phillips Library is located on Main Street at the southern end of the downtown. The Library is located in its historic 1902 building, built to house the Library. It is open various hours, Monday through Saturday. The Library has a large inventory of materials including collections for adults, young adults, and children in many media. It is part of the Finger Lakes Library System and offers free internet access. Recent renovation and restoration work have improved the library facility, and it remains popular among local residents.

CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The Center was established as a non-profit organization in 2003 with a dual mission to enhance opportunities for appreciation and participation in the arts and to preserve an important local historic structure, the former First Baptist Church of Homer, which was being vacated by its congregation. The Center provides a series of public performances, education and classes, and facilities to support the local arts.

It is important to note that the nearby City of Cortland provides other cultural institutions and events that are easily accessible to Village residents. In addition, the Central New York Living History Museum is currently being developed in a previously vacant building (former A.B. Brown site) just south of the Village on Route 11 in the Town of Cortlandville, and the Cortland Repertory Theater is located in Preble, a few miles to the north.

GOAL 8.1: Recognize and promote Village history and the role and value of cultural resources within the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

8.1.1. Seek funding and support appropriate funding requests to preserve and rehabilitate historic structures within the Village, including housing rehabilitation programs for owner and renter-occupied housing.



- 8.1.2. Partner with other entities to educate the public on the importance of historic architecture, increase support and appreciation for historic preservation, and celebrate local architecture.
- 8.1.3. Maintain existing and foster new partnerships with the school district and local preservation organizations to develop elementary, intermediate/middle school, and high school curriculum programs designed to educate students on the Village's history, historic architecture, and the connections between the built environment and social development of the community.
- 8.1.4. Encourage community groups and school officials to provide quality educational and volunteer opportunities aimed at preserving and enhancing Village cultural resources.
- 8.1.5. Partner with community groups, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, the County Historian and other interested entities to continue to advance quality cultural events, and educational opportunities which benefit the citizens of the Homer community.

GOAL 8.2: Recognize the role and value of historic architecture in the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 8.2.1. Amend the zoning regulations and zoning map to include an Historic District overlay zoning district that, at a minimum, governs new development and redevelopment in the historic corridor along Route 11.
- 8.2.2. Establish an Architectural Review Board to oversee the preservation of local historic structures and ensure that alterations/changes to existing structures are historically appropriate. Historic review should be limited to those areas or issues of concern to the Village.
- 8.2.3. To ensure fair and objective design review, clear and concise design guidelines should be established as part of the zoning code or as a stand-alone ordinance to guide the Architectural Review Board.

GOAL 8.3: Leverage historic, cultural, and waterfront resources within the Village to improve the local economy and quality of life.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 8.3.1. Foster partnerships among local museums and cultural institutions, including the Phillips Free Library, Homer Center for the Arts, Central New York Living History Museum and others to develop joint marketing campaigns, wayfinding systems, joint events, and other cooperative efforts.
- 8.3.2. Develop an arts and cultural trail linking local institutions, the waterfront, and the downtown historic district.



9. EMERGENCY SERVICES

POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS



The Village of Homer has a paid police department and an all-volunteer fire department. The Village of Homer's Police Department provides 24-hour coverage. Backup is provided by the Sheriff's Department and, occasionally, the NYS Police, which has a substation within the Village boundaries. The Homer Police force includes four (4) full time officers and one part time clerk.

Within the last five years, the police relocated to their present site in the former train station on James Street. This gave the department much needed room and provided handicapped access. The present budget for the department is \$338,000.

The Village's Fire Department includes 80-90 persons listed on the roster of firefighters. It is estimated that 20-40 of these persons are active volunteers, however, there are times of the day when many volunteers are at work, so firefighter availability tends to be less during a normal work day. Through mutual aid, the services of a career department such as the City of Cortland ensure that emergencies are addressed. The Village of Homer Fire Department also provides coverage to the Town and has contracts for services with the Towns of Summerhill and Scott. The Village's budget for the fire department is \$240,000. Unlike a fire district, this is a Village-owned department. Anecdotal information estimates the assets of the fire department, including the station, community building, land, vehicles, and equipment at \$10M.



State mandates for both police and fire, in terms of training and equipment, can be costly. For example, paper fingerprints will soon become obsolete, causing the police department to have to purchase a \$30,000 electronic fingerprinting device or use the City of Cortland's equipment for a fee. The fire department would like to add a ladder truck to its fleet which has a price tag of approximately \$1M. Cortland County, the City of Cortland, the Town of Cortlandville, and local police and fire departments are well aware of the burdens of average taxpayers in economically distressed counties such as Cortland County. There have been informal discussions among these entities to discuss the future of all local emergency services. Informal and formal discussions of consolidating police and fire services are ongoing.



AMBULANCE

The Village of Homer is covered by TLC Ambulance Services but similar to other local governments has opted not to execute a contract with the company. Therefore, individuals needing an ambulance pay a fee for services and are billed directly.

GOAL 9.1: The Village of Homer will provide/contract for emergency services for its citizens so that they can live peaceably, healthfully, and safely in the community.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 9.1.1. Continue to assist emergency services entities in searching and applying for grant funds when opportunities become available.
- 9.1.2. The Village Planning and Zoning Boards will consider and determine the impact of any new development on emergency services and the possible need to expand fire and police.
- 9.1.3. Modify procedures for site plan review to require applicants to contribute, including in-kind contributions, to emergency services if it is determined that there will be an impact on emergency services.

GOAL 9.2: The Village of Homer will provide emergency services in a cost effective manner while ensuring adequate and timely coverage.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 9.2.1. Continue to fund police and fire services, at the same time incorporating cost savings measures such as sharing services with nearby municipalities.
- 9.2.3. Equip fire and police personnel with the necessary equipment and technology to do their job and to protect paid and volunteer personnel as the need arises and its budget allows.
- 9.2.4. House emergency services in adequate facilities.
- 9.2.5. The Village will continue to investigate the issue of consolidation and/or reorganization of its police and fire departments.



GOAL 9.3: Provide for safety of Village employees, elected and appointed and officials, and citizens conducting business at municipal buildings.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 9.3.1. Ensure that all municipal buildings have the proper security equipment and procedures to ensure that employees, and elected and appointed personnel are adequately protected.
- 9.3.2. Develop security procedures for protection of Village employees, elected and appointed personnel, and citizens who work in or frequent municipal buildings during working hours or for official public purpose.
- 9.3.3. Install better security equipment in municipal buildings as needed and as affordable including facilities shared with the Town of Homer.

GOAL 9.4: The Village of Homer will assure adequate emergency services for ambulance coverage.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 9.4.1. Facilitate public outreach so that the citizens and property owners of the Village are aware of ambulance services.



10. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES – HOMER SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Homer School District is the Village of Homer's largest employer, with 409 faculty and staff and 2,226 students in grades K-12. The Village portion of the district includes one elementary school building, one intermediate/junior high school building, and a senior high, encompassing approximately 47 total acres.

When asked to rank services in the Village, most respondents to the mail survey noted that the Homer School District Buildings and its Programs were "good" to "excellent". When asked why people chose to live in the Village, the quality of the school district was mentioned frequently.



The Village needs to remain aware that under the present economy, the School District is Homer's economic driver. The 2007-2008 district budget included approximately \$25M in salary and benefits, which was 69% of its \$36.26M budget. Students, faculty, and staff patronize Village businesses, and the School District brings visitors to Homer via athletic events and school functions. Residents and visitors also use the school's facilities such as the weight room, baseball/softball fields, classrooms, or gymnasiums. Students gain valuable experience and/or satisfy community service

requirements needed for graduation working in Village businesses, volunteering for various businesses, organizations and causes, and working for the Village government. There is a potential for the Village and School District on cost cutting and environmental issues such as sharing the cost of fuel or working cooperatively on recycling and green energy efforts. The Village has an ongoing commitment to making sure students can walk to school safely.



One of the difficulties the school has had with its location in the Village is the lack of additional land for expansion, particularly at the high school. The Homer School District is lacking field space to accommodate all its needs for athletic pursuits. Until recently, the district leased field space located immediately outside the Village, Casey Field, which is a 40 acre site located along the eastern banks of the Tioughnioga River and along the east side of Route 11.



GOAL 10.1: Encourage persons associated with the school district, including but not limited to, faculty, staff, parents, students, visitors, and others to patronize Village businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

10.1.1. Work with the Homer Business Association and the Homer School District to provide a welcome packet for new district employees.

10.1.2. Work with Village businesses on advertising in media related to school events.

GOAL 10.2: Provide hands-on work experience for students including internships and community service.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

10.2.1. Facilitate the development of programs at the school so that students can work for pay or meet community service requirements in Village businesses, government, or not-for-profit organizations.

10.2.2. Continue to work to develop programs so that job training in the schools match the skill sets needed by area businesses.

GOAL 10.3: Work with the school district to identify lands which would allow for growth of the school district within the Village boundaries.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

10.3.1. Encourage expansion(s) of the school district within the Village boundaries.

GOAL 10.4: Consolidate Village and school services to the fullest extent possible.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

10.4.1. Work with the school district on cost sharing on items and services such as fuel for vehicles.

10.4.2. Work with the school on issues such as recycling and energy efficiency.

GOAL 10.5: Develop programs that encourage more children to walk safely to school.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:

10.5.1. The Village will continue to encourage sidewalk and trail infrastructure improvements to make walking to school more feasible.



11. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

More and more, municipal leaders are challenged by shrinking financial resources, coupled with high expectations for government services. As a result, municipalities are working more and more with other governments to provide needed services.



The Village of Homer is an integral part of the Town of Homer and an important municipality in Cortland County. The Village cooperates with its neighboring communities and the school district in many ways including, but not limited to, sharing emergency services, working cooperatively with the Town of Homer in the development of its Comprehensive Plan; working with the Town on annexation, infrastructure, and other development, and highway and municipal office space cost sharing efforts; and working with the City of Cortland on sewage disposal and recreational costs.

Future intermunicipal cooperation will be steered by the following conditions:

ECONOMIES OF SCALE

Buying power is often less costly when done in terms of quantity. A larger municipality may be able to purchase a system, materials, and supplies, and offer these services to smaller municipalities which may not be able to justify the cost with their own limited resources.

CONVENIENCE

One government may be in a better position to provide a particular service.

UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources may be more readily available in one community and may be shared with another municipality. Contracting for water service is a typical example.

SURPLUS FACILITIES

Population shifts may result in the shifting of local priorities. Physical facilities may not be utilized much compared to the past, and it may be more advantageous for facilities such as office space, for example, to be shared.



DUPLICATION OF SERVICES

The Village is already doing a good job in combining services where it makes sense. The Village should be challenging itself to insure that other services it provides are scrutinized to eliminate duplication which results in inefficient expenditures of time and money.

The Village of Homer realizes that to achieve its intergovernmental cooperation goals, political bipartisanship must be at the core. Turf issues must also be considered. In addition, the Village must weigh certain factors such as liability, contract term, personnel assignments, and property agreements, to name just a few, before it decides to share facilities or services with another municipality.

Intergovernmental cooperation allows the Village of Homer to continue to cost share the use of its staff, equipment, facilities, infrastructure, etc., in a manner which benefits the average Village resident and business through reduced taxes. This cooperation facilitates a feeling of good will, and inspires even further cooperation on the Town, County, regional, and State level. It is a shared goal of the community to continue this effort.

GOAL 11.1: The Village will continue to work with surrounding and nearby municipalities, the Homer School District, and Cortland County government to minimize costs and maximize services.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 11.1.1. Continue the policy to share equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and services to maximize the benefit to Homer Village taxpayers.
- 11.1.2. Consolidate services/departments, share equipment purchases, and share facilities where it makes sense and saves costs.



12. NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT



As part of the planning process, communities should make decisions that consider the preservation, maintenance, and responsible uses of natural resources. The Village of Homer was described in 1835, as *finely situated on the Tioughnioga River with streets and walks that are broad and ornamented with beautiful shade trees, which add much to the general appearance of the Village.* (History of Homer, New York Gazetteer And Business Directory Of Cortland County, N. Y. For 1869. Compiled And Published By Hamilton

Child, Syracuse, NY 1869). There is no question that the tree cover and other natural features continue to contribute to the Village's aesthetic appeal. Respondents to the Resident's Survey did not indicate any perceived problems with natural resources within the Village, although some respondents did note that the Village should make preservation of scenic resources a priority.

There are two particularly important considerations for the Village in the context of natural resources. The first is preservation of local water resources and the regional drinking water supply. The Village is blessed with abundant water resources that provide scenic views, a potential source of tourism revenue, educational opportunities, and recreation. Most importantly, though, the Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer provides a high quality source of public drinking water. However, because of the geology in the area, this aquifer and therefore local drinking water supply, is particularly susceptible to contamination. As the Village considers its future, primary consideration must be given ensuring that all development proposals include proper safeguards to preserve water resources in the Village.



The second consideration is that efforts should be taken to preserve the region's biodiversity. The term biodiversity refers to the wide range of organisms, plants and animals that exist within any given geographical region. Maintaining biodiversity in a region (and across the planet) is important for a number of reasons. Humans depend on many of the plants and animals that make up an ecological community. For example, one-quarter of all the prescription drugs in the United States contain ingredients obtained from plants. Humans benefit from the interaction among organisms in a biologically



diverse community: plants help clean the water and air, provide oxygen in the atmosphere, and control erosion. At the ecosystem level, biodiversity provides the conditions and drives the processes that sustain the global economy and our very survival as a species. Listed following are the observations and issues related to the Village of Homer's natural resources and environment.

SLOPE AND TOPOGRAPHY

Slope and topography describe the shape and relief of the land. Topography describes the elevation and changes in elevation, while slope is a measurement of the percentage change in elevation over a particular distance. The terrain in the Village of Homer is primarily flat. Elevation throughout most of the Village is 1,140 feet above sea level, with steeper elevations in the northwest corner (up to 1,280 feet), along the eastern border (up to 1,320 feet), and in the southwest prominence (up to 1,420 feet). East of River Street, the land is steeply sloped and mainly unsuitable for development. Although the sloped terrain in the northwest corner and southwest prominence of the Village are suitable for development, surface runoff can cause erosion of topsoil and contribute to flood events. (See Map 2, Page 86-A for slopes)

SOILS

Soil characteristics affect a variety of human activities, from land use patterns, to transportation routes, to the installation of necessary community infrastructure. Much of the Village is designated as prime agricultural soil although this is largely irrelevant from a farming perspective since it is unlikely that the few remaining parcels in agricultural use will remain in production indefinitely. Since the Village sits atop a sole source aquifer, soil type is significant to the health of the Village drinking water. The soil in the Village is predominantly gravelly clay loam, which drains well but is highly permeable. This is significant for the Village because pollutants carried in surface runoff and infiltrated into the soil will quickly reach the groundwater.

UNIQUE NATURAL AREAS (UNAS) AND CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS (CEAS)

Unique Natural Areas (UNAs) are locally designated sites that are recognized because of the outstanding qualities that render them unique and deserving of preservation in a natural state. UNAs include natural features such as woods, swamps, glens, cliffs, gorges, and streams that occur in a natural setting or in an urban greenspace. Often, the characteristics that make a site unique are extremely vulnerable to a wide range of both direct and indirect impacts and may be compromised by disturbing the site. UNAs are generally closed to the public. The Village of Homer has not designated any site within the Village as a UNA.

Under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), local



agencies may designate specific geographic areas within their boundaries as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs). To be designated as a CEA, an area must have an exceptional or unique character with respect to one or more of the following: a benefit or threat to human health; a natural setting, e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, forest and vegetation, open space and areas of important aesthetic or scenic quality; agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational values; or an inherent ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change. The designation of a CEA provides some regulatory protection for a site and functions as an indicator for developers, local officials, and other governmental agencies that the site is of significant environmental value.



There are two CEAs in Cortland County (the Cortland Water Works and the McGraw Groundwater Protection Overlay District both designated to protect the drinking water/groundwater sources), but none has been designated in the Village of Homer. The Town of Homer has made an application to the NYS DEC for CEA designation of Area I of the Town's Aquifer Protection District. Area I is a graphic representation of the aquifer and its short-term recharge area. As shown on Map 3 prepared by the Cortland County Planning Department, Page 86-B, the Town's Area I extends into the Village of Homer and encompasses the wells situated at the Newton Water Works and the undeveloped well at Hooker Avenue. CEA designation for that portion of Area I situated in the Village of Homer would contribute significantly to protection of the Village drinking water supply.

RARE PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The NY Natural Heritage Program is a partnership between the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and The Nature Conservancy. The purpose of the program is to facilitate conservation of rare animals, rare plants, and natural ecosystems thereby maintaining the biodiversity of New York State. The NY Natural Heritage Program surveys and monitors rare animals, rare plants, and significant ecological communities throughout the State. NY Natural Heritage data communicate a picture of the status of biodiversity in New York.

Nearly the entire Village of Homer, except for the southwest prominence, has been mapped as having rare plants or animals, although there are no significant ecological communities. What this means is that at some point in time, rare plants or animals were identified in or near the Village. The rare plant and animal species are not disclosed to the public, rather, if a landowner or developer intends to disturb a site, he or she can contact the NYS DEC Natural Heritage Program. Information on the locations and identities of rare species is provided to requesters at the level of detail necessary to enable fully informed decision-making while protecting the sensitive resource.



WATER RESOURCES

Water resources are typically critical to the public health, environmental, and economic well-being of a community. Economic and environmental activities dependent on the integrity of local water bodies and local water supplies include tourism, recreation, education, agriculture, industry, and real estate. In the Village of Homer, there are surface water and ground water resources that merit protection. Map 4, Page 86-C depicts rivers, streams, wetlands, flood zones, and the boundary of the sole source aquifer in the Village.

GROUNDWATER

Ground water is any water that is located under the surface of the ground including underground streams and aquifers. The water table is how deep you would have to dig to reach soil that is saturated with water. In Cortland County, the water table generally occurs at depths of less than 25 feet below the land surface. Aquifers can occur at various depths; some are very deep beneath the earth's surface and are not easily impacted by human activity. Others, such as the Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer are closer to the earth's surface and are highly susceptible to contamination. The average depth to groundwater in the Village of Homer is typically in the range of ten to 20 feet, with shallower depths closer to the West Branch of the Tioughnioga River, and greater depths toward the hillsides. Near the river, the depth to groundwater may only be a few feet below ground surface.

The entire Village of Homer sits atop the Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer. This aquifer was designated as a sole source aquifer (SSA) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the late 1980's (*See Appendices for U.S. EPA, Region 2, Cortland Homer Preble Aquifer System Support Document, June 1988*). An SSA is an aquifer that has been designated as the "sole or principal" source of drinking water for an area. It is a slight misnomer to say that the Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer was designated as an SSA since the SSA-area designated by the U.S. EPA is, in point of fact, a very large area that includes not only the actual sand and gravel deposits that comprise the Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer, but also the groundwater recharge areas and surface water watersheds. Figure 1 (shown on the next page) depicts the SSA designated by the EPA for the Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer. The large land area encompassed by the SSA can be thought of as a sphere of influence, that is, anything that happens within the SSA can affect the underlying sand and gravel aquifer.

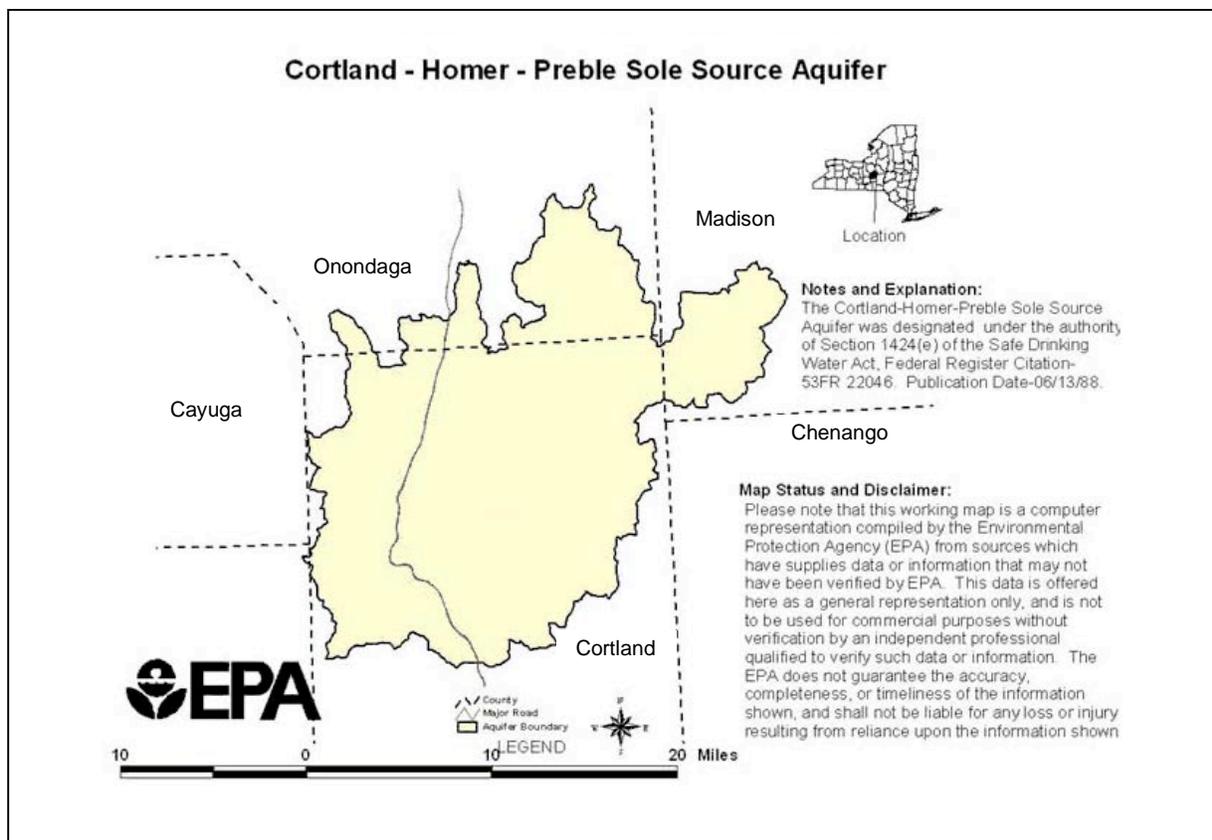


Figure 1: SSA designated by the EPA for the Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer
www.epa.gov/region2/water/aquifer/cortland/cortland.htm

An aquifer is an underground bed or layer of permeable rock, sediment, or soil that yields water. The Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer consists of sand and gravel deposits situated beneath the valley floors. Figure 2, prepared by the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District, depicts the location of the sand and gravel deposits that comprise the actual aquifer. A watershed is all of the land that contributes water, but also pollutants, to a specific surface water body (such as the Tioughnioga River or Factory Brook). A groundwater recharge area is like a watershed but for a groundwater resource such as an aquifer or well. It is important to understand that all of these water resources (surface and ground) and water transport mechanisms (recharge areas and watersheds) are an interconnected system. What flows into the rivers,



Figure 2: Location of the sand and gravel deposits that comprise the aquifer



streams, or aquifer, or through the recharge areas and watersheds affects other parts of the system.

Groundwater recharge occurs through soil infiltration, loss from streams, and groundwater flow from upland areas. Due to high soil permeability and shallow depth to the groundwater in this area, pollution of the groundwater begins immediately; it does not have to reach the "water table" (zone of saturation) or the aquifer to begin polluting. As a result, the Village must be particularly attentive to any activities that will cause contamination of water resources within the designated SSA.

Rain and snowmelt runoff can carry a multitude of contaminants that enter the aquifer through direct recharge or surface runoff. Manmade pollutants such as oil and grease from cars, or degreasers, deicing salts, and agricultural pollutants such as animal excrement, pesticides, and fertilizers enter the groundwater directly and indirectly from surface runoff. An accidental spill from a vehicle traveling on Interstate 81, or other highways in the area, poses a potential significant threat. The production and storage of chemicals, including home heating oil, can lead to spills or leakage at industrial, commercial, and even residential sites and pose a major risk of contamination. Septic systems for waste disposal, particularly if not well-maintained or in the event of a failure, could lead to contamination of the aquifer. Because groundwater resources in Cortland County are so close to the surface, a chemical spill or dense development potentially has very serious implications for the water supply.

The groundwater recharge area for the wells at the Newton Water Works and the undeveloped well at Hooker Avenue includes all of the land area from which water (precipitation) could potentially reach the groundwater system that feeds the wells. Starting at the Newton Water Works, the recharge area extends northwest into the Town of Homer and all the way up into the Town of Scott to the headwaters of Factory Brook. The two-year capture zone is representative of the area where water that is being pumped from the well may have originated. Figure 3, prepared by the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District, depicts the wellheads, 2-year capture zone, and recharge zone as they occur in the Towns of Homer and Scott. All of the shaded areas on Figure 3 are included within the Cortland-Homer-Preble SSA and should be protected locally.

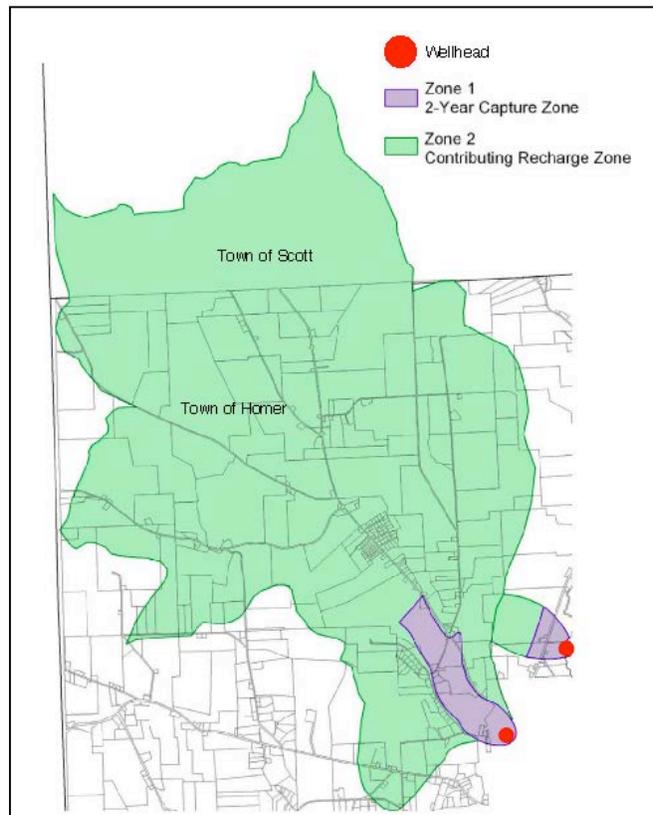


Figure 3: Town of Homer wellhead protection areas



In the Village of Homer, the source of water for the Village wells ultimately comes from what is known as the Cortland-Homer-Preble SSA. This SSA also provides drinking water to the City of Cortland and the Town of Cortlandville. According to the U.S. EPA, there are no alternate sources that can provide the same quality or volume of drinking water as the Cortland-Homer-Preble SSA. Thus, the significance of protecting the SSA cannot be understated.

Because the systems are interconnected and cross jurisdictional boundaries, the Village should enact Aquifer Protection District regulations that are consistent with the protections in place in the Town of Homer to protect ground and surface water resources. Map 5 on Page 85-D depicts the Aquifer Protection District areas within the Town of Homer. Although the areas extend into the Village, the Village must enact protections within its jurisdiction. The Village should also adopt a wellhead protection zone around the Newton Water Works that provides protection to this critical resource and its recharge area. The area that should be included in the wellhead protection zone includes the well and the two year capture recharge area within the Village boundaries as depicted on Map 6, Page 85-E.

SURFACE WATER - WETLANDS

Wetlands are a type of surface water. More specifically, wetlands are areas that contain soils that are saturated by groundwater or surface water and support wetland plants. Wetlands provide a multitude of ecological, economic, and social benefits. They provide habitat for fish, wildlife, and a variety of plants. Wetlands absorb, store, and slow down the movement of rain and snow melt, minimizing flooding and erosion, and stabilizing water flow. Wetlands recharge groundwater and acts as a filter that cleanses surface runoff containing manmade contaminants. Wetlands recycle nutrients, which then contribute to the food chain and local biodiversity. Wetlands also provide areas for recreation, wildlife viewing, and educational opportunities for humans.

There are two DEC regulated wetlands in the Village of Homer, both are also identified as NWI sites. The larger of the two DEC regulated wetlands is also regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is located behind the Homer intermediate/junior high school and owned by St. Margaret's Church. The approximate size is 19.7 acres. This wetland is very swampy with standing water and abundant vegetation. The second and smaller DEC regulated wetland is located on a parcel bordered by Prospect, North, Fulton, and Grove Streets just south of the Town garages. Approximately 11.6 acres, it is owned by the Cortland Bird Club. This wetland is also very wet and swampy on a year-round basis. Both of these wetlands are protected, meaning that a DEC permit would be required before any development could take place. Figures 4 and 5, below, depict the approximate boundaries of the wetlands and the 100 foot buffer zone, which may also be classified as a wetland.

DEC regulated wetlands are governed by the Freshwater Wetlands Act (FWA), Article 24, of the Environmental Conservation Law. Wetlands greater than 12.4 acres, or smaller wetlands that are considered of unusual local importance, are regulated under the FWA. Additionally, around every wetland is an "adjacent area" of 100 feet that is also



protected to provide a buffer for the wetland. The main provisions of the FWA seek to regulate those uses that would have an adverse impact on wetlands, such as filling or draining. A permit is required when conducting certain activities within DEC regulated wetlands



DEC REGULATED WETLANDS

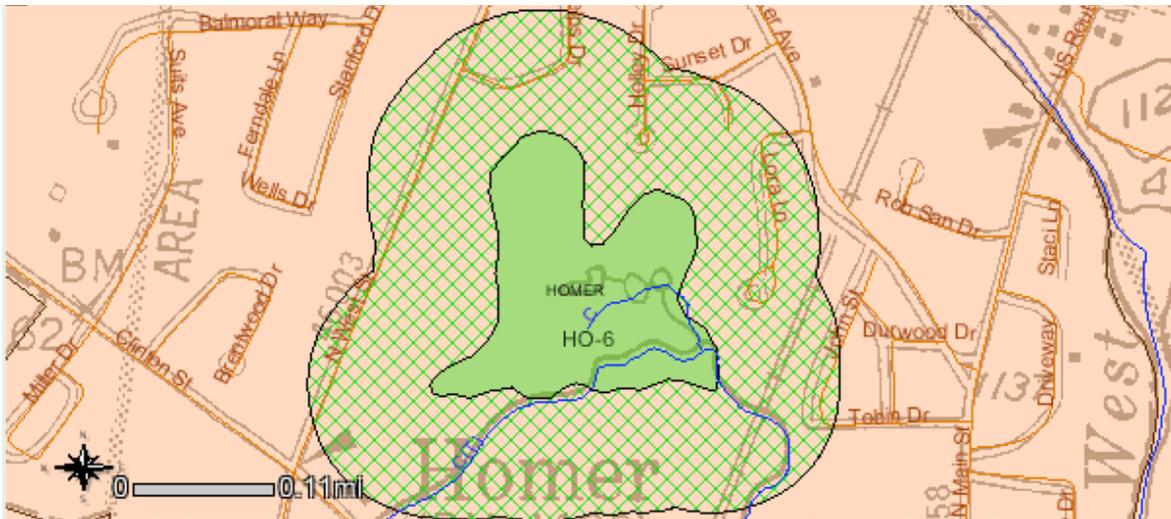


Figure 4: Larger wetland owned by St. Margaret's Church located behind intermediate/junior high school
From the NYS DEC website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/imsmaps/ERM/viewer.htm>

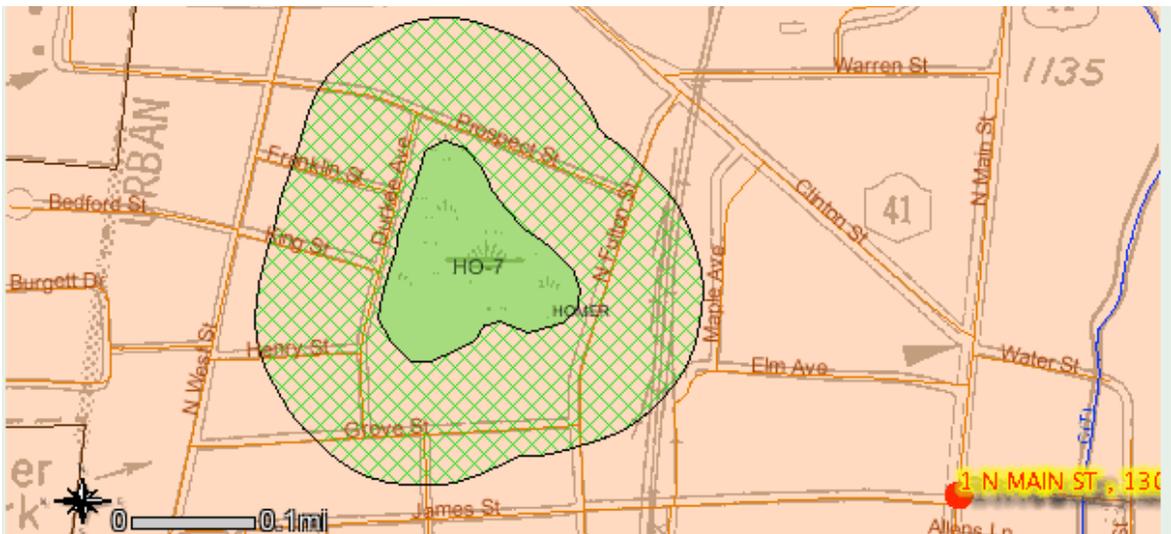


Figure 5: Smaller wetland owned by Cortland Bird Club located on a parcel bordered by Prospect, North Fulton, and Grove Streets

From the NYS DEC website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/imsmaps/ERM/viewer.htm>



Wetlands serve various functions and are critical to the health of other ecosystems. Since the two largest wetlands in the Village are already regulated by the DEC, the most salient issue for them is pollution since the wetlands are one of several sources that recharge the SSA. The larger wetland is not situated in a densely developed corridor. The smaller wetland is, however, adjacent to underused and vacant commercial and industrial parcels which may be redeveloped more intensely in the future. Beyond the 100 foot wetland buffer, any redevelopment plans for surrounding parcels will need to consider the impact of runoff into the wetland.

The dozen or so small NWI wetlands are much more vulnerable than the two DEC regulated wetlands. NWI designation of a wetland does not carry any regulatory restrictions, rather NWI wetlands are simply cataloged and occasionally monitored. While the NWI is an informational map, the wetlands on it are protected in the sense that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates many of them. As development is proposed, each NWI wetland must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and if it meets certain requirements the Corps will regulate it, but this process does not guarantee protection. Thus, there is significant danger that these wetlands could be filled or damaged should development occur on the host parcels. The Village of Homer should consider regulating development around any wetland within its jurisdiction.

SURFACE WATER - WATER BODIES

Surface water is basically any water that is exposed to the atmosphere. In the Village of Homer there are numerous sources of surface water: the Tioughnioga River, Factory Brook, Briggs Pool, two DEC regulated wetlands, and more than a dozen NWI wetlands. The DEC has classified both the Tioughnioga River and Factory Brook as C(T), meaning that these water bodies could support a trout population and are best used for fishing. Streams and small water bodies that are designated C(T) pursuant to the provisions of the Protection of Waters Program, found at Title 5 of Article 15 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), are protected from undesirable human activities that will affect or destroy the delicate ecological balance of these important areas, or impair the use of these waters. Because these water bodies recharge the SSA, and because of their aesthetic and potential economic value to the Village, all efforts should be made to protect the Tioughnioga River and Factory Brook from any sources of contamination, particularly runoff from developed parcels.

BROWNFIELDS

According to the NYSDEC, nearly every community in New York State is affected by contaminated and/or abandoned properties, known as brownfields. Brownfields are sites of underused or abandoned commercial and industrial facilities. Some, but not all, brownfield sites are contaminated with toxins. Left untouched, brownfields pose environmental, legal, and financial burdens on a community and its taxpayers. However, after cleanup, these sites can contribute to the economic welfare of the community by providing jobs, tax revenues, and housing. Currently, the Village does not have any officially recognized Brownfield sites, but there are a number of vacant and underused



properties within the Village on former commercial and industrial sites, some of which may be contaminated.

The Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program, managed by the New York Department of State, may be a suitable option for the Village in addressing the revitalization of brownfield sites. The BOA Program provides municipal participants with assistance to complete revitalization plans and implementation strategies for brownfield sites on an area-wide basis. BOA Program participants are given access to planning services, expert environmental and economic analysis, and environmental site assessment for strategic redevelopment of parcels. Fostering public participation and public-private partnerships are integral aspects of the BOA Program.

Because one of the main recharge sources for the Cortland-Homer-Preble aquifer is water transmitted to the aquifer through soil absorption, it is particularly important to clean up any contaminated sites since chemicals that settle in the soil, including airborne contaminants, can continue to leach into the groundwater. The BOA program provides an economical approach to redevelopment and revitalization of brownfields.

FLOOD ZONES

In the Village of Homer, lands adjacent to the Tioughnioga River and Factory Brook, most of the Central Business District, the property occupied by the intermediate/junior high school, and the entire southern tail of the Village are situated in a floodplain and parts of the floodway. Map 4 on Page 85-C illustrates the flood zones and the floodway for the Village of Homer.

Flood zones are described in terms of 100-year (or 500-year) floods. The terms "100-year flood" and "100-year floodplain" can be misleading. A 100-year flood is not a flood event that can be expected to occur once every 100 years. Rather, it is a flood that has a 1% chance of occurring in a given year. Thus, a 100-year flood could occur more than once in a relatively short period of time. The 100-year floodplain is the geographic area designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that would be submerged during a 100-year flood event. On FEMA maps, flood prone areas are depicted as flood zones. Each zone reflects the severity or type of flooding in the area.

According to FEMA, a "Regulatory Floodway" means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved (from obstructions such as development) in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. Development in floodways must be regulated by local jurisdictions to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations. In the Village of Homer, development is prohibited within the floodway unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated to FEMA, with engineered plans and drawings, that a proposed development will not impede the flow of water on the occasion of a flood event.

In 2008, FEMA proposed new flood zones and an expanded floodway in the



Village although these have not been formally adopted yet. Except for properties bordering the Tioughnioga River and Factory Brook, most of the Village is not affected by the new flood designations. Development is allowed within the 100-year flood zone, but landowners are required to purchase flood insurance if a mortgage backed by the FDIC is sought. Development is also allowed within the 500-year flood zone and flood insurance is not required. Nonetheless, local land use regulations must be brought into conformance with FEMA requirements.

SUSTAINABILITY

Growth is both inevitable and desirable for a healthy community. The way a community manages its growth directly impacts not only the built environment but also all natural resources within the local jurisdiction and beyond. Some respondents to the Residents Survey indicated that their desire to live in Village is based, in part, on the aesthetic value of the Village. Other survey respondents opined that scenic views should be better protected. Many scenic vistas are actually situated in the Town of Homer and observed from the Village. Through planning and land use regulations, the Village can be successful in encouraging appropriate development while maintaining valued natural resources. Still, residents must be cognizant of the fact that what happens in the Village of Homer and in adjacent jurisdictions has an environmental impact elsewhere. The Village should provide input, whenever possible, to the Towns of Cortlandville and Homer, when projects are proposed that could affect the aesthetic resources of the Village.

With respect to the built environment, utilization of green building techniques, alternative energy sources, and interior home improvements that promote energy efficiency and conservation will make the Village a better place to live. The Village has an opportunity take a leadership role in such an initiative by modeling sustainable construction and business practices. Taken together, these actions will have not only a local, but also a global impact.

GOAL 12.1: Ensure that future development and redevelopment within the Village will complement the natural environment.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 12.1.1. Work with surrounding local governments, particularly the Towns of Homer and Cortlandville, to ensure that adequate stormwater runoff/retention systems ponds are in place for all new development.
- 12.1.2. Enact local law to regulate stormwater runoff and retention.
- 12.1.3. Enact aquifer protection zone regulations consistent with Town of Homer regulations to protect aquifer and recharge areas.



- 12.1.4. Amend zoning to allow alternative parking technologies for redevelopment on existing and development of new sites, allowing the use of paving stones, permeable pavement, or other green technologies that address, minimize, redirect, or treat runoff from parking lots. Include this as an element of site plan review.
- 12.1.5. Limit or prohibit development in designated wetlands. Development proposals adjacent to wetlands should be scrutinized and carefully planned to minimize impacts on wetlands.
- 12.1.6. Limit or prohibit development in areas with slopes greater than 15%.
- 12.1.7. Implement the actions and recommendations contained in the Tioughnioga Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.
- 12.1.8. For all development proposals that exceed 10,000 square feet, require storm water plan review by the Soil & Water Conservation District.
- 12.1.9. Adopt regulations establishing a wellhead protection zone around the Newton Water Works wells and apply proactive zoning to it, working with Cortland County Planning, Health Department, and Soil and Water Conservation District.
- 12.1.10 Initiate designation of a Critical Environmental Area for area surrounding the wells at the Newton Water Works and at Hooker Avenue.

GOAL 12.2: Enable redevelopment and use of brownfield sites consistent with the vision of the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 12.2.1. Seek designation as a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) for appropriate areas within Village.
- 12.2.2. Prepare and submit a pre-nomination study and an application to the Brownfields Opportunity Areas program.
- 12.2.3. If BOA is not pursued, inventory Brownfield sites within the Village to enable landowners to apply for clean up funding, and to redevelop these sites for various types of infill development.

GOAL 12.3: Be proactive in appropriate redevelopment/reuse of properties affected by a major flood event.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 12.3.1. In the event of a major flood affecting properties in the floodway (established by FEMA), assemble parcels to create a park or other open space/recreation areas on parcels that are no longer developable in the downtown along the Tioughnioga River.



12.3.2. Assemble parcels between Route 11 and the Tioughnioga River, which are situated in the floodway, to create a ribbon park or other open space/recreational areas.

12.3.3. Consider adopting by ordinance more stringent regulations than FEMA has for development in both flood zones and floodways to eliminate or substantially control development in these sensitive areas.

GOAL 12.4: Take a leadership role in sustainability initiatives by modeling sustainable construction and business practices.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

12.4.1. Add incentives to zoning code to encourage energy conservation and efficiencies and the use of alternative energy sources.

12.4.2. Promote energy efficiency for new or existing structures such as green build standards, alternative energy sources, and/or new energy saving technologies.

12.4.3. Promote the development and the use of alternative energy sources such as wind, geothermal, and solar in all Village building projects. Adopt regulations governing the use and siting of such technologies.

12.4.4. Encourage developers to seek LEED certification or use other green building technologies.

12.4.5. Enact local law governing the installation and use of wood burning boilers.

GOAL 12.5: Recognize natural resources within the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

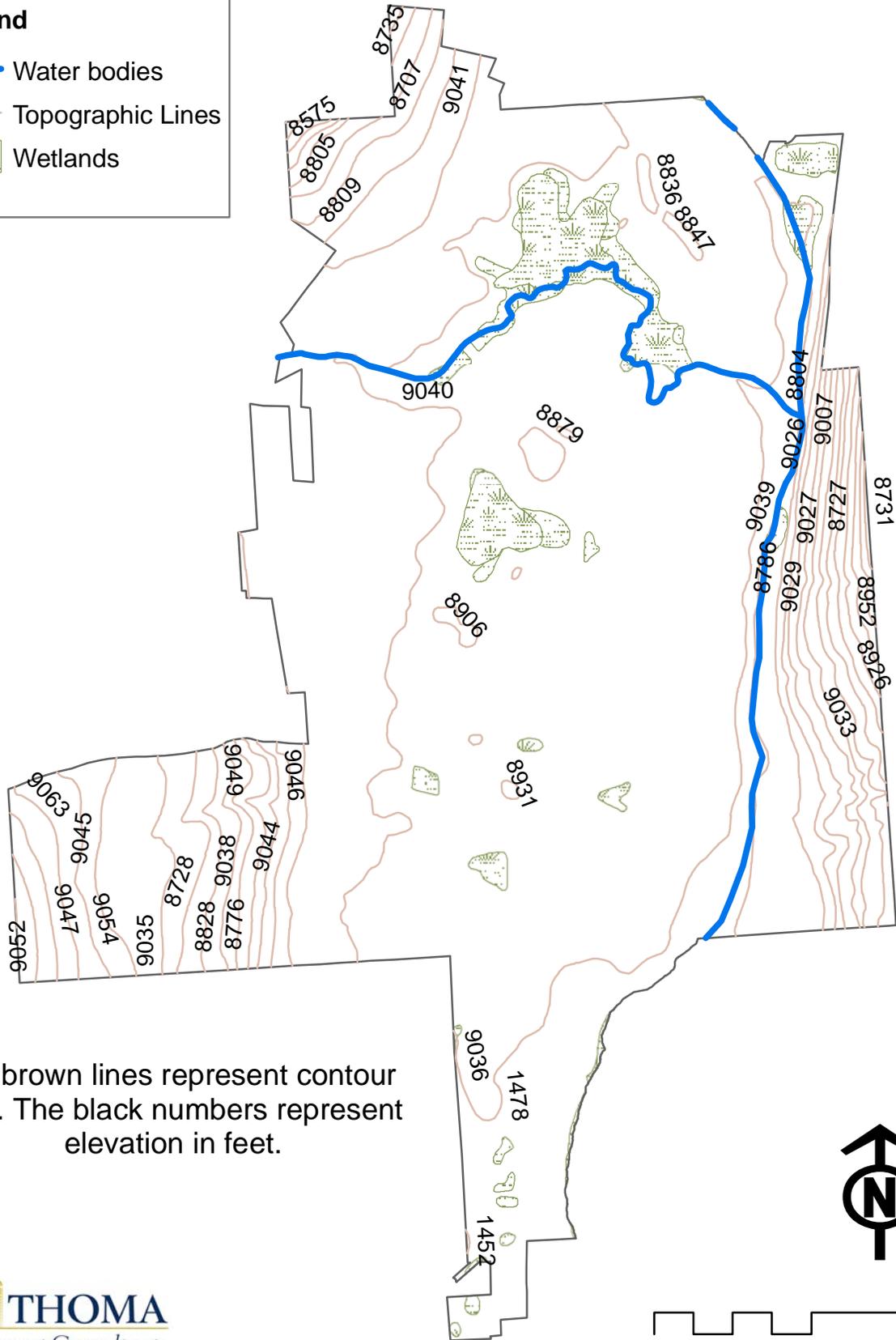
12.5.1. Identify and map habitat of natural resources of interest, such as boar and indigenous wild turkey, deer, coyote, and plant populations.

12.5.2. Establish inventory of natural resources including flora and fauna specimen.

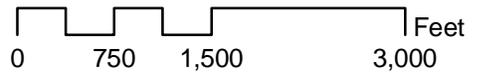
Map 2: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Topographic Detail

Legend

-  Water bodies
-  Topographic Lines
-  Wetlands



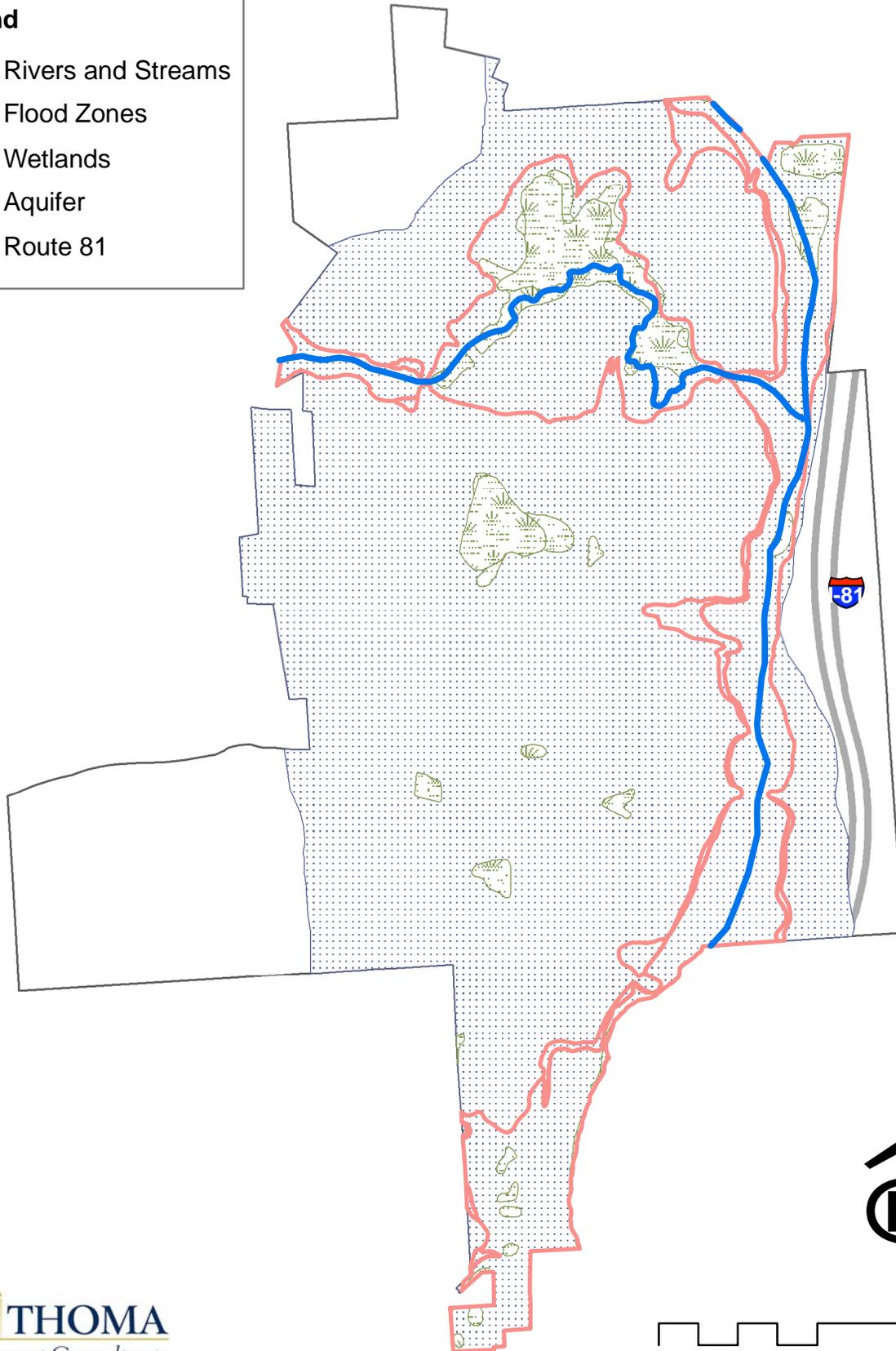
The brown lines represent contour lines. The black numbers represent elevation in feet.



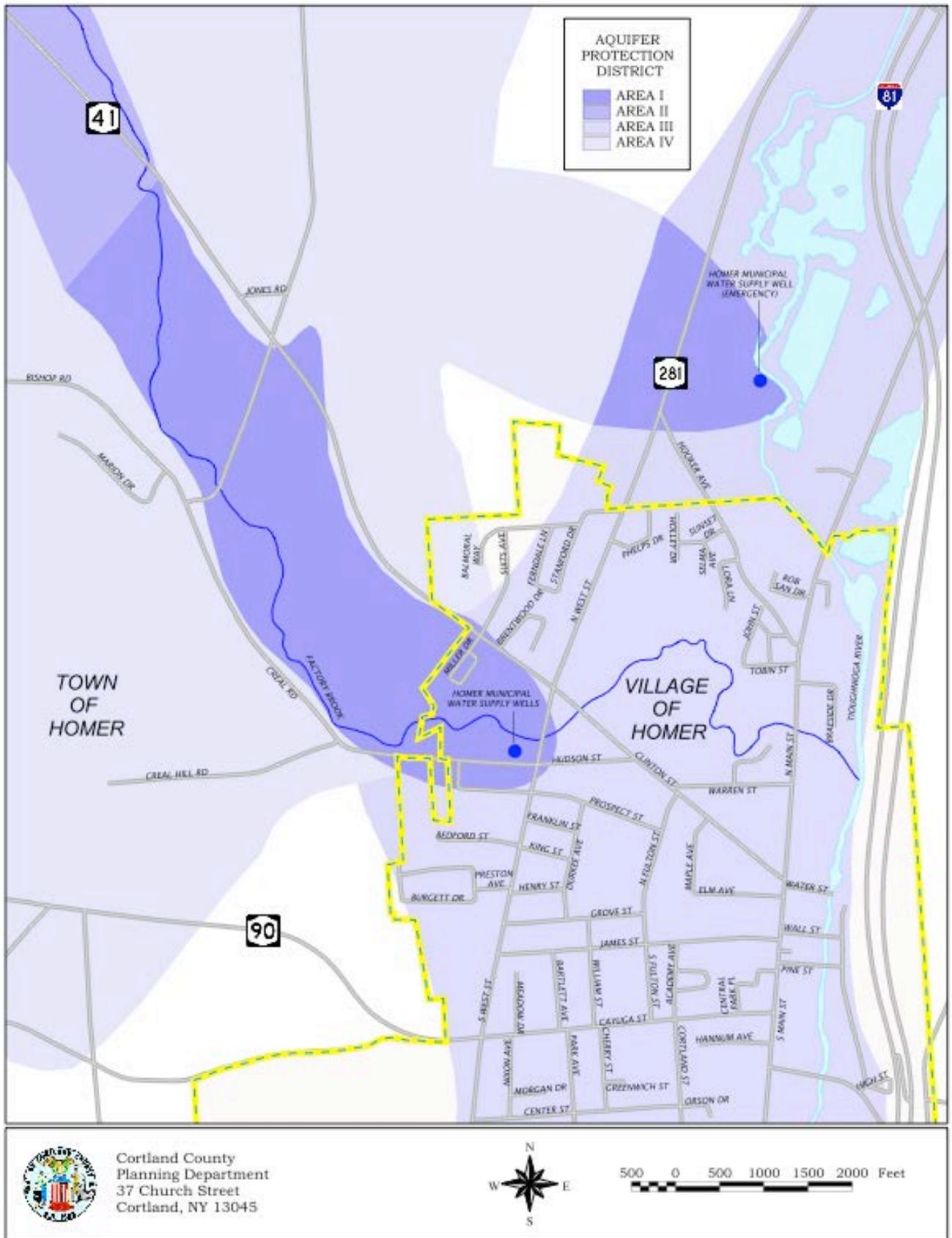
Map 4: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Rivers, Streams, Wetlands, Flood Zones, Aquifer

Legend

-  Rivers and Streams
-  Flood Zones
-  Wetlands
-  Aquifer
-  Route 81



Map 5: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Town of Homer Aquifer Protection District

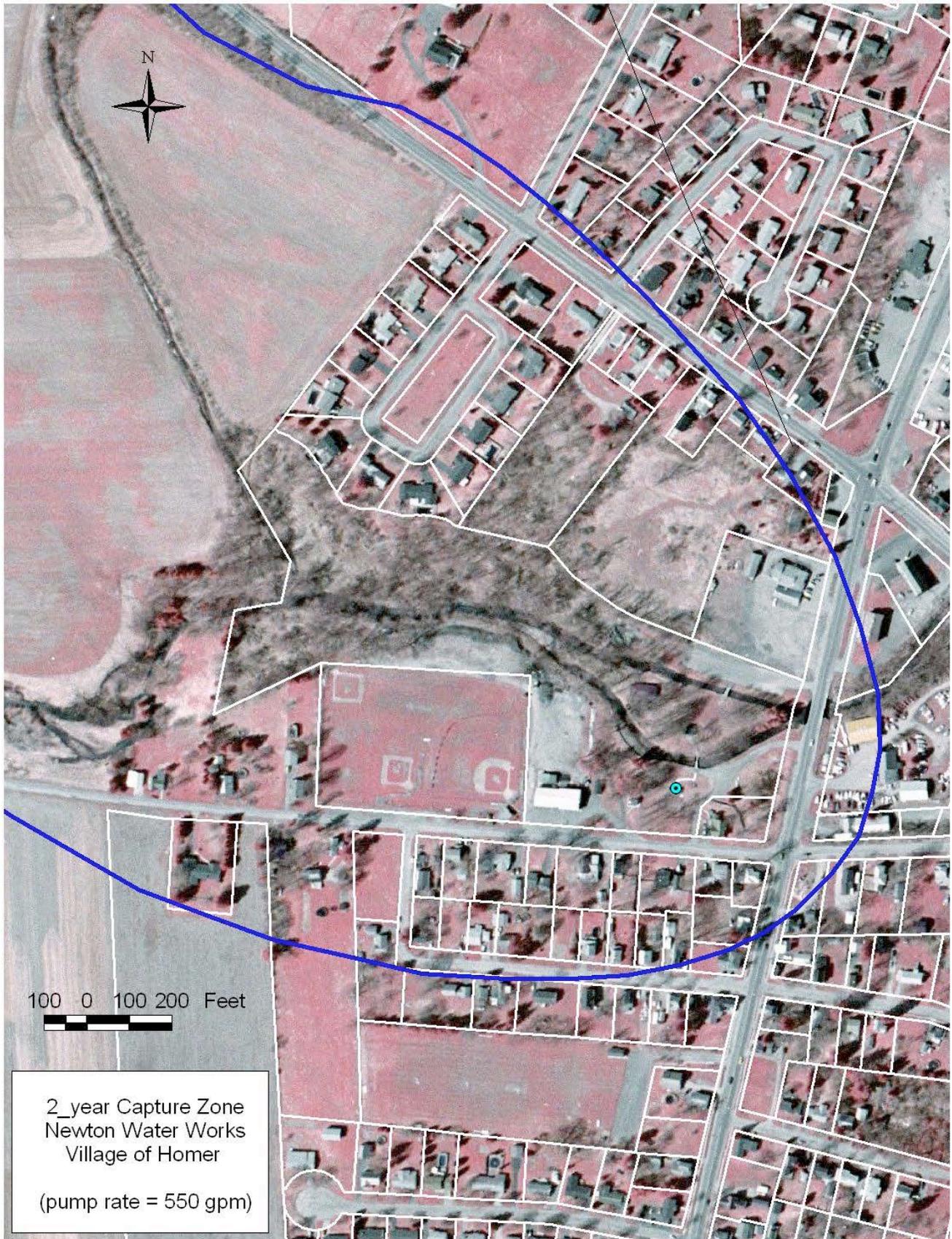


Cortland County
Planning Department
37 Church Street
Cortland, NY 13045



500 0 500 1000 1500 2000 Feet

Map 6: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 2 Year Capture Zone Newton Water Works





13. LAND USE AND ZONING



According to Residents Survey respondents and those who attended public meetings, it is important for the Village to protect scenic views and historic resources, to better regulate junkyards, and to maintain the small town atmosphere of the Village. Survey respondents also noted that a variety of factors would make the Village a less desirable place to live, most notably, neighborhood deterioration, conversion of existing single family

homes to multi-family units, and loss of historic character. Residents desire more residential development, particularly single family homes and housing for senior citizens, and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock. More opportunity for retail establishments was also identified as important. With farmland, historic structures, abundant natural areas, and commercial development pressure, Homer is a village of contrasting attributes; without careful planning the small-town character of the Village may change.



Land use planning involves making decisions about how to categorize various land uses, assess how various land uses will interact with one another, and determine how to use or preserve other valuable resources. Although the Village of Homer has many vacant and underused parcels of land that may be available for development, the Village has a significant environmental constraint: the sole source aquifer that sits beneath the entire Village. The protection of this resource has largely been ignored in the past. Difficult land use choices must be made that will dictate the function and appearance of the built and natural environment for the foreseeable future.



LAND USE CLASSIFICATION AND ZONING

Each parcel of land in the Village is classified and coded for tax purposes according to its current land use. Although there may be circumstances where a single parcel has more than one use, the parcel is classified according to its primary use. For example, there may be a residence with vacant acreage, forestland, or some other ancillary use, but the parcel will be classified and coded as residential. Each parcel also sits





within a zoning district that governs the use and dimensional requirements for a specified use on the parcel. See Map 13, Page 101-G. In general, land use classifications should roughly correspond to, or be duplicated by, local zoning. This is largely true in the Village, with notable exceptions being the Recreation, Community Service, and Agricultural uses.

OVERVIEW

The table below compares land use classifications by acreage and the total percentage of each use as currently found within the Village.

Comparison of Land Use

Land Use	Acreage	Percentage of Total Land Use	Number of Parcels
Residential	443	43.1%	1,050
Agriculture	144	14.0%	5
Community Service	132	12.8%	25
Vacant	116	11.3%	104
Commercial	84	8.2%	120
Recreation	50	4.9%	7
Unclassified	23	2.2%	9
Industrial	18	1.8%	15
Public Service	16	1.6%	5
Wild, Forest, Conservation	2	0.2%	1
TOTAL	1,028*	100.1%	1,341

* Total acreage derived from 2005 Real Property Services Tax Data, 1,028 acres or 1.6 square miles, differs from the total land area of 1.7 square miles as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census.

According to tax records, there are approximately 1,028 acres (excluding roadways and the Tioughnioga River), or 1.61 square miles, of developable land in the Village of Homer. This acreage is currently divided into 1,341 parcels of which 1,050, comprising 43% of the total land usage in the Village, is residential. Among these, 924 parcels, or 88% of all residential land use, is single family residential. Many of the parcels forming the perimeter of the Village, including land annexed during the past ten years, are large and undeveloped. Although the Village is primarily residential in character, 11% of the total land use is classified as vacant and another 14% is currently classified as agriculture. Together, vacant and agricultural lands create significant opportunity for residential and commercial growth. Without careful planning, development of these lands could change the character of the Village. During the public visioning process held in conjunction with the development of this plan, Village residents expressed a desire to maintain the residential character of Homer while acknowledging



that additional multi-family, retail, and commercial growth is necessary for the long-term viability of the Village.

RESIDENTIAL USE CLASSIFICATION

Only nine parcels in the Village are classified for multiple family residential use, 24 parcels for three-family use, and 93 parcels for two-family use. Although local zoning allows for various multiple-family uses (including two, three, and four family units) in the R-2 zoning district, only 12% of all residential land use in the Village is currently classified as being used for other than single family residential. Housing is needed that will allow senior citizens to age in place, allow empty nesters and retirees to downsize from single family homes to smaller units, and housing to accommodate young professionals, as well as families with children. Most of the large parcels available for new residential development are situated within the R-1 zoning district. Within the R-2 zoning district, there are numerous vacant parcels of varying size that could be developed as multiple family units; however, it is not clear whether more intense residential development is desirable in established, primarily single family neighborhoods in the R-2 zoning district. Since a diverse population is critical for the long-term economic viability of the Village, the Village must reconsider the delineation of, allowable uses within, and desirable intensity of use for the current residential zoning districts. Map 7, Page 101-A and Map 8, Page 101-B depict single family and multiple family residential land uses in the Village.

COMMERCIAL USE CLASSIFICATION

There are three concentrated areas of commercial activity within the Village. The most intense concentration of commercial activity is situated in the Central Business District on the east side of the Village. Another area is situated along Route 11, running from the Interstate 81 interchange to the southern border of the Village. This corridor is zoned for commercial use on the east side of the highway and for industrial use on the west side, although more than half of this industrially zoned land is currently in use for commercial activity. The third node of commercial activity runs along Route 281 on the western side of the Village. This area has the most commercial growth potential in the Village, but is limited by current zoning.

Route 281 is a heavily traveled, major thoroughfare. A significant number of the parcels adjacent to and on either side of Route 281, north of Route 41 and south of James Street is zoned commercial. Many of the commercially zoned properties are underdeveloped and some are vacant. Between Route 41 and James Street, the land is zoned R-2, but there are several residential parcels in commercial use. As the commercial sites along this busy corridor become fully developed, the development pressure will intensify on the residential parcels in the R-2 zone. To the south, the neighboring Town of Cortlandville, has experienced intense commercial development pressure along Route 281. To the north, the Town of Homer, although primarily rural in character, has also experienced development pressure in this corridor. It is recommended that those portions of Route 281 presently situated in the R-2 zoning



district be downzoned for commercial use and an overlay zoning district developed to accommodate and manage the growth in this area.

Throughout the Village there are 38 parcels currently classified for commercial use that are situated in residential (primarily the R-2) zoning districts. Although commercial use of many of these sites may predate adoption of the zoning code, it is recommended that the uses in all zoning districts be reviewed with an eye toward preventing further encroachment of commercial use in viable residential neighborhoods. Map 9, Page 101-C depicts the location of commercial and industrial uses in the Village. As shown on Map 10, Page 101-D, parcels currently classified as vacant could significantly change the character of the R-2 zoning district if developed.

AGRICULTURAL USE CLASSIFICATION

According to Real Property tax records, 14% of the land in the Village is classified for agricultural use. Each of the five parcels classified as agricultural is under single ownership and several of the parcels are presently in agricultural production. All of the agricultural land in the Village is currently zoned for residential use. There is no agricultural zoning district in the Village of Homer. However, since it is unlikely that land currently in agricultural production will be preserved for agricultural use in the long term, no adjustment is needed to the zoning code in this regard.

COMMUNITY SERVICE USE CLASSIFICATION

Nearly 13% of the land use in the Village is currently classified for community service use. Among the 25 parcels classified for community service use are the high school, intermediate/junior high school, elementary school, fire station, police station, public library, and Center for the Arts. Although there is no report of conflict between the community service uses and the underlying zoning, because these uses are on large parcels and may expand or contract in the future, the Village should consider establishing a Public Service zoning district. Map 11, Page 101-E depicts the parcels currently in use for community service. Most of them are situated in the R-2 zoning district.



REVIEW OF LAND USE REGULATIONS

The Village of Homer has adopted two land use regulations, a zoning code and subdivision control ordinance. Both laws were adopted in 1973, but existed as part of the Village Code prior to that date. There have been a number of minor amendments to the Zoning Code since 1973, even as recently as 2003, with the most significant changes having been made in 1991 when sections regulating Home Occupations, Mobile Homes and Mobile Home Parks, Antennas, and Signs were added. In 2000, a Research and Development District, the B-3 business zone, was added. Only minor amendments to the Subdivision Code have occurred. No comprehensive review and revision of the Zoning or Subdivision codes has occurred since the 1973 adoption.

Both regulations need to be reviewed and updated to conform to State law and the Comprehensive Plan. Once revised, the laws should be reviewed on a regular cycle to ensure continued compliance with State law, to take advantage of contemporary land use planning methods and tools, and to meet the changing needs of the community.

ZONING CODE

The Village Zoning Code includes eight (8) different zoning district classifications and accompanying regulatory language. These include two residential districts: R-1 and R-2; four commercial districts: B-1 Neighborhood Business, B-2 General Business, B-3 Research and Development, and the CBD Central Business District; a Planned Development District allowing for three types of Planned Developments: PDDC (commercial), PDDR (residential), and PDDI (industrial); and one industrial district, ID. The Village Zoning map depicting the current zoning can be found on Map 7, Page 101-A. There is no zoning district for community services and uses, for agriculture, or for parks and conservation.

Most of the land in the Village lies within one of two residential zoning districts. The R-2 zoning district is primarily comprised of single-family residential lots with notable exceptions for community services/uses and non-conforming commercial uses, many of which probably pre-date the zoning code. Although more diverse housing is needed and desired within the Village, and the R-2 zoning district is designed to accommodate diverse housing options, the Village must determine whether the current single-family aesthetic of the R-2 district should be maintained. The current aesthetic of the R-2 district is vulnerable on several fronts. There are numerous vacant parcels, some large and some small. Most of the industrially zoned land in the Village is situated in the midst of the R-2 zoning district. There is no protection for historic structures in the Village. Without a landscape code, historic preservation control, design guidelines, or any architectural standards, the face of the R-2 district could change dramatically with new development. Since most of the R-2 zoning district sits atop the federally designated sole source aquifer, intense development is not particularly desirable in this area anyway.



By contrast, the R-1 zoning district has ample vacant property, much of which abuts existing commercial and industrial uses and zones. Some of the land situated in this district could accommodate high-density residential development without threatening the historic and single family aesthetic occurring in the R-2 zoning district. However, only single family and two-family homes are allowed in the R-1 zoning district, limiting development of underdeveloped and vacant parcels and posing a threat to the more liberal, but primarily residential, R-2 zoning district. If the current and future housing needs of the Village are to be met, the boundaries of the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts need to be examined and revised with due consideration given to commercial development trends and environmental constraints and concerns.

Although there is probably little need for the creation of a separate parks and recreation zoning district, the Village might wish to consider establishing a Public Use zoning district to accommodate community services or institutional uses rather than piggy-backing such uses into the R-2 residential district. Site plan review procedures are the only tool for review and management of community uses and the dimensional requirements in the R-2 zoning district are intended primarily to accommodate residential development rather than institutional uses. Additionally, because most of the Village sits atop the sole source aquifer, and because there are as many as 16 wetland areas scattered throughout the Village, Homer should consider enacting a conservation overlay to govern development near wetlands or in other environmentally sensitive areas.

The Planned Development District requires a minimum of four acres, thus the usefulness of this zoning district to accommodate small-scale infill, re-development, and development of vacant parcels is limited.

SUBDIVISION CONTROL

Subdivision of land is regulated by Chapter 198 of the Village of Homer Code. Although fairly comprehensive, the code has one major deficiency. First, the code does not contain any reference to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requirements. Although Chapter 99 of the Village Code references SEQRA, and indicates that the Village follows the state regulations, there are threshold considerations that should be detailed in the subdivision code. Additionally, in the event of a positive declaration under SEQRA, the timeframes for review and notice change. At a minimum, the subdivision code should cross-reference the appropriate section(s) of the SEQRA regulations.



REVIEW OF ZONING TOOLS

As mentioned throughout this plan, some of Homer's greatest assets are its small town atmosphere, historic character, and community appearance. Survey respondents expressed that there is a need for historic preservation and stricter regulation of zoning districts, signs, junkyards, and housing densities. More retail stores, a grocery store, more single family homes, housing for seniors, bicycle and pedestrian trails, sidewalks, and maintaining the existing housing stock were identified as desirable types of development. Inadequate housing choices, loss of historic character, conversion of single family homes to multi-family, and neighborhood deterioration are threats to the community.

Careful planning includes determining what zoning tools are most appropriate for a particular jurisdiction and how they should be used. For example, form based zoning codes, which eliminate strict use-based zoning districts and instead regulate development by the form and design of building envelopes are not particularly well-suited to small municipalities, particularly those that are primarily built-out. Transfer of development rights programs are useful in jurisdictions with a large, very-active real estate market, or in places where there is a need to preserve farmland or other natural spaces. What follows is a discussion of the zoning tools, appropriate for the Village of Homer, that are most likely to minimize threats and preserve what residents value about the community.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: HOME OCCUPATIONS

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, over four million people, 3.3 percent of the nation's population, work from home. In the Village, 10 percent of the Survey respondents reported that they use their home for something other than a residence, including 17 respondents who reported a home business.

Home occupations are defined in the Homer Zoning Code as "an occupation or profession which is carried on in a dwelling, by a member or members of the family residing in the dwelling, that is clearly incidental and secondary to use of the dwelling for residential purposes, and carried on within a maximum of 30% of the gross floor area." Home occupations are allowed in any residential zoning district with certain conditions, including, most notably, "no external evidence of such an operation except a small announcement sign not more than two square feet in area." No window displays are allowed, no external storage, and nothing may be sold or offered for sale that is not produced on site and all parking must occur on the street. The zoning code does not provide any examples of acceptable home occupations, rather it states what would not be an acceptable home occupation. Thus the regulation is based on enumerated performance standards. Permits are issued by the Code Enforcement Officer.

Although a primary concern with home occupations is that the use not increase traffic and/or parking in the neighborhood and otherwise be incompatible with residential use, the Village regulation is highly restrictive. One way to expand allowable home



occupations while protecting the neighborhood is to identify and define in the code various types of home occupations (home crafts, home based business, an office in the home, in-home sales and service), or divide home occupations into “major” and “minor” with specific performance standards for each type depending upon the host zoning district. Some jurisdictions allow up to one employee unrelated to the occupants of the dwelling, currently the Village does not. Likewise, signage variations, relaxed parking requirements, such as allowing for some off-street parking, and allowing multiple businesses in one dwelling will expand the opportunity for home occupations. Finally, using a special use permit process would provide oversight and review of all home occupation applications, but still allow more flexibility in defining and regulating the process rather than “one size fits all” performance standards.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: MIXED-USE INFILL

Another method for expanding the opportunity for small business is to establish and allow, where appropriate, mixed use, mixed density infill development in residential neighborhoods. Infill development is defined as development or re-development of a site that exists between two already developed lots that is compatible and consistent with, and respectful of the character and scale of the existing neighborhood. An example of such a project might include a retail or service establishment on the first floor of a building with medium density residential dwelling units on the upper floors. The current zoning code does not regulate infill development nor mixed-use projects (outside of the planned development districts which have a minimum acreage requirement).

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT/CLUSTERING

The Village of Homer does not have regulations governing mixed-use or cluster developments. Clustering housing units within a larger development or on a single parcel is an innovative planning tool that allows developers to maximize density yet preserve natural resources. The concept of clustering housing units in close proximity to one another within the development envelope, allows for efficient infrastructure patterns and minimal disruption to surrounding natural resources by reducing the overall development footprint. Clustered housing in a mixed-use development allows separation of retail and service uses from residential uses, but does not sacrifice density. Clustered subdivisions often include nature trails or conservation areas on undeveloped land within the development. Thus, although individual lot sizes are smaller, the subdivision will have significant open space that acts as a large lot shared by all residents. Because there is limited developable land in the center of the Village, clustering housing units on individual infill lots would allow for a variety of housing types to accommodate changing demographics of the Village. Appropriate changes to the zoning ordinance would be required to implement any clustering scheme, outside of the existing Planned Development zones.



OVERLAY ZONING

Overlay zoning is a regulatory tool that creates a second, mapped zone that is superimposed over a conventional “base” zoning district. The provisions of the base zone remain intact, but the overlay identifies additional provisions that attach to the overlay district which are intended to protect a specific resource or guide development within a special area. Overlay zones typically provide for a higher level of regulation than the base zone, but may also be used to permit exceptions or less restrictive standards (fewer parking spaces in a downtown or transit station area, or more density in an economic development area). The overlay district can share common boundaries with the base zone or cut across base zone boundaries.

Overlay zoning districts are often used for natural resource protection or to provide development guidance in specific areas such as downtown, economic development areas, or historic districts. In terms of development guidance, overlay zones may also be applied to protect historical areas or encourage or discourage specific types of development. For example, land within the historic overlay district may be subject to requirements that protect the historical nature of the area (e.g., materials or façade design). Or a community might use incentives along a transit corridor to encourage higher development densities, target uses, or control appearance. This comprehensive plan proposes that overlay districts be developed and adopted to guide more intense commercial development along portions of the Route 281 corridor running through the Village, to govern development at Village gateways, and to regulate historic resources within the Central Business District. (See also Map 12, Page 101-F)

Overlay districts can be used to manage development in or near environmentally sensitive areas, such as groundwater recharge areas, e.g., to ensure water quality and quantity; special habitat, e.g., for species or feature protection; or floodplains, e.g., to prevent flood damage. In the Village of Homer, special attention must be paid to groundwater recharge generally, and specifically to the wellheads. Common requirements to manage development in or near environmentally sensitive areas may include modified building setbacks, density standards, lot sizes, impervious surface reduction, and vegetation requirements. Structural requirements could include building floor height minimums and flood-proofing to high water levels.

Any governmental unit with the power to create zoning districts can create an overlay district. There are three basic steps to creating an overlay district. First, the purpose of the district should be defined. The district should have a clearly defined purpose, e.g., to protect drinking water, preserve historical character, or minimize erosion from storm water runoff. Second, the areas that will make up the district must be specifically identified. Mapping district boundaries will depend on the natural or cultural resources and the geographic areas that relate to achieving the purpose of the district. For example, if the purpose of the zone is to protect groundwater, important groundwater recharge areas, and areas prone to pollution, such as fractured bedrock or areas with a high groundwater table should be mapped. Third, specific rules must be developed that apply to the overlay district and that are different from the base zone. In a groundwater recharge overlay district for example, provisions may restrict development or require



development guidelines that require the capture and filtering of water runoff. The procedures for adopting an overlay district are the same as for adopting any zoning or rezoning provision; the overlay provisions, as well as changes to the zoning map, must be approved and adopted by the local governing body.

Several other factors are important to consider in adopting an overlay. It is critical that the zoning provisions offer clear guidance to both property owners and the governing body charged with approving proposals. Zoning requirements must be applied equally over all properties within the district. The ordinance not only must comply with any State and federal regulations, but must also be consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the municipality's comprehensive plan. It is important that the local governing body invite the public to fully participate in the process and explain the reasons supporting the overlay district boundaries. An educational program will help increase awareness and compliance with the new requirements. Administration of the overlay can be incorporated into the existing subdivision or site plan review process, or, in the case of individual parcels, a streamlined site plan review process can be developed.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) AND TRANSIT ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT (TAD)

Generally speaking, transit-oriented development (TOD) and transit-adjacent development (TAD) can be defined as a compact, mixed-use development near transit facilities with high-quality walking environments, though not necessarily at the expense of automobile access. There is no universally accepted definition of TOD or TAD, but a principal difference between the two is that a TOD is not just located near a transit hub, but is also oriented to and even dependent upon it, whereas a TAD is not designed for or shaped by transit facilities, just located within close proximity. Six elements that define transit-related developments are: moderate to higher density, a mix of uses, a pedestrian-friendly design, new construction or redevelopment, within easy walking distance of public transit, and increasing transit ridership. The transit hub may simply be a train station or a bus stop.

In large urban areas, TODs may cover hundreds of acres surrounding a transit hub, but this model doesn't exclude smaller scale developments that seek to reduce reliance on individual automobiles and encourage pedestrian friendly mixed-use mixed-density developments that facilitate convenient use of public transit. A TOD or TAD can act as the cornerstone of a local government's sustainability initiative. Less automobile use means less consumption of fossil fuels, less air pollution, and ultimately less spending on transportation infrastructure, such as roads, parking, and maintenance. As more discussion focuses on the possibility of high speed rail serving upstate New York, or the development of a passenger rail service linking Syracuse to Homer, Cortland, and Binghamton, the concept of transit-related development along the railroad in Homer becomes less the realm of fantasy and more grounded in reality.

Transit-related development is not a new concept. A century ago, highly walkable, mixed-use communities blossomed around most streetcar and interurban rail



lines in the United States. The proliferation of single-use, automobile-oriented suburbs, witnessed the gradual disappearance of original transit-oriented communities. A TOD or TAD in the Village of Homer would serve multiple purposes: providing sorely needed mixed-use, mixed-density development that meets the housing needs of various segments of the population, increasing neighborhood retail and services, reducing the cost of providing transportation infrastructure and maintenance, and encouraging sustainable development patterns.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Site plan review is a way to ensure that proposals to develop individual parcels meet development policies and regulations, as well as commonly accepted design practices within a community. Zoning laws do not regulate the micro-details of site development such as traffic circulation and congestion, unsightly design, noise, drainage, architectural features, lighting, and the impact on adjacent sites. Site plan review laws, adopted as a supplemental regulation in a zoning code, or as a standalone ordinance, allow the review of elements above and beyond the use and dimensional requirements established by the zoning ordinance. Pursuant to Village Law 7-725-1, a site plan review law must specify the land uses that require site plan review and the required site plan “elements”.

The site plan “elements” are the features that must be included on the site plan drawing and further described in the accompanying narrative. Section 7-725-a.2.(a) of the Village Law provides that parking, means of access, screening, signs, architectural features, landscaping, the location and dimension of buildings, and adjacent land uses and physical features meant to protect adjacent land uses are acceptable site plan elements. Additionally, a municipality may require “any additional elements” as specified by local law. Other elements might include streetscapes, ecological considerations, pedestrian circulation, vehicular traffic, and drainage.

Decisions of the reviewing board must be based on the elements contained in the site plan law. Ideally, however, the site plan regulation will contain standards and criteria, both quantitative and qualitative, which further refine the elements and guide the reviewing board in its decision-making process. For example, the landscaping element might include criteria that specifies that the developer will preserve certain natural features “insofar as possible” or review the adequacy of trees, shrubs, and other landscaping. These are qualitative standards. Or, they may require that no septic tank be located within 50 feet of a wellhead-- a quantitative specification. Thus, even though the reviewing board’s authority is limited, detailed review standards, coupled with the State Legislature’s broad granting of power allowing municipalities to include “any additional elements”, gives municipalities far-reaching authority to consider and regulate individual development proposals through the site plan process.

The Homer Village law regulating site plan review is fairly vague. The definition of “site plan” mirrors State law, defining the site plan as “a rendering, drawing or sketch prepared to specifications and containing the necessary elements . . .”. The Village law does not require a professionally prepared sketch plan even though some of the



elements, such as vehicular site access and circulation, or elevations and valley cross-sections, would be best understood with engineered drawings. There is no prescribed format for the application, for the site plan drawing, or for the accompanying narrative. There are no standards or criteria accompanying the required elements to provide guidance for the reviewing board. This creates a situation where the developer does not have adequate notice of what might be required and the reviewing board has minimal language to guide its decision.

There are several other concerns with the Village's site plan regulation. Site plan approvals are actions under SEQRA. Thus, the Planning Board is required to make a determination of environmental impact. In the event that a DEIS or EIS is required, extended timetables apply. This is not detailed in the current law. The regulation states that it is a, "duty of the Planning Board to resolve matters in favor of approval." This language is not mandated by the State law governing site plan review and significantly weakens the local site plan review process. Finally, the regulation does not provide timeframes for notice to the applicant or advertising of a public hearing if one is held. The Village may wish to revise its site plan review regulation to conform to State law and to take full advantage of the power granted by the Legislature.

SIGN REGULATION

The zoning code was amended in 1991 to regulate outdoor signs. In 2000, the sign regulation was amended to include provisions governing political signs. Signs are vital for communication and play a significant role in defining community character. Poorly located, improperly constructed, too large, or too numerous signs can be detrimental to a community's character, reduce the effectiveness of communication, and cause traffic safety issues. Conversely, a well-designed sign regulation can result in the creation of positive images of the community once the regulation is put into place and it is followed.

Sign controls generally seek to limit the size and shape of signs, although sometimes municipalities seek to regulate content. The U.S. Supreme Court has placed limits on the authority of a municipality to control sign content. Regulating sign content will often result in a constitutional violation by violating freedom of speech. A content-neutral regulation applies to any sign regardless of the message conveyed, or the identity of the messenger, focusing only on the time, place, and/or manner in which the sign is displayed. These regulations generally classify signs by type including, for example, freestanding, projecting, wall, or roof signs. Lastly, content-neutral sign regulations address physical or dimensional characteristics such as height, face size, and location. The Village sign regulations are content neutral.

Sign regulations will also need to be amended if the Village makes comprehensive changes to its zoning ordinance, such as modifying the uses allowed in the various zoning districts, or expanding the opportunity for home occupations. The Village may also wish to consider adopting an amortization schedule for non-conforming signs.



LAND USE AND ZONING ADMINISTRATION

PLANNING BOARD

The Village Planning Board reviews site plan and subdivision applications. Authority for the Planning Board is found in Chapter 198 of the Village Code, which regulates subdivisions. The Village should consider including more detail in Section 198-1, which authorizes and governs the Planning Board. At a minimum, Section 198-1.1.A., which provides that Planning Board members must attend four hours of annual training, and Section 198-1.1.C., which details the duties, powers, and functions of the Planning Board, should be revised to include more specificity. The Planning Board also reviews special use permits. This is not addressed in the code; such policies should be memorialized and codified in the code.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals in the Village has been active in recent years, considering appeals for interpretations, use variances, and area variances. The Village should be mindful that, generally speaking, zoning changes should benefit the public and promote the overall plan for the Village rather than enrich an individual landowner with certain rights and benefits.

GOAL 13.1: Enhance and preserve the visual and aesthetic integrity of the major gateways into the Village.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 13.1.1. Determine the appropriate boundaries and location for gateways to the Village.
- 13.1.2. Develop and adopt a gateway overlay zoning district with regulatory provisions governing development of all properties situated within the overlay.
- 13.1.3. Develop and adopt site plan review procedures to encourage aesthetically pleasing visual entrances into the Village for persons who reside in the Village and for persons entering the Village for business, recreation, tourism, or other purposes. Within the Gateway area, emphasis should be paid to landscape requirements, site design, signage, and appropriate site plan review standards which enhance and protect the visual and aesthetic integrity of the gateway, preserve the historic character of the Village, and promote proactive improvement of existing developed properties.



GOAL 13.2: Increase opportunities for growth and development of compatible retail and commercial establishments within the Village outside of the historic district.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

13.2.1. The Village will consider changes to the zoning code and zoning map that allow mixed density, mixed use, and infill development at appropriate locations throughout the Village that maintain the scale, size, and character of the Village, allowing for increased opportunity for neighborhood retail and commercial establishments through the special permit process.

13.2.2. The Village will amend its land use regulations to expand the opportunity for home businesses that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Items such as dimensional requirements, parking, and signage will be addressed to allow compatible home occupations through the special permit process.

GOAL 13.3: Provide housing options for all income, age, and ability segments of the population with opportunity for mixed-use developments.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

13.3.1. Rezone the existing Industrial District south of Route 41 (bordered on the east by the railroad and on the west by Fulton Street) to accommodate a Transit Adjacent or Transit Oriented Development-style development that will take advantage of possible passenger rail service in the future and allow mixed housing densities and mixed residential, retail, and service establishments.

13.3.2. Modify the zoning code to allow for development of medium to high-density cluster-style developments that increase housing opportunities but also preserve green space and scenic resources using the special permit process. Possible locations include land currently zoned PDDR, and parcels zoned R-1 bordering the Village that are currently undeveloped.

13.3.3. Amend the zoning code to offer development incentives such as higher densities, increased Floor Area Ratios (FAR), or other incentives in exchange for voluntary set asides of up to 10% percent affordable housing units in any development with greater than four units. Incentives should not be as of right, but projects reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure quality development and appropriate procedures to ensure long-term designation of the units as affordable.

GOAL 13.4: Undertake a comprehensive review and revision of the Village zoning code and other land use regulations.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

13.4.1. Appoint a 10-member Steering Committee to initiate review of the zoning code, zoning map, and other land use regulations. A suggested composition of the committee might include: Village attorney, code enforcement officer, an architect,



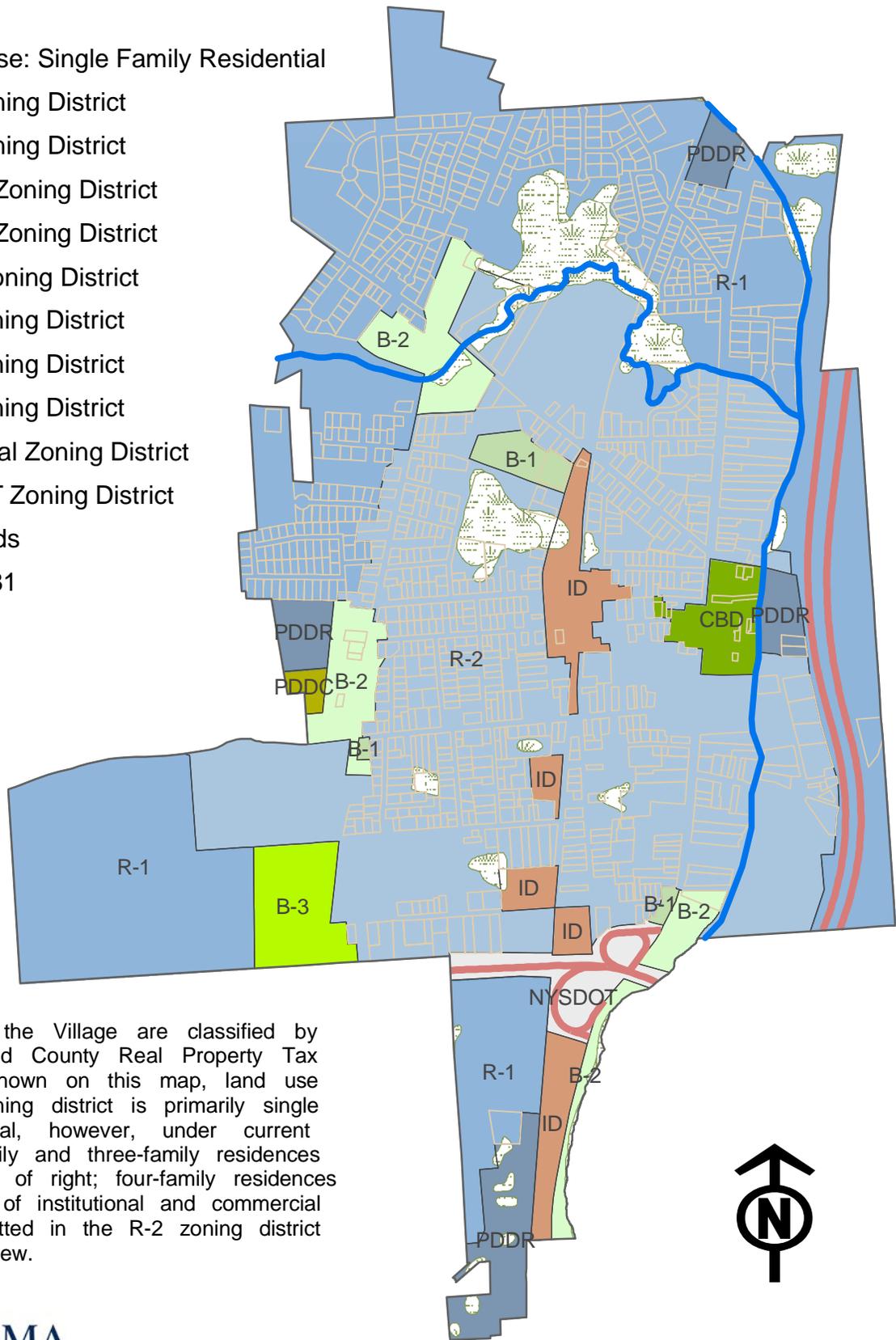
a small business owner, a developer, a member of the Planning Board, a member of the Board of Trustees, and three (3) at-large members representing different institutions and/or segments of the community.

- 13.4.2. As part of the zoning code revisions, adopt Village-wide minimum design standards and architectural guidelines, a landscape code, a local historic preservation program, stricter regulation or amortization of non-conforming uses, signage, and strengthening its site plan review procedures, code enforcement, stormwater management, and periodic review of penalties for violations.
- 13.4.3. As part of the zoning code revisions, consider strengthening the code as it relates to tree planting and tree preservation. The Village will consider adopting a tree conservation ordinance which will address preservation of specimen trees, but also, for example, removal of vegetative cover and altering the tree canopy
- 13.4.4. As part of the zoning code revisions, evaluate the allowable uses in each zoning district and modify as appropriate to the current development and demographic needs of the community.
- 13.4.5. As part of the zoning code revision, revise existing regulations and/or develop additional zoning districts that accommodate mixed-density and/or mixed-used development, and cluster housing.
- 13.4.6. As part of the zoning code revisions, develop and adopt an R-3 zoning district intended to preserve single-family residential neighborhoods located in areas currently zoned R-2.
- 13.4.7. As part of the zoning code revisions, the code will specify a periodic review to take place at a minimum of every five years to assess the code's consistency with the comprehensive plan, compliance with State law, and to ensure that it meets the needs of the community.
- 13.4.8. As part of the zoning code revision, the Village will review and revise regulations governing signs within the Village.
- 13.4.9. As part of the zoning code revision, the Village will enact an amortization schedule to bring all existing signs into compliance with new sign regulations if enacted.
- 13.4.10. As part of the zoning code revision, the Village will develop incentives such as increased FAR, density bonuses, or relaxing certain dimensional requirements to encourage the use of green infrastructure, sustainable planning techniques, or LEED certified construction (e.g., a green roof makes allowance for slightly more lot coverage).
- 13.4.11. As part of the zoning code revision, the Village will enact procedures governing site plan review including authorizing the planning board to require professionally prepared sketch plans under specified circumstances, and creating an opportunity for sketch plan conference.

Map 7: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Single Family Residential Land Use and Zoning Districts

Legend

-  Land Use: Single Family Residential
-  R-1 Zoning District
-  R-2 Zoning District
-  PDDR Zoning District
-  PDDC Zoning District
-  CBD Zoning District
-  B-1 Zoning District
-  B-2 Zoning District
-  B-3 Zoning District
-  Industrial Zoning District
-  USDOT Zoning District
-  Wetlands
-  Route 81

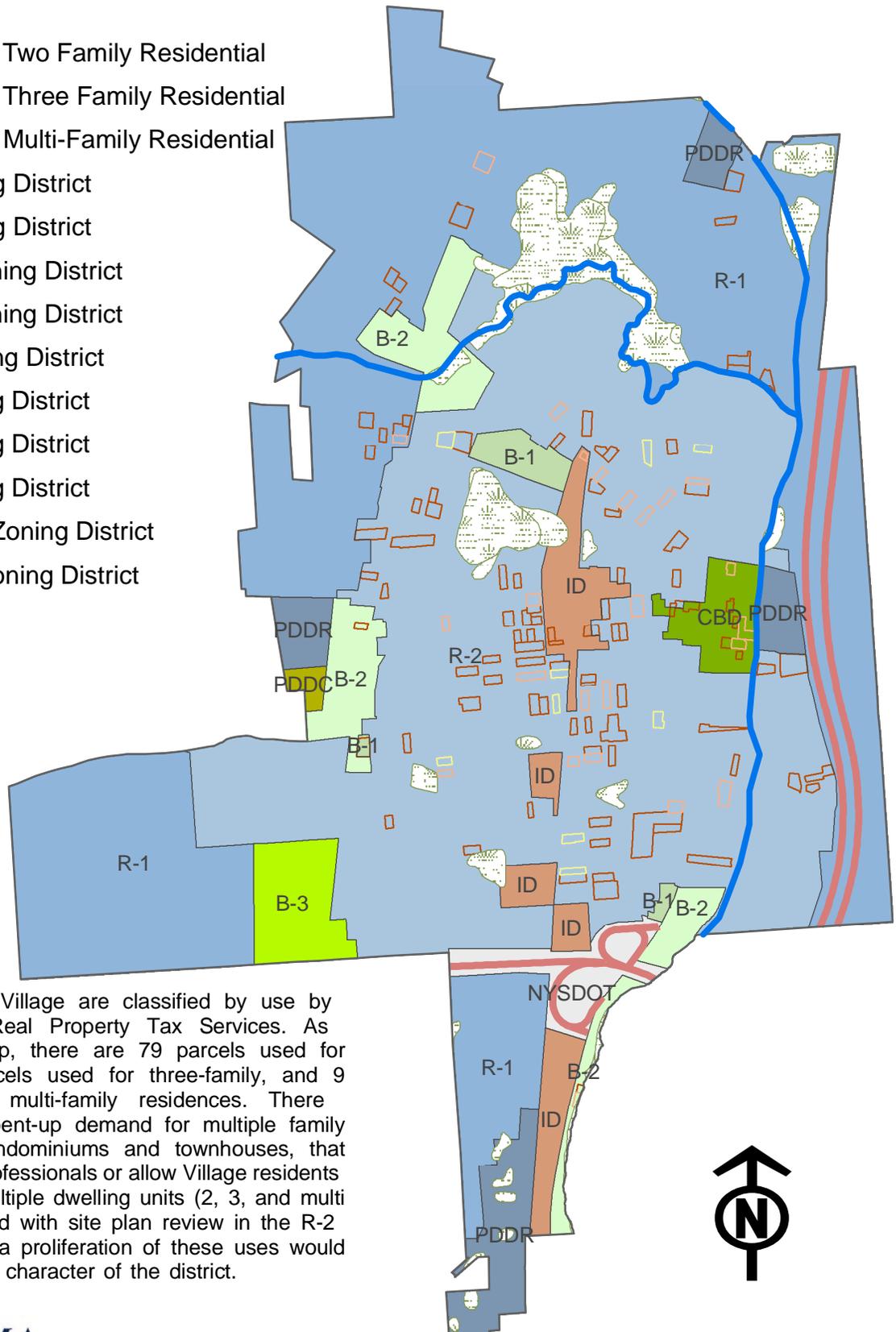


All parcels in the Village are classified by use by Cortland County Real Property Tax Services. As shown on this map, land use in the R-2 zoning district is primarily single family residential, however, under current zoning, two-family and three-family residences are allowed as of right; four-family residences and a number of institutional and commercial uses are permitted in the R-2 zoning district with site plan review.

Map 8: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Multiple Unit Residential Land Uses and Zoning Districts

Legend

- Land Use: Two Family Residential
- Land Use: Three Family Residential
- Land Use: Multi-Family Residential
- R-1 Zoning District
- R-2 Zoning District
- PDDR Zoning District
- PDDC Zoning District
- CBD Zoning District
- B-1 Zoning District
- B-2 Zoning District
- B-3 Zoning District
- Industrial Zoning District
- USDOT Zoning District
- Wetlands
- Route 81



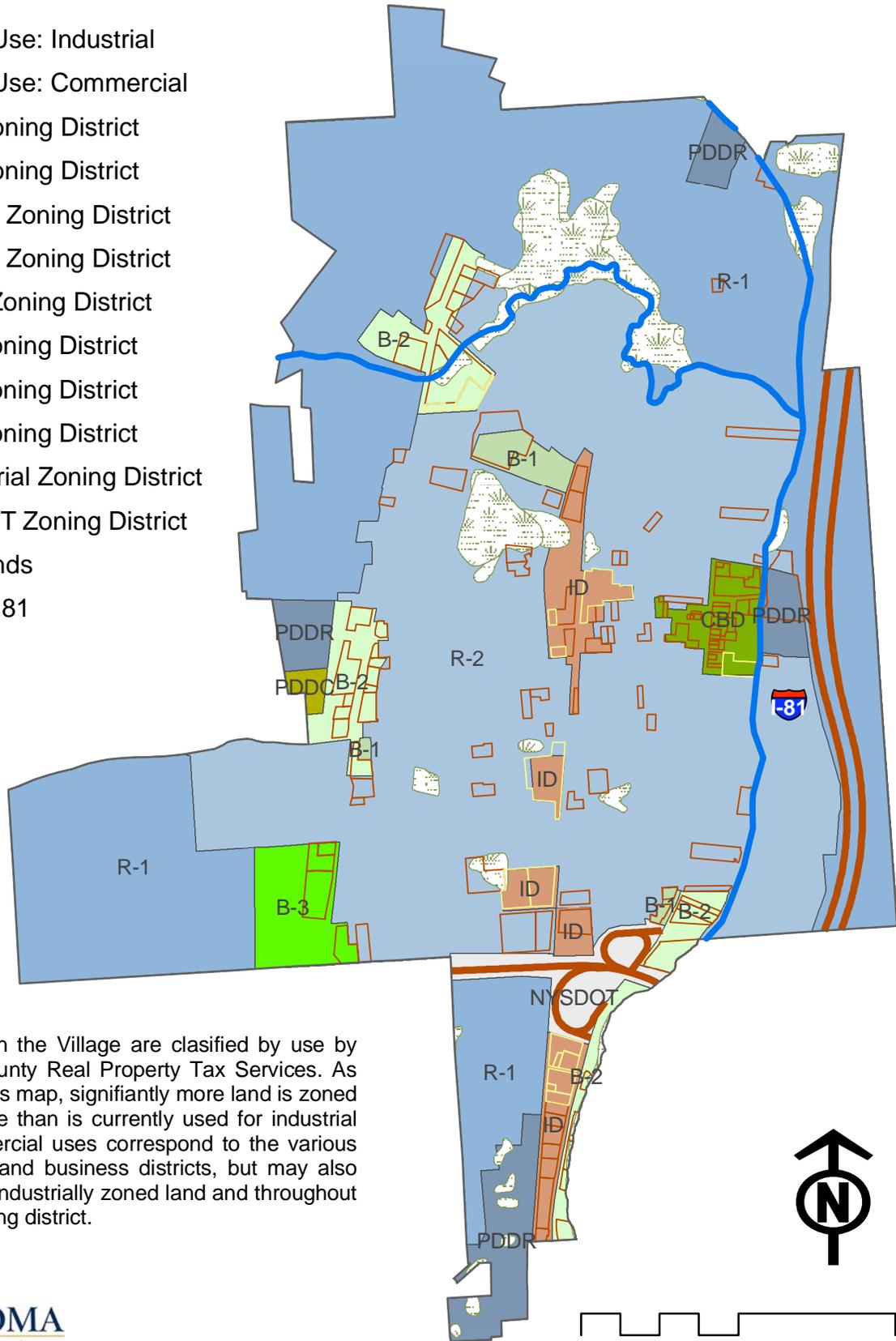
All parcels in the Village are classified by use by Cortland County Real Property Tax Services. As shown on this map, there are 79 parcels used for two-family, 22 parcels used for three-family, and 9 parcels used for multi-family residences. There appears to be a pent-up demand for multiple family units, including condominiums and townhouses, that will attract young professionals or allow Village residents to age in place. Multiple dwelling units (2, 3, and multi family) are permitted with site plan review in the R-2 zoning district, but a proliferation of these uses would change the existing character of the district.



Map 9: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Commercial and Industrial Land Use

Legend

- Land Use: Industrial
- Land Use: Commercial
- R-1 Zoning District
- R-2 Zoning District
- PDDR Zoning District
- PDDC Zoning District
- CBD Zoning District
- B-1 Zoning District
- B-2 Zoning District
- B-3 Zoning District
- Industrial Zoning District
- USDOT Zoning District
- Wetlands
- Route 81

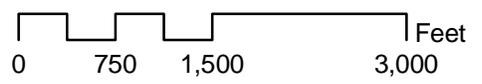
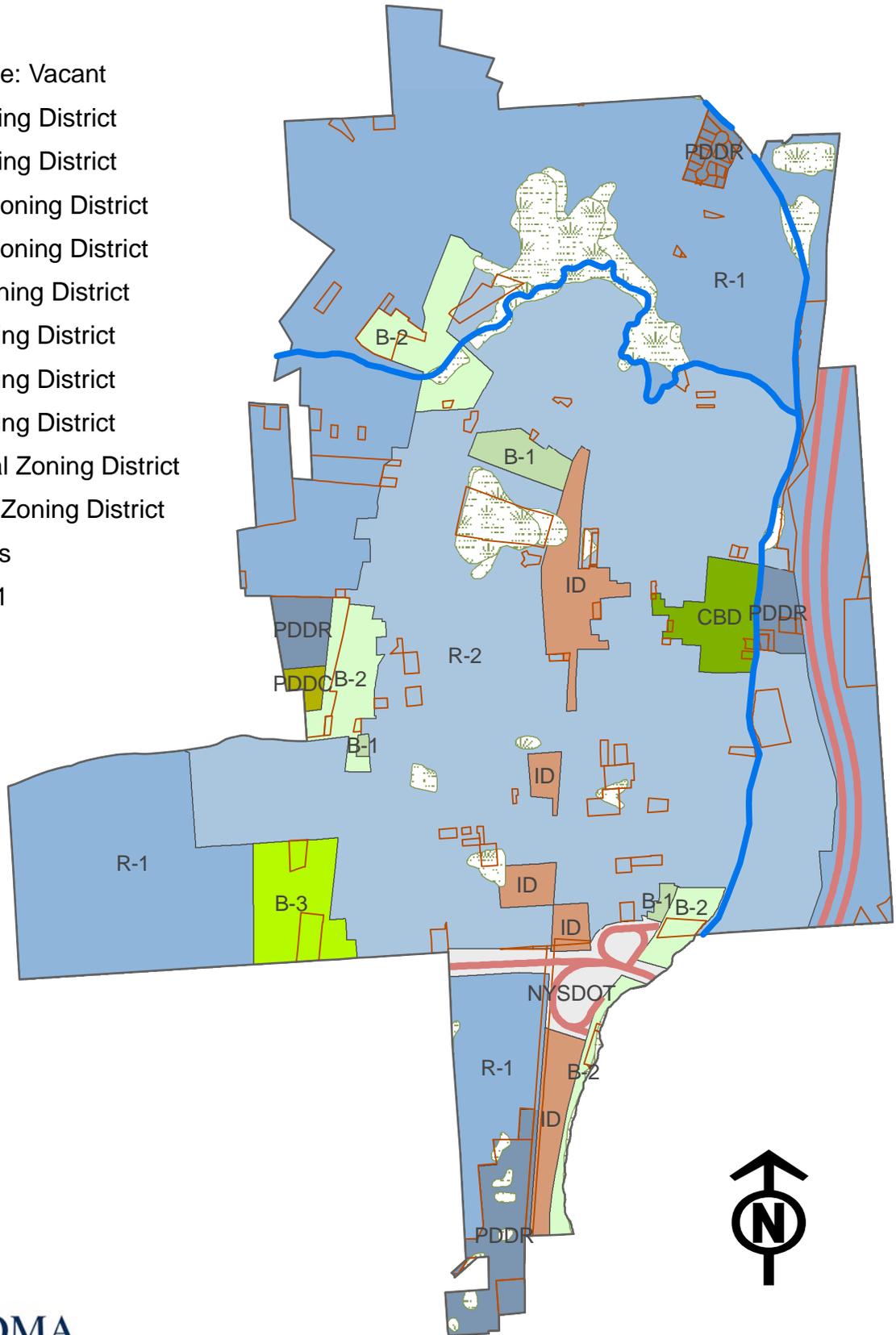


All parcels in the Village are classified by use by Cortland County Real Property Tax Services. As shown on this map, significantly more land is zoned industrial use than is currently used for industrial use. Commercial uses correspond to the various commercial and business districts, but may also be found in industrially zoned land and throughout the R-2 zoning district.

Map 10: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Vacant Land Use and Zoning Districts

Legend

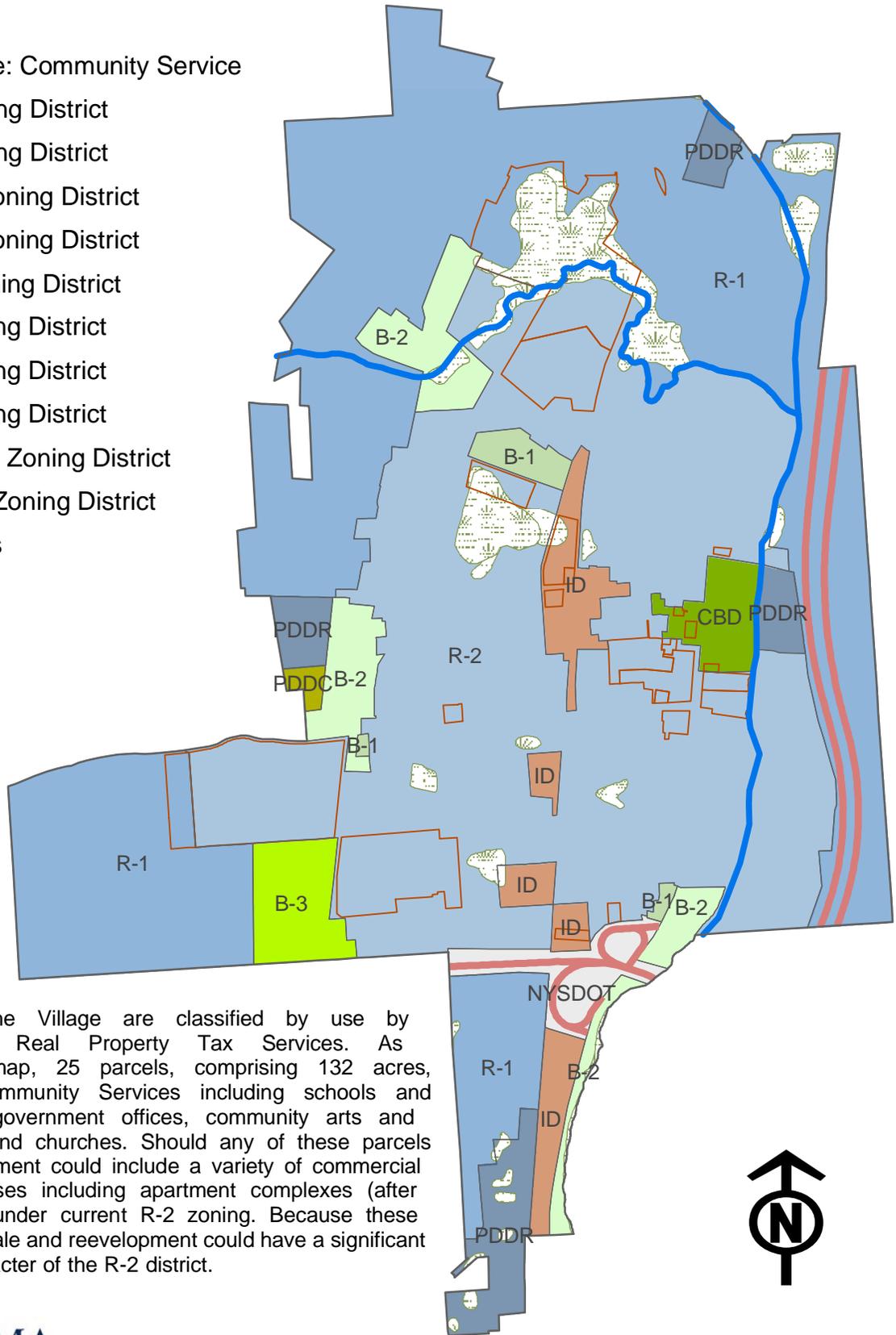
-  Land Use: Vacant
-  R-1 Zoning District
-  R-2 Zoning District
-  PDDR Zoning District
-  PDDC Zoning District
-  CBD Zoning District
-  B-1 Zoning District
-  B-2 Zoning District
-  B-3 Zoning District
-  Industrial Zoning District
-  USDOT Zoning District
-  Wetlands
-  Route 81



Map 11: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Community Service Land Use and Zoning Districts

Legend

- Land Use: Community Service
- R-1 Zoning District
- R-2 Zoning District
- PDDR Zoning District
- PDDC Zoning District
- CBD Zoning District
- B-1 Zoning District
- B-2 Zoning District
- B-3 Zoning District
- Industrial Zoning District
- USDOT Zoning District
- Wetlands
- Route 81

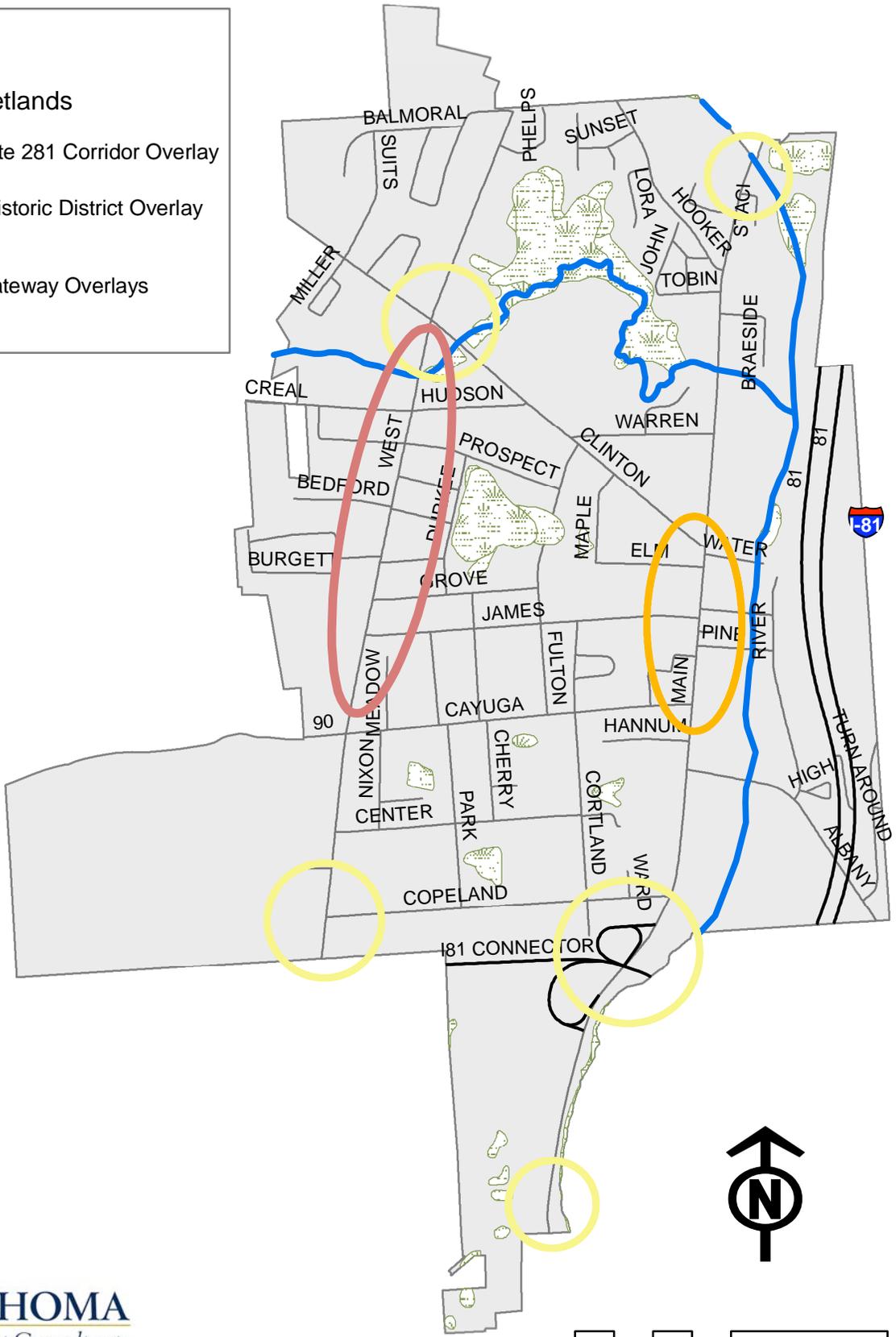


All parcels in the Village are classified by use by Cortland County Real Property Tax Services. As shown on this map, 25 parcels, comprising 132 acres, are used for Community Services including schools and related facilities, government offices, community arts and cultural facilities, and churches. Should any of these parcels be sold, redevelopment could include a variety of commercial and institutional uses including apartment complexes (after site plan review) under current R-2 zoning. Because these parcels are large, sale and redevelopment could have a significant impact on the character of the R-2 district.

Map 12: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Possible Locations for Proposed Overlay Districts

Legend

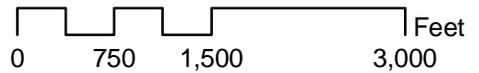
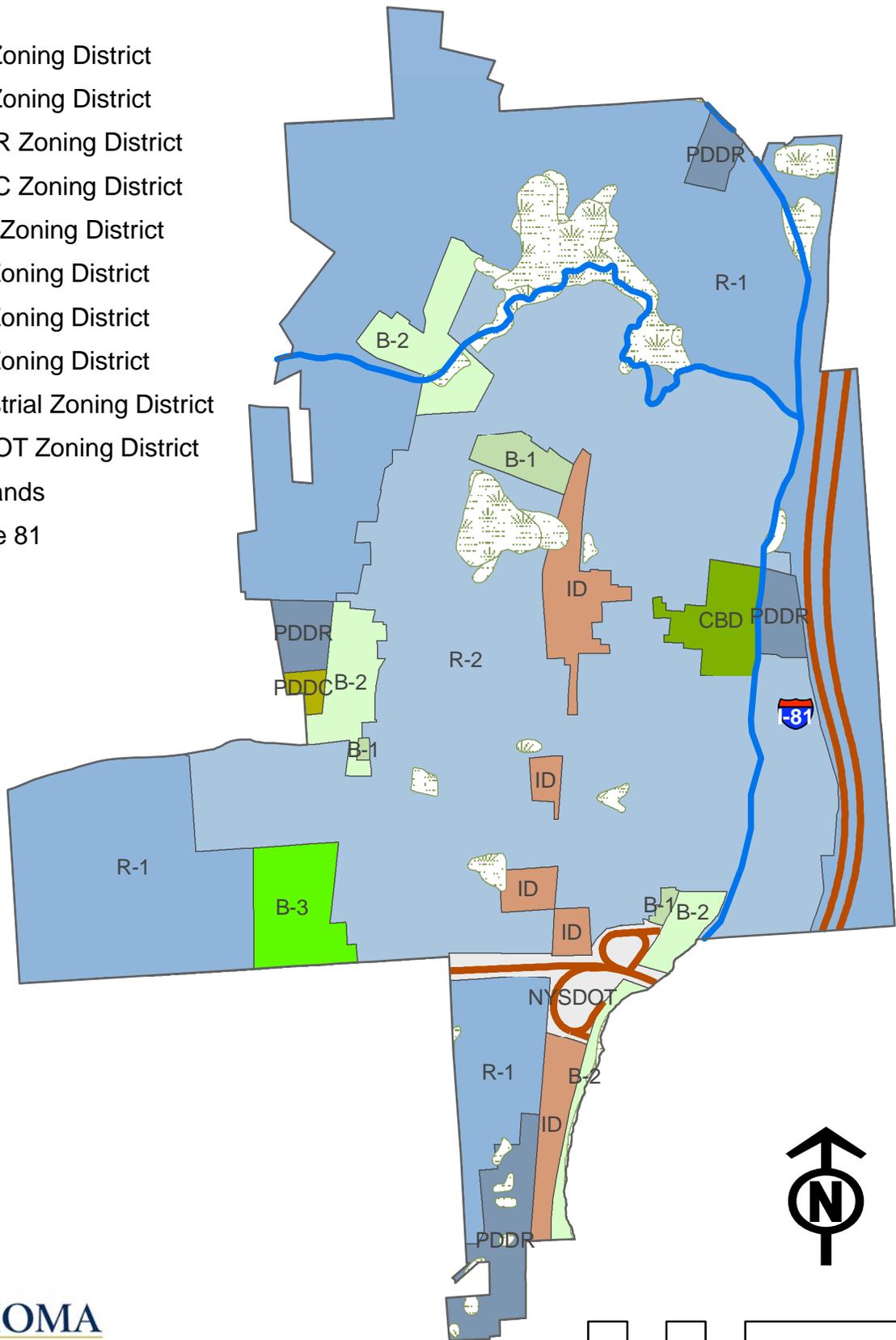
-  Wetlands
-  Rte 281 Corridor Overlay
-  Historic District Overlay
-  Gateway Overlays



Map 13: Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan 2010 Zoning Districts

Legend

- R-1 Zoning District
- R-2 Zoning District
- PDDR Zoning District
- PDDC Zoning District
- CBD Zoning District
- B-1 Zoning District
- B-2 Zoning District
- B-3 Zoning District
- Industrial Zoning District
- USDOT Zoning District
- Wetlands
- Route 81



Section IV: Adoption & Maintenance
&
Section V: Public Participation





IV. ADOPTION and MAINTENANCE

FORMAL ADOPTION

The Village Board appointed a special board, namely the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, to prepare the proposed Comprehensive Plan. By State statute, it is necessary for the Steering Committee to hold at least one public hearing, and by resolution, recommend the proposed Comprehensive Plan to the Village Board of Trustees for adoption.

Prior to the Village Board of Trustees formally adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the Plan must be submitted to the Cortland County Planning Board for review and recommendation as required by State law. Within 90 days of the Steering Committee's recommendation, the Village Board needs to hold a second public hearing.

A village comprehensive plan is subject to the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the adoption of a comprehensive plan is classified as a Type I action. Therefore, prior to adoption, the Village of Homer needs to satisfy the requirements for a Type I action under SEQRA.

PERIODIC REVIEW AND FILING

As time passes, community conditions, values, and attitudes may change. If the Comprehensive Plan does not continue to reflect the values of the Village, the plan should be revisited, changed, and amended according to the community's desire. Revisiting the plan on a periodic basis for amendment considerations, rather than ignoring the Plan, will keep the Village's Comprehensive Plan up-to-date. Therefore the Village Board of Trustees will review the Comprehensive Plan every five years, which will be the maximum interval for a review process.

After adoption, this Plan must be filed in the Village Clerk's Office, and a copy must also be filed with the Cortland County Planning Department.

EFFECT OF ADOPTION

Should the Village of Homer decide to adopt any type of land use regulation, the regulation needs to be in accordance with this Comprehensive Plan. In addition, all plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in the Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan shall take this plan into consideration.



V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

As noted in Section I, it was important for Homer to provide a variety of venues for the citizens and business and property owners in the Village to weigh in on the plan. This would provide “ownership” in the plan and hopefully allow the Village to feel they had a voice in determining the future of the community. Listed following is a detailed description of each of the citizen participation venues and the results of public input.

RESIDENTS SURVEY

The survey was mailed to approximately 500 randomly selected households in the Village. A small number of mailed surveys were returned as undeliverable. The Village received a response of 233 surveys out of 478; a 48.7% response rate.

The results were tabulated for the entire survey and also tabulated for different age cohorts. The following age cohorts were selected: (1) those aged 18-35; 36-64; and 65+ years old.

HOMER SURVEY QUICK FACTS

- The typical mail survey respondent was a 2-person household (46%).
- 23% of survey respondents said that the cost of housing was one of the influences in deciding to live in Homer.
- 6% of respondents have a home business.
- 49% of survey respondents think the Village's housing conditions are good; an additional 24% say the conditions are satisfactory.
- 42% of respondents think housing choices in the Village are good.
- 46% of respondents think the conversion of single family housing to multi-family would make the Village a less desirable place to live; 66% cite neighborhood deterioration; and 42% said loss of historic character.
- Regarding future housing development, 33% stated they would like to see single family housing; 20% said townhouses/condos; and 35% said housing for seniors.

The results of the survey are included at the end of this section.



MEETINGS

A total of four (4) public meetings were held to gather input on the Village of Homer Comprehensive Plan. The Steering Committee met numerous times over the course of two years and a special Business Focus Group meeting was also held. Results of some of these meetings are listed following.

September 5, 2007 Steering Committee Meeting

Members of the Village-appointed Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee met for the first time on September 5, 2007. The kick off meeting included a presentation on the Comprehensive Planning process and the scope of work. Committee members reviewed the contents of the mail survey instrument and made recommendations.

Steering Committee members were asked what their individual goals were for the Comprehensive Plan. Their goals included:

- Devising a plan for development; increasing the tax base; and reducing taxes.
- Better articulation of Code Enforcement regulations.
- Re-examining zoning districts, especially near zoning district boundaries.
- Making sure the Village is business friendly.
- Improving intra-Village cooperation.
- Improving the school/Village relationship.
- Identifying issues where residents agree and working on differences.
- Maintaining a family friendly, affordable Village.
- Devising a better plan for the Village.
- Expanding the municipal boundaries of the Village.
- Seeking more funding for needed projects.
- Preserving the historic integrity of the Village.

October 3, 2007 Public Meeting

A public visioning meeting was held in the Community Building on October 3, 2007. Attendants were given information on the comprehensive planning process. They were then asked to list the Village's positive characteristics (attributes) and/or opportunities as well as negative attributes. These were recorded. After everyone had the opportunity to voice their opinion, attendants were given twelve (12) stickers and asked to place them next to those attributes/opportunities that were most important to them. Following is the list and the number of "votes" each item received. The higher the number, the greater the importance to the audience.



POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES/OPPORTUNITIES

- Small town atmosphere (28)
- Architecture/historic preservation (23)
- History/heritage (23)
- Village Green (18)
- Arts and culture (17)
- Main Street businesses/Look of Main Street (12)
- Cultural/community activities (12)
- Quiet (11)
- Access to I-81 (10)
- Good infrastructure/Water supply (10)
- Tioughnioga River/Trail (8)
- Phillips Library (7)
- Recreation program (6)
- A government that listens (6)
- Natural resources (5)
- Centralized location (5)
- Vitality of the community (4)
- Homer School District (4)
- Major highway location/rail opportunities (4)
- Respect for elderly citizens (4)
- Affordable housing (3)
- Volunteer fire department (2)
- Active churches (2)
- Tourism (2)
- DPW/Street maintenance (1)
- Accessible Post Office (1)
- Local and State police (1)
- Rt. 281 Commercial Development Opportunities (1)
- Upgrades to Newton Water Works Park/Parks in general (0)
- Walkable/Bicycle Friendly (0)

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES/THREATS

- Taxes (24)
- Rundown houses/absentee landlords (22)
- More consistent code enforcement/cooperation from Village attorney/courts (23)
- Energy descent (20)
- Poor gateways to the Village (10)
- Losing green space (10)
- Tenure of Planning/ZBA Boards is too long (10)
- Tractor trailers on Main and other streets (10)
- Encroachment of the Rt. 281 commercial corridor and the need to clean up (9)
- Limited space for commercial development (8)
- Conversion of single-family homes to multi-family (8)
- Lack of housing choices (7)



- Low volunteerism for fire department (7)
- Need to do more to expand heritage tourism (6)
- Condition of some commercial buildings (6)
- Lack of business variety (5)
- Drug problems (5)
- Poor condition of sidewalks (4)
- Overgrowth near Hooker Ave/281 and other areas (4)
- Junkyards (4)
- A Tioughnioga River Bridge is needed that accommodates fire trucks (3)
- Not enough rental units, especially for young professionals (3)
- A traffic signal is needed at Albany/South Main Street (2)
- Need better public transportation for the elderly (2)
- High school student behaviors portray poor community image (1)
- Too many tax incentives (1)
- Lack of activities for youth (1)
- Liquid manure smell (1)
- Zoning regulation update needed (1)
- Community bisected by major highways and railroad (0)

Attendants were then asked to list words and phrases that would describe the Village of Homer of the future. Their responses follow:

- Clean air
- Sustainable
- Relocalization
- Proud of its past: well-preserved natural and historic resources
- Heritage tourism
- Friendly, charming, “the way it is now”
- Norman Rockwell
- Good schools
- Multimodal transportation system
- So much to do: sports, recreation, etc.
- Convenient to everything
- Safe
- Affordable
- A government that listens
- Promote/host more community events
- Maintain balance between green space and development

October 10, 2007 Steering Committee Meeting

Members of the Homer Steering Committee met on October 10, 2007. Each Steering Committee member had previously been given a disposable camera and told to take equal numbers of pictures that represented positive and negative images in the Village. At the October 10th meeting, they broke into three groups and used the photos as talking points. They pasted the positive images on one display board and the



negative on the other. A spokesperson for each group discussed why they selected the pictures they did for inclusion on their respective display boards.

The Steering Committee had previously been given samples of Vision Statements developed by other communities to use as a reference. Briefly, a Vision Statement is a summary of the focus of the Plan. Following is the Vision Statement developed by the Homer Steering Committee:

The Village of Homer, rich in heritage, will continue to be a safe and attractive small town community where successful businesses and residences co-exist, and goods and services are easily accessible. Our quality of life is enriched through community involvement, strong leadership, educational and recreational opportunities, well-maintained infrastructure, and thoughtfully managed development.

November 7, 2007 Public Meeting

Approximately 50 residents attended a Land Use and Zoning Meeting entitled, "What's Going on Next Door?" The first part of the meeting engaged participants in an exercise to determine their preferences when shown a series of pictures of general community features. They were then shown a series of photos including similar features in the Village of Homer. These early public meetings were meant to gauge the sentiments of the community regarding elements of their built environment and whether these elements need to be preserved, eliminated, or changed in the future.

The second half of the meeting focused on educating the audience about land use regulations and the current land uses and zoning in the Village. There were many people in the audience who have strong, yet differing, opinions on future zoning and land use in the Village.

Results of the Visual Preference Survey follow at the end of this section.

December 5, 2007 Public Meeting

Community design features that most people find appealing such as quality architecture, tree lined streets, big box development that blends well with the character of the community, walkable areas, and attractive signage, were discussed with audience members.

Cindy Teter, Registered Landscape Architect and Village resident, reviewed the visual preference survey results and at the photographs that were taken previously by the Steering Committee. She used these as the basis for her presentation. She focused on seven key areas/attributes in the Village including historic preservation, community gateways, the Tioughnioga River, the Route 281 corridor, Main Street, etc. Through photos, she was able to show the audience the features they must strive to protect such as historic buildings, and which areas need to be improved such as the design of Route



281, and properties that leave a poor first impression such as junkyards located on Route 11 at the entrance to the community.

January 23, 2008 Steering Committee Meeting

Members of the Homer Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee invited members of the Village's Planning and ZBA Boards to a meeting on January 23. Thoma Development Consultants reviewed current land use and zoning in the Village and Village zoning regulations. In particular, the west side of the Village has vacant parcels that are ripe for development and this concerns the group. The Village's site plan review process and PDDR and PDDC zoning designations were also a topic for discussion, in addition to minimum design requirements.

May 21, 2008 Business Focus Group Meeting

Members of the Homer Business Association were asked to participate in a Business Focus Group to provide input into the Comprehensive Plan. The focus group met on May 21, 2008 in the Key Bank. Members of the Steering Committee were also invited to sit in on the meeting.

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was done. Members did not vote on any of their recommendations or opinions. Following is a list of the business opportunities and weaknesses as noted by the group:

VILLAGE OF HOMER BUSINESS STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES

- Aesthetics, historical aspect, charm
- Village population lives near businesses
- There is an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between Homer's downtown and the Rt. 281 commercial corridor
- Proximity to transportation corridors
- Town and Village residents patronize businesses
- Business longevity
- There are spaces available for future business development
- Good parking
- Affordable
- Travelers and relatives visit the Village
- Quaint shops
- Convenient services
- Cultural events
- Low amount of traffic on Main Street; quiet
- The businesses could do more joint advertising
- Increase web-based advertising
- Become more involved with the Cortland County Chamber of Commerce
- Capitalize on the Lincoln Bicentennial in 2009



- Tourism
- Reasonable rents
- Homer School District is a community asset; generates business
- Safe
- There is an opportunity to enlarge the Village
- Local police department maintains order

VILLAGE OF HOMER BUSINESS WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

- Difficulty (red tape) in opening businesses
- Lack of business volume
- Population is decreasing
- Age of the population is rising
- Need younger residents; no “replacement” population
- Housing choice is lacking; expensive
- High energy costs; gasoline
- Parking is poor, especially certain times of the day
- Not enough attractive rear entrances to downtown businesses
- Recent new businesses have had a hard time surviving
- Businesses need a “one-stop-shop” for start up and ongoing support
- Poor business signage
- Lack of volunteers for Business Association functions/events

The Focus Group was then asked to describe the ideal Village of Homer business climate of the future:

VILLAGE OF HOMER BUSINESS CLIMATE OF THE FUTURE

- Keep downtown beautiful
- 2nd and 3rd floor business development in downtown buildings
- Historic restoration of buildings
- Expressive and creative signage
- Services are close to home
- Home businesses are encouraged and supported
- There is high speed internet
- The variety of businesses is expanded
- More user-friendly laws and regulations
- Mass transit exists
- Rt. 281 corridor is improved
- There are better community gateways
- There is flexibility in dealing with changing times
- Friendly business climate
- The Tioughnioga River is better accessed

VILLAGE OF HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RESIDENT SURVEY

I. ABOUT YOU

Number = 233/478 = 48.7%

1. Are you a: (200) Homeowner or (29) Renter (4) No Answer
2. How many people live full time in your household?
(53) 1 (108) 2 (28) 3 (31) 4 (6) 5 (0) 6 (4) 7+
No answer (3)
3. Are you: (123) Male (106) Female No answer (4)
4. What is your age? (9) 18-25 (14) 26-35 (44) 36-45 (47) 46-55
(45) 56-64 (32) 65-74 (40) 75 +
5. Do you have children under age 18 who live with you? (64) Yes (167) No; No answer (1)
6. Is anyone in your household aged 65 or older? (69) Yes (163) No; No answer (1)
7. How many years have you lived in the Village of Homer?
(13) Less than 1 year (39) 1-5 years (35) 6-10 years No answer (1)
(31) 11-20 years (27) 21-30 years (87) 30+ years
8. Do you use your property for anything other than a residence? (21) Yes (211) No
If yes, what else is your property used as? (Check all that apply)
(1) Day Care (15) Home Business (0) Seasonal Home
(1) Commercial (6) Year-Round Rental (0) Seasonal Rental
(0) Other
9. What influenced you to live in Homer? (Please check all that apply)
(76) Born or raised here (85) Close to work (143) Small town atmosphere
(71) Low crime rate (53) Cost of housing (46) Nearness to I-81
(106) Community appearance (112) Quality of schools (85) Historic Character
(48) Quality of nearby services (90) Proximity to relatives or friends (17) Other
10. What is your employment status? (Please check only ONE box)
(133) Employed (7) Unemployed (18) Semi-retired (74) Retired
If you are employed, where do you work? (Note: Some people work more than one job)
(30) Village/Town of Homer (68) Cortland area (3) Other Cortland County community
(30) Syracuse area (19) Ithaca area (4) Binghamton area No answer (7)
Do you own a business in the Village? (21) Yes (175) No; No answer (37)
11. What do you like most about living in Homer? See Attached

II. YOUR SHOPPING HABITS

12. On average, how often do you purchase goods or services within the Village of Homer? (Please check only ONE box)

- (62) Daily (77) Once a week (47) A few times per month
 (21) Once a month (18) Less than once a month (3) Never; No answer (5)

13. Where do you buy groceries most often? (Please check only ONE box)

- (10) Homer (209) Cortland/Cortlandville (5) Syracuse (3) Other: Ithaca; No answer (6)

14. Where are the top three places you shop for goods and services? (Please select 3)

- (98) Homer (97) Ithaca (130) Syracuse (223) Cortland/Cortlandville
 (13) Binghamton (41) Internet (8) Other No answer (5)

15. When you go Downtown, is it most usually to:

- (44) Shop (118) Go to the bank (15) Work (149) Go to the Post Office (80) Walk/Exercise
 (26) Eat (30) Go to church (35) Get groceries (34) Go to the library (28) Other
 No answer (8)

III. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

16. Please rate the following about Homer's existing conditions/services (Please rate between 1-5 in each category: 1 = Poor, 5 = Excellent)

	1 Poor	2 Fair	3 Satisfactory	4 Good	5 Excellent	No Opinion
Small town atmosphere	(0)	(4)	(17)	(70)	(135)	(7)
Parks/Recreational Activities	(5)	(15)	(46)	(83)	(61)	(23)
Neighbors/Neighborhoods	(2)	(11)	(41)	(97)	(75)	(7)
Homer School Buildings	(0)	(3)	(33)	(102)	(76)	(19)
Homer School Programs	(1)	(7)	(33)	(92)	(65)	(35)
Housing Conditions	(2)	(23)	(55)	(114)	(21)	(18)
Housing Choices	(5)	(27)	(60)	(97)	(21)	(23)
Variety of Downtown Businesses	(27)	(56)	(69)	(52)	(18)	(11)
Route 281 Commercial Corridor	(14)	(61)	(66)	(48)	(21)	(23)
Sidewalks	(17)	(42)	(65)	(73)	(26)	(10)
Fire Department	(0)	(1)	(20)	(70)	(130)	(12)
Police Department	(3)	(7)	(30)	(87)	(91)	(15)
Code Enforcement	(11)	(29)	(54)	(60)	(38)	(41)
Ambulance Services	(1)	(2)	(27)	(72)	(69)	(62)
Community Events	(0)	(7)	(36)	(95)	(82)	(13)
Traffic and Roads	(2)	(16)	(49)	(105)	(53)	(8)
Pedestrian/bicycle friendliness	(7)	(21)	(44)	(99)	(45)	(17)
Parking	(3)	(24)	(59)	(97)	(39)	(11)
Services/activities for youth	(11)	(22)	(41)	(72)	(35)	(53)
Services/activities for elderly	(4)	(11)	(48)	(58)	(26)	(86)
Village Government	(6)	(24)	(61)	(77)	(32)	(33)
Town Government	(4)	(16)	(60)	(79)	(31)	(43)

17. In your opinion, since you have lived here has the Village of Homer:

- (75) Become a more desirable place to live
- (38) Become a less desirable place to live
- (102) Not changed noticeably as a place to live
- (18) No opinion

Why do you feel this way? See Attached

18. Which of these factors would make the Village of Homer a less desirable place to live? (Check all that apply)

- (79) Inadequate housing opportunities/choices
- (56) Area is becoming overdeveloped
- (96) Lack of employment
- (49) Lack of cultural opportunities
- (99) Quality of schools
- (72) Inadequate parks/recreation
- (98) Loss of historic character
- (153) Neighborhood deterioration
- (107) Conversion of single-family homes to multi-family
- (78) Inadequate community services
- (21) Other
- No answer (15)

IV. LAND USE MANAGEMENT

19. In your opinion, which of the following land use issues should be better regulated? (Check all that apply)

- (32) Minimum lot size
- (100) Junkyards
- (65) Protection of scenic views
- (23) Minimum dwelling size
- (68) Mobile homes
- (72) Historic Preservation
- (14) Building setbacks
- (32) Commercial building design
- (30) Parking / traffic
- (48) Zoning Districts
- (35) Signs
- (41) Housing densities
- (31) Street trees & lawn requirements
- (22) Waterfront management
- (20) Other _____
- (32) None, land use should not be regulated
- No answer (26)

20. Regarding consolidation with the Town of Homer, the Village should:

- (21) Not consider consolidation at all
- (106) Should consider consolidating some departments/services such as the Highway Dept., Court, etc.
- (38) The Village should be dissolved and merge with the Town
- (1) Other Did not specify
- (67) No Opinion

21. As the Village moves towards the future, what types of development would you like to see? (Check all that apply)

- (77) Single family houses
- (18) Rental housing
- (46) Townhouses/condos
- (15) Apartment complexes
- (81) Housing for senior citizens
- (75) More retail stores
- (43) Neighborhood service businesses
- (82) Another grocery store
- (124) A pharmacy
- (42) More parkland/recreation
- (104) Bicycle/pedestrian trails
- (39) More commercial development
- (97) Sidewalks throughout the Village
- (130) Maintaining/rehabilitating the existing housing stock

(17) No more development

(32) Industrial

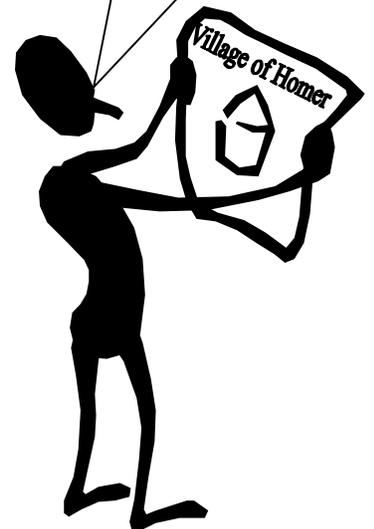
(12) No opinion

(30) Other _____

22. Should the Village of Homer share services with the Homer School District (example: purchase gasoline together?) (151) Yes (47) No No answer (35)

23. How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years? (Please use the space below to answer) See Attached

Please return survey by
**October 8, 2007 to the
Village Office**
or
Bring them to the
Visioning meeting on
October 3, 2007



YOU MUST INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION:

Address: _____ _____

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Well maintained; quiet; safe; maintains property value well

Village atmosphere; quality of services (i.e. plowing)

Very active community; my son likes the school; everything is close by

Usually quiet and friendly

Uniqueness of the Village

The size of the schools; being near my family; small town sense of community

The residents

The quality of life is outstanding; beautiful surroundings; friendly people; great schools; rich in history; wonderful place to raise a family; people seem to care about Homer and each other

The quaintness

The proximity of parks, schools, and other community services

The location of my apartment

The hometown atmosphere; schools; parks

The historic legacy, look, and intimacy of the Village. Our friends from down-state and out of state always remark on how beautiful the homes are in the Village.

The government stays out of my business and doesn't tell me what color to paint my house.

The fact that it is a small community; peace & quiet

The atmosphere of the Village; activities for children after school

The atmosphere

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Small; quiet; enjoyable atmosphere; pretty

Small; quiet

Small village; feel "at home" here; friendliness of people - I don't feel like a "number"; near the country, but close to shopping

Small village atmosphere; friendly; knowing my neighbors

Small village atmosphere

Small town; low crime rate

Small town; family is all here

Small town; concerts on the Green; available access to shopping

Small town setting

Small town living

Small town life

Small town feel; mostly clean village

Small town feel; Main Street merchants; Village Green

Small town feel; historic charm

Small town feel; family atmosphere; high quality of services that the Village provides (plowing, trash removal, compost pile, etc.)

Small town environment

Small town community

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Small town atmosphere; the people

Small town atmosphere; school district

Small town atmosphere; safe; proximity to family in Homer & surrounding area

Small town atmosphere; quiet

Small town atmosphere; proximity to Syracuse, NYC, & Canada

Small town atmosphere; preservation of historic qualities; great location; attractiveness of town itself and local properties

Small town atmosphere; love the library

Small town atmosphere; Homer community days

Small town atmosphere; Homer Center for the Arts

Small town atmosphere; good neighbors

Small town atmosphere; friendly town; excellent schools. This small Village has kept what other villages have lost. We are not a village that was nice years ago, and then lost its charm. We've kept it! I love it here.

Small town atmosphere; friendliness of people; things to do

Small town atmosphere; friendliness

Small town atmosphere; easy access to I-81

Small town atmosphere with friendly people

Small town atmosphere - I love the Village Green!

Small town atmosphere

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Small town atmosphere

Small town appearance

Small historic town

Schools

School system; clean; small; safe community

School district; safe environment; historic character

Safety; peace & quiet

Safe; small town; nice looking; near our jobs; affordable housing; close community and church atmosphere; not rowdy; we can go away on trips and not worry about our home and property.

Safe; small town

Safe; quiet community

Rural atmosphere; safe feeling; the appearance

Quiet; small; friendly; safe

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Quiet; small

Quiet; shopping is available for people without transportation; everyone is friendly

Quiet; safe

Quiet; relaxed atmosphere

Quiet; peaceful; pleasant atmosphere; safe place to live with neighborhood feel; architecture; close to my family; half way between Ithaca and Syracuse

Quiet; not being "rushed"; upkeep of most of the properties and homes

Quiet; historic charm; closeness to Syracuse, Ithaca, & Binghamton

Quiet town in which everyone cares about maintaining quality services while keeping the small town atmosphere.

Quiet neighborhood; convenient location to surrounding cities

Quiet location; quaint village; services for elderly are available; politicians are aware of taxes for school and Village and are kept reasonable given the fact that taxpaying homeowners bare much of the burden for

Quiet community

Quiet area; Close to Syracuse for hospitals and shopping

Quiet area

Quiet and peaceful

Quiet

Quality of schools; small town atmosphere; low crime rate

Quaint village; quiet neighbors

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Proximity to relatives

Proximity to privately owned business in Cayuga County & job in Syracuse

Proximity to friends, family, church, & library

Proximity to all necessary services; trees; Village Green; neighbors; limited amount of traffic; Downtown area; Victorian homes

Police patrol; neighborhoods

People seem to care about the appearance and atmosphere of both their homes and the community as a whole. People are welcoming, neighborly, and friendly. The community events are nice, meaningful, and

People know each other; strong sense of community; community events; walkable community; schools are nearby; Village Green; Downtown; Library

People are friendly; good to have a bus line

People are friendly; good schools with great teachers

People are friendly

Peaceful; low crime rate; appearance

Nothing. There is nothing here. It's no wonder why people are drug addicts.

Not as many problems as dealing with Cortland City government

Nice people

Nice community; village atmosphere; very neighborly; quiet

Neighborly people; beautiful appearance; neat & clean

Neighborhood atmosphere; number of parks and playgrounds

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Near our families; great schools; lots to do; wonderful library; great neighbors

My family has lived here for generations; good churches; nice shopping district; most conveniences are nearby; good village to walk/exercise in; scenic area

Low crime rate; good services; central location

Location - easy access to Syracuse, Ithaca, and work

Knowing people; good neighbors; clean

It's where my parents lived. It's convenient to everywhere.

It's home. I like knowing people anywhere we go. I feel safe and feel my children are safe.

It's close to family and friends

It's charm and the clean neighborhoods.

It's a quiet, small village with pleasant ambience and abundant undeveloped land nearby

It's a quaint, friendly village with rural atmosphere & good exchanges among the churches; Brewster House availability; music programs on the Green; good library service & Center for the Arts programs

It's a beautiful place to live.

It's "Home"

It was close to our work; we like the setting of our home & neighborhood

It is quiet. Everybody keeps their houses and lawns up. There are nice people in Homer.

It is quiet

It is a small, quiet community

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

It has been a great place to bring up our four children.

It feels safe even at night; community events for families

I would move in a heartbeat if it weren't for my family living here.

I love my neighbors, the small town atmosphere, & the fact that my children had such a great time growing up here.

I live in a small historic house.

I like the fact that there are many activities in Homer such as Youth Programs (soccer/softball,etc.), the mobile van, & Center for the Arts

I like the "old" small village atmosphere. I like how it is not commercialized and you are surrounded by families. I like being able to walk to most anything and not have to worry if you remembered to lock your car

I like living in a small, quiet village that is not too far from larger businesses for shopping.

I like being close to the City of Cortland and close to the country.

I like being able to walk around the Village without fear; I like knowing a lot of people I "run into" when walking or shopping; I have good neighbors; I can walk to the store and to church

I have not lived here long enough to comment

I feel safe leaving my house unlocked; roads are always cleared of snow

I did like the small, close knit community, but now it's heading for "welfare alley" and "industrial city"!

Historic; small town; close to I-81

Historic; community events; parks

Historic District; my neighborhood/neighbors; Village Green; the residents; our church

Historic district; historic homes

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Historic district and historic quality; small town atmosphere; quality of schools and fire department

Historic character; low crime rate

Historic character

Historic character

Historic atmosphere

Good village services (garbage, plowing, police); attractive village; nice neighbors

Good small town living; Village workers always do a great job keeping our streets good; I like having the police and fire so close

Good services; quiet neighborhood

Good environment for my children to grow up in.

Friendly; affluent; Main Street; Village Green

Friendly town

Friendly people; beautiful Main Street; good fire department

Friendly people and neighbors - I have great neighbors!

Friendly neighbors; peacefulness; small town atmosphere

Friendly neighbors; everything is in walking distance i.e. schools

Friendly merchants and bank employees

Friendliness; community events; junction of many state and federal highways; nearby rural character; activities

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Friendliness of the people

Excellent school district; quiet neighborhoods

Everything about Homer feels like "Home" - small businesses, friendly people, good location.

Everyone is friendly; there is a lot to do

Easy access to Syracuse and Binghamton; small town; limited low income housing; limited number of trailers; few large businesses

Convenient to shopping, hospital, and recreational activities

Convenient

Comradeship of people in the Village; great schools

Community pride; historic value; good people

Community feeling; low number of rental properties and large number of homeowners; people committed to community

Community atmosphere - friendly, clean, historic; quality of the schools

Close to work

Close to Homer schools

Close to Friends

Close to family and school

Close to family

Close neighborhoods; low crime rate; convenience of Downtown services

11 What do you like most about living in Homer

Clean; safe

Clean; quiet; attractive; proximity to Syracuse, Ithaca, college, and Route 81

Clean; neighbors are friendly

Clean; friendly; all around nice area

Clean; friendly

Charm; character; schools

Central to many activities - community theater, concerts in the park, & festivals. Close to church and family.

Being close to family; country atmosphere

Being close to everything - shopping and family

Being able to walk to concerts, parks, schools, stores, post office, bank, ball games, friends' houses, library

Beautiful; safe

Atmosphere; the community; schools

Appearance; friendliness; walkability

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

I have only lived here a couple months

No change

Nothing ever changes in Homer

No change

No change

No change

No change

The quality of life in the Village has remained the same, which is a good thing

No change

More desirable

More desirable

The people are friendly.

More desirable

More desirable

I am a new resident of the Village and I really like the neighborhood that my apartment is in

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable
Improvements to our schools

No opinion

No opinion

Less desirable
Some homes are in disrepair

More desirable
It's a great place to live and raise a family.

No change

More desirable
Although it is not my favorite small town, it is well cared for, close to I-81, and close to several colleges.

No change

More desirable
I feel more and more comfortable here.

Less desirable
Politically speaking

More desirable
More is being done to maintain our small historic village

17B Why do you feel this way

Less desirable

Less desirable

Not enough variety of stores/shops

More desirable

A lot of music and theater offered

Less desirable

Quality of the people has degraded

No change

Less desirable

Housing is run down

No change

More desirable

Park improvements; cultural center

No change

I haven't noticed any changes one way or another.

More desirable

The schools and the appearance of the Village continue to improve

No change

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable

Condition of historic buildings and shops Downtown

Less desirable

More crime; more liquid manure smell

Less desirable

Houses are not kept up; tractor trailer traffic; wrong types of housing projects

More desirable

Safety; school district

No change

More desirable

There have been a lot of home renovations and new sidewalks. Maint Street looks good.

No change

I haven't noticed any real changes - or changes have balance out.

More desirable

More activities on Village Green; new retail stores; Linani's expanded; Center for the Arts

No change

No change

More desirable

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable

We've become woven into its everyday life

More desirable

Addition of the Center for the Arts

No change

More desirable

Less desirable

Fewer employment opportunities compared to 30 years ago

More desirable

Less desirable

Homer Oil

Less desirable

High taxes; needs more restaurants

No change

No opinion

No change

The Village meets my expectations.

17B Why do you feel this way

Less desirable

Taxes

No change

More desirable

More desirable

The care given to the buildings

No change

Homer has tried to stay "as is".

No change

Thought it was great to begin with and it hasn't changed

No change

No change

More desirable

People keep up homes nicely; streets are cleaned

No change

Sewer project was completed, but no new businesses.

No change

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable

The Village looks better all the time; residents who move here care about the quality of life and the way our Village operates

No change

No change

Some good (plant closed down) and some bad (senior apartments went up)

No opinion

I have not lived here long enough to form an opinion.

No change

No change

No change

Less desirable

Yards look like junkyards; cars are parked on sidewalks; repair shops are located in residential areas.

More desirable

No change

Homer has always been a prime residential village.

Less desirable

Amount of rail traffic has increased

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

No noticeable changes in residential areas; no noticeable changes in viable businesses downtown

No change

Neighbors not keeping up their property

No change

More desirable

Made new friends

No change

No opinion

No change

Housing and business development has stayed stable.

No change

Have not seen a lot of change in the year I have lived here

No opinion

No change

More desirable

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable

Great place to raise children; we still have the Village Green & charming downtown area; it's an easy commute to the north, south, or west; people are renovating the beautiful houses; the "stinky" factory is gone

No change

I've lived here 6 years and not much has changed.

More desirable

The more I live here and get to know people, I notice more things I like.

More desirable

More activities; Center for the Arts; More sidewalks; coffee shop

More desirable

It's much neater than Cortland and quieter

More desirable

No opinion

No change

No change

There's nothing here at all.

More desirable

Less desirable

Stores leaving i.e. pharmacy & hardware

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable

Services are improved and adequate.

No change

Less desirable

Taxes are high; lack of promoting business growth; high expenditures on over compensated Village services (i.e. police dept.)

More desirable

Low crime rate compared to other areas in New York

No change

still has its good areas and bad areas

More desirable

Responsive Village government

Less desirable

Ordinances are not enforced i.e. leash law, junk cars, junk houses

More desirable

Many things for people to do; Main Street has been cleaned up

No change

Less desirable

It has gotten a "snooty" reputation we don't like. I want to live somewhere friendly & welcoming - not "showy".

More desirable

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

Static development

No change

Population has grown, but not too much since moving here in 1996

Less desirable

No change

No change

More desirable

The Village looks better and better; more pride in properties

More desirable

I like where I live.

No change

No change

It remained a quiet pleasant community

More desirable

More desirable

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

The Village hasn't really changed - just the people.

More desirable

So many people use Homer as their bedroom.

Less desirable

Property taxes are way too high.

More desirable

I love Linani's and the other new eating places such as Hobeau's, Little Italy and the Elks Lodge

No change

I have not noticed many changes, but that's part of the charm.

More desirable

People like the small village atmosphere.

No change

No opinion

No change

I have only lived here 4 months

No change

Less desirable

One person (the Mayor) basically rules and has brought in many unsavory tenants and polluting factors.

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

Seems the same as when we moved here.

No change

It depends on your neighbors/neighborhood

More desirable

People seem to take more pride in their property.

Less desirable

Too many rental properties & transient people

More desirable

Quality of historic homes has improved immensely.

No change

Less desirable

Property taxes are out of control

Less desirable

Higher school taxes; bad zoning - no enforcement of zoning

No opinion

Just moved here

No change

It has remained a desirable place to live

More desirable

With crime on the rise, it is a great safe town.

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

No opinion

More desirable

People are repairing houses in the historic area

More desirable

No change

No change

People are against industrial development.

More desirable

I didn't realize how desirable it was until I moved here

Less desirable

Less desirable

Lack of taxi service

More desirable

Improvement of Village services; increased recreational opportunities; increased cultural opportunities

More desirable

17B Why do you feel this way

Less desirable

Appearance of houses and properties

No change

Things are pretty much the same here.

More desirable

Less desirable

Increased number of group homes in residential areas

More desirable

Water/sewer services; recreation

No change

No change

We've been happy and comfortable in the Village for approximately 30 years.

More desirable

It maintains its standard

More desirable

More desirable

Less desirable

Taxes

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable

No change

No new buildings or new happenings

No change

Everything looks the same

No opinion

No change

Very stable place except for tax increases

More desirable

Progress

No change

Little change has occurred.

No change

Nothing has changed

No change

I love this place, but I haven't seen many changes

Less desirable

People are trying to keep businesses out, but we need businesses to help with taxes. Schools have also gone down; they need to focus more on teaching

No change

Only been here a short time - not long enough to see changes

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

No change

I have not noticed any changes except taxes going up.

No change

No change

It has always been a nice place to live.

No change

Some aspects have improved while others have declined

More desirable

Less desirable

House values have not increased as much as other comparable locations.

No opinion

No change

No opinion

No change

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

No change

No change

Less desirable
Crime; welfare

Less desirable
Taxes

No change
some of the houses and properties are very poor due to absentee owners

No opinion

More desirable
Limited welfare housing

No change

More desirable
Historic District improved Main Street

No change

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

More desirable

More desirable

No change

More desirable

No change

No change

No opinion

More desirable

More desirable

Less desirable
Taxes

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable

No change

No change

Less desirable

Schools/administration; increase of multi-family houses

No change

No opinion

No opinion

No opinion

Less desirable

Too many rentals & taxes

More desirable

No change

17B Why do you feel this way

More desirable

No change

More desirable

No change

More desirable

Less desirable

Kept businesses from growing or moving into the area.

Less desirable

Loss of businesses has removed much of the middle class.

No change

No change

No change

No change

My observation

17B Why do you feel this way

No change

More desirable

Center for the Arts; improved library

18 Other

unfriendly people

truck traffic

Taxes

taxes

Taxes

population increase

Nothing

Lower socio-economic population

loss of Village Green or quaint buildings Downtown

Liquid manure odor

lack of homes for seniors - affordable, one story

Lack of enforcement of traffic laws (i.e. speeding)

Lack of code enforcement

Lack of code enforcement

Increased traffic

high taxes compared to surrounding areas

cutting down more trees

crime; noise

additional taxes

19 Other

vacant & run down houses should be torn down/revitalized

throwing garbage in the river

Speeding on side streets

run-off into local streams

protect green space

Preserving lot size and single family dwellings

Noise; truck traffic on Route 281

No more conversions from single units to multi-units

mosquito control

Make people clean up their properties

limiting commercial uses in residential areas.

leash law & pooper scooper for dogs; noise ordinances

Lack of area for new housing

junk cars

Industry that blends easily into the Village

IGA facade

Enforcement of existing codes

19 Other

Do better with existing regulations

common sense should prevail

camping equipment

21 Other

Youth Center

swimming pool for the kids

Swimming pool for kids

swimming pool

Summer activities for the youth

Senior housing without income restrictions

Route 281 zoned as commercial

Repair to store fronts on Main Street

playground on Griggs Field

open Homer Oil

Non-obtrusive business development

more restaurants

More employment opportunities

more businesses

light industrial/maintain current commercial

jobs for our young people

improve the dilapidated exterior of the grocery store

Improve existing grocery store

hardware store

Gourmet restaurant; Senior housing near waterfront

21 Other

Food Pantry

Fix the front of IGA store

Fast food restaurant

Dog park

Curbs on major streets

Capitalize upon the historic/tourism element

another restaurant

Affordable retirement complex

Affordable housing for single adults & seniors

A place for camping, hiking, & biking

a local diner

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Would like to see good senior housing or an affordable retirement complex in a nice section of the Village, not in what has always been a lower class area. The old Peck property on N. Main Street by the creek would be the perfect location - nice scenic area and walking distance to Downtown. Improve the outside appearance of houses that need it. Would like to see less parking on front lawns. A little ice cream parlor on Main Street for walkers would be nice.

With the widening of Route 281, do not allow undesirable businesses to affect the charm of the Village.

We need to attract businesses that are environmentally safe in order to build our tax base. Consolidation of Village departments must be done, but services should be maintained and a tax reduction must be the goal.

We could use some industry to help employ people and to help with taxes, but still maintain the small town atmosphere. I would like to have more activities for the young people during the summer, as well as activities for the non-athletes year-round i.e. skateboarding. We could also use a drug store. I am always surprised by the reluctance regarding the soybean factory. Growing up in Homer, we had the soap factory and the canning factory, which both emitted odors. However, we put up with these minor inconveniences because a lot of our citizens worked at these places. We still had a nice village in spite of and because of these factories.

Unless the Village can acquire more land by access, I see little space for increased housing or commercial use.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

To be able to do everyday living in the Village of Homer i.e. pharmacy, grocery store, etc.

The Village should annex all the land between Homer & Cortland and use Route 81 as an eastern boundary. The Police Dept. should be stream lined to cut costs or contracted out. The Fire Dept. should be changed a Fire District or be incorporated to bonded indebt.

The Village of Homer is a great place to raise a family and even retire. The more people we move into our community by building more houses, condos, etc. puts us at risk of more traffic and possible crime. The areas that are run down need to be cleaned up (i.e. old milk plant). I do believe if the Village and Town were to join forces in some areas it would benefit us all. If money and resources can be saved, they should be.

The Village needs to realize that we need an increase in industry/commercial activity. This will help with taxes. With much thought, industry and the small town "feel" can work together. With the cost of traveling to work, people need jobs that are nearby. Village services should only be consolidated if it does not compromise our services. The highway, police, and fire departments do excellent jobs, so don't lose any of them!

The Village needs some industrial development. It cannot survive as a bedroom community or rely on the historical value of the Village. Industrial development will help broaden the tax base and give relief to tax payers.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

The Village is doing fine. Do not try to over regulate.

The senior housing on Cortland Street is a good beginning - now we need another one similar to Friendship House in Cortland.

Taxes need to stop going up on houses.

Stop using the fire station horn!

Stop raising taxes!

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Stop "building up" our school - the teachers are overpaid and the kids aren't any smarter. Taxes need to be lowered. I would like to see a hardware store and pharmacy - let's get that little town "life" back here. Town/Village meetings should be held at night (7pm). People don't have a say when the meetings are held at 4pm or earlier.

Stay the way it is

Stay committed to community and limit development

Small drugstore; cleaner and updated grocery store

Slum landlords should be made to monitor their welfare tenants more closely. No more huge 24 unit apartment complexes. No soy bean production - Homer is residential, not agricultural or industrial. Citizens should be able to elect their planning board members; they should not be chosen by the Mayor. One person (the Mayor) should not have so much say in what affects so many people's lives. The cultural aspect has been great. Musical events on the Village Green, Jazz Fest, ice skating rink, etc. are all wonderful for Village residents. The bus service appears to be a good addition for many.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Slowly. Improve housing stock - there are many run down houses waiting to be improved. Lower taxes. Protect the Historic District. Bring in strong, well designed tax paying commercial projects. Extend the R1 district to cover R2-R4 districts. Create/enhance Planned Unit Development (PUD). Improve the exterior look of the market; it significantly detracts from an otherwise nice looking downtown. Install new, well designed Village entry signage and landscaping. More shops, restaurants, landscaping, and lighting is needed in the Main Street area. Create a dog park.

Slowly! I'm okay with the soybean oil plant as long as environmental controls are enforced. Homer is not a major commercial center, nor should it be. Improving the economy in Cortland would be the biggest benefit to Homer. Homer is not really in the same league as Cazenovia or Skaneateles, however, it might not be a bad idea to push it in that direction.

Slowly while improving the quality of the existing Village infrastructure i.e. streets, sidewalks, parks. Increase housing opportunities. Increase opportunities and incentives for new businesses.

Slowly and try to keep its small farm community roots.

Slowly and carefully. Homer has the potential to become over developed very quickly. It's a great place to live, but the quality of the "small town" could melt away quickly.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Sidewalks need to be repaired. Lower taxes, especially for seniors. Stop snow removal after 6pm. Sidewalks should be plowed like they used to be as all people cannot do their own.

River Trail completed; fewer apartments; reduce zoning for 2-family houses; construct more single family homes; keep the bank, post office, grocery store, library, and coffee shop; build a community/recreation center with a pool; keep the village government separate from the town except for money saving joint services; install more sidewalks especially through areas where kids walk to school (Prospect, Durkee, etc.); clean up Ottenshot's junk yard/business; more mosquito control; maintain Village Green; maintain services such as garbage collection, water, lawn debris pick-ups; plow sidewalks near the schools and Route 281; maintain community events; increase lot sizes

Respect and protect what we have. We are a village, not a city, nor do we need to try and become one. There are new communities being built across America designed on the model identical to the Homer Village blueprint. Bigger is seldom better and certainly it isn't when it comes to changing the character of a community.

Remove the laundry and dry cleaner from the Downtown District and refurnish the building for store fronts and upscale apartments.

Remain small and maintain "homey" atmosphere. Require that business signs be removed 30 days after a business closes (this is currently not being enforced).

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Reduce the heavy truck traffic on Main Street. Institute a brush/branch clean up day in mid-summer and a household trash/chemicals amnesty day.

Provide incentives to fix up houses - consider tax credit for maintenance. Also, provide some tax incentives for young people to convert multi-tenant homes to single family home.

Promote business development including manufacturing, retail, and small businesses. Re-evaluate the need for the Village Police Department since the State Trooper barracks are now located in the Village. Possibly reduce the size of the department by having only one car. The department should have an officer walking a "beat" to create more interaction with the people. Improve the sidewalks along Route 281. Do not change the historic character on Main Street.

Preserve small town quality; limit commercial development yet encourage increased services/businesses downtown; maintain restrictions regarding building and noise; continue to provide community events and cultural offerings to the same high quality we have had

Plan/control location of streets and housing.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

No more multi-family houses. Clean up the grocery store that we have or bring in a new one. Use our industrial buildings to attract some business. Fast track the River Trail walk.

No changes

Municipal electric service like Groton & Marathon; lower taxes by increasing the tax base; better animal control such as rodent trapping; clean up and maintain Factory Brook and Tioughnioga River to prevent flooding and improve water flow; police the dumping of materials and pollutants into waterways; develop grants for streambank improvement to avoid ongoing erosion

Multi-use trail near the river

More summer recreation for the youth - it would keep the children busy and out of trouble. Repair the sidewalks.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

More stores and more things to do for the youth. We have nothing - all we have are taxes to pay!

More small businesses i.e. restaurants, video rental, drug store; a dog park so dogs can exercise

More shopping since all malls are 40 minutes from here

More services for young people because I hear too many complaints that there is nothing to do. Establish a youth recreation center for young adults to congregate and have fun at. Prevent alcohol drinking and unwanted pregnancies.

More services for the elderly

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

More retail businesses to draw people to the Village. More retail development along Route 281 because Downtown seems to lack retail space. Development of the Riverwalk would be very advantageous. More festivals are needed.

More practical businesses located in the Village to help with the tax base - small grocery store, drug store, restaurants, etc. If taxes keep increasing, we will be forced to sell.

More historic preservation; more work done to Downtown

More employment/jobs; repair broken sidewalks; fix the Pine Street bridge

More diverse business community

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

More consistency with the appearance of downtown stores, especially the current grocery store.

More commercial businesses to help with taxes.

More businesses that create job opportunities

More businesses shared throughout the County

More businesses need to be established; more parks/recreation for kids; lower taxes. People in the Village need to realize that change is good. The Village needs to bring in businesses and use buildings that are vacant/not being used. Taxes will never go down if we don't bring in revenue.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Minimize multi-family homes; upgrade store front appearance - the IGA is a mess

Make the Village more renter friendly i.e. townhouses or condos. I would really like to stay here after I sell my house, but no one wants pets and many apartments are on upper floors.

Make the Village more child and bicycle friendly. Better traffic management is needed for the safety of everyone (i.e. enforce speed laws more vigorously, ticket people who "roll" stop lights).

Maintain what we have.

Maintain historic sites. Increase cultural activities. Increase recreation and youth services - I see too many kids roaming the streets at night being unruly. Maintain homes - I see too many run down home mostly due to incompetent landlords.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Maintain historic character within present historic area while expanding the tax base through housing development including rentals (but not complexes), condos, professional housing, & single family. More business development. Establish a friendlier, more helpful code enforcement office. Expand Village boundaries if necessary.

Maintain current course; bring in a drug store/convenience store; fix sidewalks; maintain small town charm but be willing to change - do not let small minority run the Village (i.e. Homer Oil not reopening - we need jobs); encourage landlords to maintain properties; establish better zoning for apartments

Lower the taxes; enforce zoning; widen Route 281. Increase community education and foot patrol instead of speed traps. Do not waste money on just beautification projects and ordinances.

Lower taxes

Lower property taxes. Some of our friends have moved away due to their property taxes being so high. Maintain the quality of life that we now have in Homer - great water, great schools, nice neighborhoods.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Look into the possibility of merging services with the Town and County.

Let new buildings come in, but make them have a historic look. This should help lower school taxes. Develop in a way that the small town "look" is kept. Crank down on crime and the type of people who commit the crimes. All the services for the Village and the schools should be combined since it's our tax dollars anyway and maybe it will help lower the cost.

Less resistance to industry; lower taxes

Less industry/commercial in residential areas; more historic preservation including owner incentives; increased regulation of conversions from single family to multi-family residences

Keep the same appearance; more housing for seniors

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Keep single family houses as they are; allow businesses to move into areas that are designated as business zones without much difficulty; keep parks well maintained i.e. upgrades to Durkee Park; keep the same historic atmosphere in the Downtown

Keep its small town atmosphere; discourage welfare housing; reduce taxes; get rid of the police department. If the police department stays, have them join the county drug task force to get rid of the "druggies".

Keep it historic. I would encourage development of garden apartments to bring in more young people. We need professional housing. We should expand our "bedroom community" image. Code enforcement needs to be better.

It's a nice town - keep it that way.

It would be nice if our leaders, no matter what party, could remember the people. They are there to do the people's will, not to force their own agenda upon us. I fear even our local government is going the same way as the State and federal, always finding fault with the other party and getting nothing done to benefit us.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Investigate the need for the Village Police at present levels. Can it be reduced or merged with the Sherriff's Department? The Village needs more attractive housing (condos or single family houses), especially outside the historic district. Explore the possibility of a municipal electric company like Groton.

Improve housing stock to increase tax base; add bike paths; renovate Downtown; improve energy efficiency of public buildings; tear down the worst residential buildings; convince Verizon to install Fiber Optic service; shield Route 81 noise; reduce the rate of tax increases; promote Homer's liveability; get rid of eyesores

Improve existing storefronts and sidewalks

If possible, build an industrial park to help offset taxes and bring in employment.

I'm always traveling to Ithaca for the quaint, unique shops and the beautiful scenery. Homer has this potential. Durkee park can be reconstructed and extended for swimming, camping, hiking, & biking. Add a trail that follows along the river and crosses onto the roads where necessary. Homer just needs some imagination and better advertisement for the little shops and places like the Center for the Arts.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

I'd like to see a small pharmacy open up and more development on Main Street, while still maintaining the historic aesthetics of Homer. I would like to see less commercial development on Route 281. Perhaps, larger brick buildings similar to Main Street would provide more commercial and housing spaces. I would also like to see more school oriented functions & child/family related activities. Repair roads and sidewalks.

I would not like to see sudden growth - the Village is pretty well built-up. I would not like to see homes destroyed to build manufacturing plants. I would not like to see the historic buildings altered in ways that would destroy their character. I would like to see sensible zoning laws enacted to retain the beauty and the attractiveness of the Village. It would be useful to find ways to hold down budgets without cutting services. We do not want to lose local residents due to higher taxes.

I would not like to see it too densely populated.

I would love to see a decrease in property taxes so I can afford to keep my home.

I would like to see the Village maintain its present character. There is some land that could be developed for townhouses, single family houses, and senior housing, but I realize there isn't much. Continue to maintain streets and trees. Sidewalks could use more rotating maintenance.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

I would like to see the walking trail constructed.

I would like to see the Village increase business on Main Street without sacrificing the small town/historic appeal. I would also like to see the Route 281/81 area to increase revenue and services i.e. grocery store, pharmacy, other businesses

I would like to see the Village cut back on their spending and taxes. We, as families, try to cut back on spending, so the Village should also try to cut back on spending. People of the Village have to work outside of the County just to pay their village, county, and school taxes.

I would like to see the Village continue to pursue grants to improve the storefronts and the historic district. I would also like to see the Village move away from the exploration and implementation of multi-unit dwellings at the expense of long standing neighborhoods and longtime loyal residents i.e. Cortland Street & Bedford Drive.

I would like to see the recreation department offer more activities. I would like to see sidewalks redone, especially near the tracks on Cayuga, James, and Cortland Streets. I would like to see a new training tower built for the fire department. I would like to see a skate park or some kind of teen youth center.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

I would like to see the elementary school demolished and have a new school built behind the cemetery off Route 90 or on Route 11 towards Little York. I would also like to see a community swimming pool for generations of children to come. Sidewalks are needed on Copeland Ave. leading up to the High School. A nice restaurant would be nice too.

I would like to see the downtown buildings retrofitted and used for upscale apartments or office spaces. Stop the conversion of single family homes into multi-unit apartment buildings. Merge the Village and the Town. Encourage upscale apartments and condo development. Discourage dirty businesses in the Village (Homer Oil). Replace sidewalks. Have more youth activities (music, trips, etc.). Get the police out and involved in the community - they need to know the residents and be more visible and aware of what is going on in the Village. Homer needs to attract more families and be family friendly. Clean up the neighborhoods (junk cars, run down houses, etc.). Be proactive, not reactive. We need politicians to listen to the people, not just voice their opinions and wishes on everyone.

I would like to see the beautiful areas of Homer maintained and protected. I would also like to see some of the unsightly homes on side streets improve their appearance. I don't have a problem with homes being used as rentals or 2-family homes. I do think, however, that the outside appearance should be subject to fairly strict regulations. It seems that some landlords continuously allow their property to deteriorate because they don't want to "waste" money on the house. What they don't see is that they are losing money by allowing their assets to decrease in value. Zoning that regulates the appearance and character of local homes would actually protect all of the local homeowner's assets.

I would like to see more shops with reasonable prices like Homer Men & boys, a pharmacy, more rental properties/apartments, and more senior housing. Improvements are needed to the grocery store - improvements to the building; make it larger; more competitive choices & prices.

I would like to see more commercial development. The Village cannot be supported by tourism alone.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

I would like to see lower taxes and affordable housing - people are being driven out by the “yuppies”

I would like to see it similar to Geneseo. Geneseo has a balance between historic preservation and new development. In Geneseo, the housing and standard of living seems higher, there are more opportunities, and a better variety of stores. I think it can be done here with some planning. Property taxes are out of control. This needs to be corrected before good citizens leave.

I would like to see Homer remain the same with some minor development as needed. I would also like to see changes to some of the streets (i.e. house and street improvements).

I would like to see Homer become a place that has all the “necessary” stores - a decent grocery store, a pharmacy, and some nice quaint restaurants. A McDonald's would be fine, but only one fast food place is needed. The rest should be sit-down restaurants. Nice restaurants would bring people to the Village.

I would like to see an “over 55” community - duplexes with attractive landscaping, one story with attached 2 car garage, no basements, air conditioned, storage space, snow removal, and lawn care provided. Many of us have no desire to leave Homer, but we may have to as we grow older because there is nothing here for us to buy. I would like to see more variety of stores and businesses in Homer, particularly a pharmacy and nice restaurant. I would like to see more people renovating the old homes on the side streets off of South and North Main Street. People need to take pride in their homes like Skaneateles, Cooperstown, Cazenovia, Hamilton, etc. We don't need a lot of industry. There is nothing to be ashamed of if we remain a bedroom community. I'd like to see the Center for the Arts continue to succeed, as well as, Holiday in Homer and Winterfest. I hope some of the younger people in our community come forward and become involved in making Homer a place where people would love to live.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

I would like to see a senior mobile home park where seniors have a place to call their own and have pets.

I would like to see a pharmacy, a fast food restaurant, or another diner. It would be easier for people who don't have cars. I would like to see a place where I can buy bird food.

I would like to see a pharmacy and a hardware store. I would also like to see a coffee shop/bakery open before 6:30am.

I would like the Village to focus on being a small-town, family-friendly community. I don't care if everyone has their grass cut short or their trees perfectly groomed. I care that children can play safely, families can picnic, and elderly people do not have to leave to find retirement living. I care about living in a neighborly community above anything else.

I would like the community to expand with more businesses for more work opportunities.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

I would like Homer Village to keep that small town, unbusy "spirit". We raised our children here and we would like to raise our grandchildren here. The lush green atmosphere on Main Street, the parks, the small town businesses, and the safety at all hours is sought after in so many other communities - let's keep this incredible environment/community the way it is!

I would like Homer to stay a small village and maintain the historic values. Clean up some of the substandard houses.

I would hope that Homer never encourages the flow of non-working welfare scurge that Cortland is overwhelmed by.

I would hate to see Main Street turn into Route 281 - keep it simple, historic, quaint. I think the post office needs more parking spaces. Find a use for the Jay Line Togs building - replace it with something else or tear it down to make more parking. Create trails around the one lane bridge area for walkers/bikes. Improve the Village's water quality. Improve the traffic on Route 281.

I think we are going to get bigger than expenses will allow; more help and equipment than the Town and Village can stand

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

I think as a semi bedroom community, there should be businesses that offer part-time work for seniors, at-home moms, and high school/college kids. This place has the potential to be more than charming in appearance. A little planning about business signage, plantings at the the entrance of businesses, sidewalks and curbs on the side streets (such as Cherry), seating at bus stops, etc. is needed. Entrances to the Village should be improved. Please do something about the north Route 11 entrance around the truck place and bar. It makes us look like we are coming into Cuyler. The triangle entrance from Route 81 (near the High School) could be so nice if we had two gardens like they have in Cortland (Zonta). As you plan, make sure the hillside near the Trooper barracks and farm is a gracious introduction.

I hope the Village will continue to be a bedroom community

I hope the Village remains a village. We need to maintain what we have with minimal growth.

I enjoy the community life. Development of more cultural events is important to me. The Center for the Arts is wonderful. I can appreciate that people would like to live here, however, development needs to be considered more carefully so it does not change the quaint, historic nature of Homer.

I do not want to see what was talked about several years ago - mandatory paint colors for houses, intrusive commissions regulating what each homeowner should do to fit into the community.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

I believe Homer is the perfect "bedroom" community for people working in Syracuse, Ithaca, Binghamton, or On-line. I would love to see a fiber optic line come into Homer. Downtown Homer, with its Victorian buildings, Village Green, shops, and Art Center already looks pretty good, however, the commercial strip along Route 281 needs some work. If we could make this area look similar to the roads running through McLean, our Village would be a nicer place to live. The corner across the road from the gas station would be a lovely site for a garden with a better kiosk illustrating highlights of the local community.

Houses need to be fixed up on James Street & other areas. Try to keep taxes down so the elderly don't leave. Create a neighborhood feeling that promotes helping neighbors (older folks) with snow removal & home improvement.

Homer is a quaint village with very little vision for expanding beyond that level or category or status. I would like the Village to start thinking about alternative energy options such as wind, water, & solar to save money. Our neighbor, the Village of Groton, saves its citizens incredible money through its municipal electric system. Regarding culture, folks are doing a superb job and this should be maintained. I would like to see the Elizabeth Brewster house expand (Baby Boomer Phenomenon is here) and secure Medicaid eligibility or allow such funding for poor residents.

Grant money for low income homeowners to insulate windows, improve homes, etc.

Find a way to reduce the property taxes - it's insane and unfairly arbitrary

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Dredge and clean up both sides of the Tioughnioga River in the Durkee Park area. Build a kayak/canoe launch off the east shore of the river.

Draw in more middle/upper class families to the Village with incentives such as well preserved, maintained, and appealing single family homes

Do not let condos into the Village. Maintain the beautiful views in the Village. I bought my house next to the field between Creal Road and Burgett Drive because of the spectacular view!

Do not get much bigger; keep single family homes

Develop townhouses or condos for seniors who wish to downsize (\$100,000 - 130,000 range).

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Develop the Opera House; develop the Tioughnioga River Trail; develop the museum on Homer-Cortland Road; consolidate municipal services

Deal with school buildings that need to be replaced (elementary). Improve Durkee Park and re-install pool. Diversify use of publically supported athletic fields to include more opportunities for youth.

Crack down on speeders on Route 90. Crack down on drugs in the Village. Crack down on loud exhaust pipes on vehicles driving through the Village.

Continue to support the Center for the Arts. Create more activities for teenagers (i.e. skate park). Fire Department needs a better budget. Expand the Winter Festival to the next level.

Consider future upgrading of Village services such as fire, police, water, etc. Amount of volunteer manpower is dwindling, so efforts are going to have to be made to supplement.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Clean up less desirable properties - Mike's Welding looks terrible from I-81; maintain small town atmosphere; maintain buildings and historic sites; promote new businesses and retail shops to occupy vacant buildings

Bring in a retail store that includes a pharmacy.

Bring a theme park or a mall.

Bike path along the Tioughnioga River Trail; No chain stores - only small family-owned businesses; More family recreation opportunities

Better sidewalks on Cortland Street and surrounding areas

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Better code enforcement concerning uncovered and unfenced above ground swimming pools, residential junkyards, old cars, car parts, & miscellaneous junk piled up against buildings. Have a code enforcement officer make periodic inspections of the Village. Better police and law enforcement concerning cars parked on or across sidewalks obstructing pedestrian passage. Police need to patrol more side streets instead of main thoroughfares.

Become cleaner by enforcing existing codes; Trustees need to listen to taxpaying residents instead of proceeding with developments no one wants; Zoning members should be elected, not appointed; flooding on Copeland Ave. needs to be fixed; tractor trailer traffic through the Village needs to be decreased; make Mr. Craig and Mr. Crandall clean up their businesses

Become a more scenic/historic site similar to Skaneateles or Cazenovia

Assist homeowners with restoring old homes by providing information on exterior colors and old photographs of properties that can be used as a resource. More self-promotion needs to be done - Homer should be a destination that people wish to visit. Limit apartments and multi-family houses. All buildings downtown should be restored to historic accuracy, at least the facades. Restore the Opera House. Consider becoming a Public Power community. Promote more families living within the Village limits in single family homes. Homer should have vision of its own character - in other words, when people think of Homer, they should have positive response.

As it will without government intervention.

23 How would you like the Village to evolve in the next 5 to 10 years

Another senior complex like Ellis Pines with affordable housing for seniors or persons in need. There is already a waiting list and none of the residents plan on leaving. It's "Home".

Although I am quite pleased with the Village as it is now, I understand the Village's need to expand its tax base in an effort to maintain and increase their services. In my opinion, great care must be given in this process so it does not undermine or deter from Main Street business owners. I would be against the introduction of any large chain store with the exception of a pharmacy.

Adequate parking for children's sporting events; better traffic flow on Route 281

A new bridge is needed that would accommodate heavy vehicles on the North end of River Street. A traffic light is needed at the corner of Main Street and Albany Street. There should be no parking near the corner of Main Street and Albany Street. Rental housing is needed for widowers and single people. Install speed bumps across the South end of River Street to slow down traffic. The school bus stop at the corner of Albany Street/River Street needs to be moved so the kids can board at the end of Albany Street Extension. The IGA storefront needs to be redone. A noise ordinance should be enforced for motorcycles. I would like the option of paying my taxes in increments instead of annually (i.e. quarterly, bi-annually).

HOMER COMP PLAN SURVEY DATA COMPARISON BY AGE COHORTS

(NOTE: THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS ARE BASED ON: (1) PERCENTAGES; AND (2) ALL NUMBERS ARE ROUNDED WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR SOME ANSWERS NOT ADDING UP TO 100%)

1. Are you a homeowner or a renter?

GROUP	HOMEOWNER	RENTER	NO ANSWER
18-35	65	35	
36-64	87	12	1
65+	92	7	

2. How many people live full time in your household?

GROUP	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS							No Answer
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+	
18-35	17	30	22	13	9	0	4	4
36-64	16	45	15	19	4	0	2	
65+	38	54	3	3	1	0	0	1

3. Are you male or female?

GROUP	MALE	FEMALE
18-35	48	52
36-64	53	47
65+	58	41

4. What is your age?

Number of respondents in Group 18-35 = 23

Number of respondents in Group 36-64 = 136

Number of respondents in Group 65+ = 72

5. Do you have children under the age of 18 who live with you?

GROUP	YES	NO
18-35	48	52
36-64	38	62
65+	4	96

6. Is anyone in your household aged 65 or older?

GROUP	YES	NO
18-35	0	100
36-64	4	96
65+	100	0

7. How many years have you lived in the Village of Homer?

GROUP	< 1 yr	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-20 yrs	21-30yrs	30+ yrs
18-35	13	52	13	9	13	0
36-64	4	17	18	18	15	26
65+	6	6	10	6	4	69

8. Do you use your property for anything other than a residence?

GROUP	YES	NO
18-35	17	83
36-64	10	90
65+	4	96

9. What influenced you to live in Homer (check all that apply)

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
Born or raised here	47	32	31
Low crime rate	26	33	29
Community appearance	47	46	44
Quality of nearby services	22	17	28
Close to work	52	35	33
Cost of housing	22	25	19
Quality of schools	52	50	43
Proximity to relatives or friends	57	35	42
Small town atmosphere	47	68	54
Nearness to I-81	22	21	17
Historic character	26	43	81
Other		7	13
No answer			3

10. What is your employment status?

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
Employed	87	80	6
Unemployed	13	2	1
Semi-retired	0	7	11
Retired	0	10	82

11. What do you like most about living in Homer? (See list of open-ended questions)

12. On average, how often do you purchase goods or services within the Village of Homer (Please check only ONE box)

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
Daily	26	29	21
Once a week	61	35	22
A few times a month	4	18	29
Once a month	4	9	11
Less than once a month	0	8	10
Never	4	<1	1
No answer			6

13. Where do you buy groceries most often? (Please Check only ONE box)

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
Homer	4	4	6
Cortland/Cortlandville	96	91	86
Syracuse	0	4	0
Other	0	Ithaca: 1	1
No answer			7

14. Where are the top three places you shop for goods and services? (Please select 3)

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
Homer	35	38	52
Ithaca	56	43	35
Syracuse	61	60	46
Cortland/Cortlandville	100	97	93
Binghamton	0	8	3
Internet	22	21	10
Other	0	3	6
No answer			6

15. When you go downtown, is it usually to (check all that apply):

	<u>Group 18-35</u>	<u>Group 36-64</u>	<u>Group 65+</u>
Shop	26	16	21
Go to the bank	35	49	60
Work	12	6	6
Go to the post office	43	65	68
Walk/exercise	57	34	29
Eat	15	11	10
Go to church	0	9	25
Get groceries	17	14	17
Go to the library	9	13	19
Other	26	10	10
No answer			10

16. Please rate the following about Homer's existing conditions/services. 1= Poor; 2 = Fair; 3 = Satisfactory; 4 = Good; 5 = Excellent; 6= No opinion

	Group 18-35						Group 36-64						Group 65+					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Small town atmosphere	0	0	9	30	61	0	0	2	6	31	60	<1	0	1	8	28	54	8
Parks/Recreation activities	4	9	22	26	30	9	3	7	21	37	26	6	0	4	18	35	25	18
Neighbors/Neighborhoods	0	0	13	60	26	0	0	6	17	43	31	1	3	4	21	32	33	7
Homer School buildings	0	4	4	43	43	4	0	1	18	43	30	7	0	0	11	46	32	11
Homer School programs	0	4	9	43	35	9	<1	4	17	37	28	14	0	1	11	44	25	18
Housing conditions	0	4	17	61	17	0	<1	11	23	54	6	4	1	8	28	35	11	17
Housing Choices	0	9	17	52	22	0	1	10	29	46	7	7	2	14	22	32	10	18
Variety of downtown businesses	22	17	30	17	13	0	12	28	30	23	1	1	4	10	29	22	10	13
Route 281 commercial corridor	4	26	30	22	17	0	8	27	30	18	8	2	1	24	24	25	8	17
Sidewalks	4	17	26	26	26	0	7	17	30	37	1	1	4	21	24	24	13	11
Fire Department	0	0	4	43	48	4	0	<1	10	31	3	3	0	0	7	24	60	10
Police Department	4	0	9	17	43	4	1	5	13	37	4	4	0	0	14	38	38	11
Code Enforcement	0	4	30	26	22	0	5	13	23	26	15	15	5	14	21	25	13	22
Ambulance services	0	4	0	43	22	3	0	0	13	30	31	31	1	1	13	29	39	17
Community events	0	4	9	52	30	4	0	3	15	40	2	2	0	3	18	36	31	13
Traffic and roads	0	9	26	22	43	0	1	7	20	50	<1	<1	0	6	22	42	21	10
Pedestrian/bicycle friendliness	0	13	13	35	35	4	3	8	19	46	4	4	4	8	21	39	14	14
Parking	4	17	9	43	26	0	1	9	29	43	2	3	0	10	25	39	17	10
Services/activities for youth	9	17	13	22	17	22	6	9	19	29	20	20	0	7	17	36	11	29
Services/activities for the elderly	4	4	4	17	9	61	1	4	22	18	43	43	1	6	24	39	13	18
Village government	0	13	13	30	13	30	2	11	29	35	12	12	2	8	25	29	19	14
Town government	0	4	21	30	13	30	2	5	29	35	18	18	1	11	21	32	18	17

17. In your opinion, since you have lived here has the Village of Homer: (a) Become a more desirable place to live; (b) Become a less desirable place to live; Not changed noticeably as a place to live; or No opinion.

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
More desirable	39	32	32
Less desirable	9	18	14
Not changed noticeably	52	44	42
No opinion	0	6	13

18. Which of these factors would make the Village a less desirable place to live (Check all that apply).

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
In adequate housing opportunities/ choices	30	29	43
Lack of employment	39	39	46
Quality of schools	39	47	35
Loss of historic character	39	46	36
Conversion of SF homes to multi-family	35	46	50
Area is becoming overdeveloped	35	22	25
Lack of cultural opportunities	17	24	15
Inadequate parks recreation	30	33	26
Neighborhood deterioration	74	71	51
Inadequate community services	35	34	32
Other	9	0	4

19. In your opinion, which of the following land use issues should be better regulated? (Check all that apply)

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
Minimum lot size	9	12	19
Minimum dwelling size	0	8	17
Building setbacks	4	4	10
Zoning districts	0	23	22
Street trees/lawn requirements	4	14	15
Junkyards	35	43	44
Mobile homes	9	29	36
Commercial building design	9	13	9
Signs	9	12	22
Waterfront management	9	10	8
Protection of scenic views	22	32	22
Historic preservation	30	32	29
Parking/traffic	17	11	14
Housing densities	4	19	18
None, land use should not be regulated	30	8	18
Other	4	10	8
No answer	13	0	17

20. Regarding consolidation with the Town, the Village should:

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
Not consider consolidation at all	13	5	15
Should consider the consolidation of some department/services	39	45	49
The Village should merge with the Town	13	21	8
No opinion	35	29	28
Other	0	<1	0

21. As the Village moves towards the future, what types of development would you like to see? (Check all that apply)

	Group 18-35	Group 36-64	Group 65+
Single family homes	26	32	36
Townhouses/condos	9	14	32
Housing for senior citizens	4	28	57
Neighborhood service businesses	30	20	13
A pharmacy	48	47	65
Bicycle/pedestrian trails	57	48	35
Sidewalks throughout the Village	57	40	39
Rental housing	4	7	8
Apartment complexes	9	5	7
More retail stores	22	32	35
Another grocery store	35	32	42
More parkland/recreation	39	20	8
More commercial development	13	16	18
Maintaining/rehab existing housing stock	61	57	53
Industrial	13	12	18
No more development	0	10	6
No opinion	4	5	6
Other	4	12	17

Visual Preference Survey Results by Subject

Open Spaces, Parks, Public Places (photos 1-14)

Highly rated features included active agricultural land, pristine-looking streams wooded areas with possible public trails that were largely unimproved. Public spaces with benches and picnic facilities were also highly rated.



Residential Development (photos 15-37)

The highest rated residential photo included tree-lined streets with curbing and sidewalks. A few other residential scenarios that stood out include the following; smaller lots with front yards, including sidewalks and greenspace on both sides of the street and landscaping as well as larger homes somewhat close together that utilized stone and brick construction with ample vegetation and landscaping.



Signs (photos 34-49)

The highest rated signs included features such as presence of building materials including stone or brick as a decorative foundation, as well as landscaping and greenspace around the signs. High-rise and internally illuminated signs were rated poorly in this category.



Parking Areas, Access Roads, and Commercial Development (photos 50-84)

Highly rated photos included parking areas around commercial buildings that included landscaping, plantings such as flowers, shrubs, trees, etc. Parking lots that were separated from the road by a vegetative buffer were rated highly. Other highly rated features for parking areas included curbing to control traffic, establish planting areas for trees and shrubs, etc.



The highest rated commercial buildings were those that are either used historic buildings and preserved architectural integrity of such buildings, or those that were constructed to meet local design standards or sensitivity to local character. A colonial-style bank was rated the highest, while a federal style house converted to a popular coffee shop was the second-highest. Buildings that used gable architectural features were preferred to flat-roofed buildings. Corporate identity in architecture was not highly rated. Therefore, architecture and colors that identify national or widely-recognized commercial establishments were not preferred. Shopping areas that were arranged in clusters and constructed with brick were rated better than strip development with large parking lots.



Transportation (photos 85 - 95)

A divided road with flowers, trees, and landscaping was clearly preferred to a wide two-lane or four-lane road with little landscaping. Streets lined with trees and sidewalks in residential neighborhoods are preferred. Highly visible crosswalks, bicycle paths, and other visual amenities for alternative forms of transportation are preferred to simple white crosswalk markings or no defined bike lane.



Section VI: Action Plan Matrix





VI. ACTION PLAN MATRIX INTRODUCTION

Following is a summary of the Goals and Implementation Measures found in *Section III. Inventory and Analysis*. They are compiled in an Action Plan Matrix as a quick reference for the reader.

As the Village of Homer moves forward with the implementation of its Comprehensive Plan, it recognizes that time, money, and opportunity are important factors in determining which actions are given the highest priority.

The Goals are categorized as Priority 1, Priority 2, and Priority 3, with Priority 1 having the most urgency.

Each Goal includes a series of Implementation Measures that have also been prioritized. If an Implementation Measure, or project, is categorized as *Immediate*, it is the Village's desire to undertake this project within 0 to three years from the date of the adoption of its Comprehensive Plan. Similarly, if the Implementation Measure is deemed *Short Term*, the Village would like to see it completed within 0 to eight years, and a Implementation Measure deemed *Ongoing* is to be undertaken within 0 to 15 years. It is recognized that some of the projects included herein will have a definitive beginning and end, while some projects will have a longer duration, or may always be a Village priority, such as street maintenance, for example. The timeframe imposed for the Implementation Measures is under ideal circumstances.

If an unforeseen opportunity presents itself to the Village, or circumstances otherwise change, Homer acknowledges that a reordering of priorities may be necessary. The Village will remain flexible in its approach to moving forward with implementing its Comprehensive Plan. As the Village gains success in achieving its goals, or if new actions need to be added, it will become necessary for the Village to periodically update the Goals and Implementation Measures of its Comprehensive Plan.

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
Adopt Comprehensive Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally adopt Plan according to Village Law Section 7-722 to enable implementation 	Village Board	Immediate	Page: 102
HOUSING				
<p>1.1 Ensure all dwelling units are in compliance with New York State Property Maintenance Code. There will be units in the Village, existing or proposed, which are affordable and accessible to all income, age, and disability segments of the population.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #1</p>	<p>1.1.1. Seek financing sources, such as State or federal funds, to renovate housing through rehabilitation programs. Particular emphasis shall be paid to homeowners who struggle financially. Income property rehabilitation programs, where the majority of tenants are lower income, should be conditioned on rent subsidy programs or affordable rents.</p> <p>1.1.2. Continue to support comprehensive housing code enforcement efforts in the Village to maintain owner-occupied and income property units in standard condition.</p> <p>1.1.3. Partner with financing sources to provide financing for developers to create market rate housing. This housing will be created via new construction or the rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, or mixed commercial/residential structures.</p> <p>1.1.4. Promote home ownership through programs that provide assistance to first time homebuyers.</p> <p>1.1.5. Develop a proactive approach to the development of new rental units for all income, age, and disability segments of the population as demand and developable properties are identified. The Village will work with qualified developers who share a common vision with the Village in developing new living units to meet growing needs that are in keeping with the character of the Village.</p> <p>1.1.6. Work with local, State, and federal housing agencies and organizations regarding the housing needs of special needs populations, including but not limited to, handicap access, visitability, the needs of the frail elderly, etc., and assist with advocacy efforts when needed.</p>		<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Short-term</p> <p>Short-term</p>	<p>Page: 25</p> <p>Page: 26</p> <p>Page: 26</p> <p>Page: 26</p> <p>Page: 26</p> <p>Page: 26</p>

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
	1.1.7. Partner with Cortland County and other agencies devoted to housing related issues such as homelessness, lead based paint, radon, energy efficiency, and safety issues. The Village will be a part of the referral network.		Short-term	Page: 26
1.2 Future housing development, or modifications to existing housing, will be consistent with the size, scale, aesthetics, architecture, character, and historic nature of the Village and its neighborhoods. Priority #1	1.2.1. Enact minimum design guidelines that include all housing development so that new construction and significant rehabilitation/renovation of existing housing is in keeping with the character/architecture of the neighborhood in which the project is being undertaken. Incorporate design guidelines into site plan review.		Immediate	Page: 26
1.3 Periodically update land use regulations, particularly with respect to housing. Priority #1	1.3.1. Update the Village's land use regulations, especially those related to housing, so that they are reflective of the goals and vision of the Comprehensive Plan.		Immediate	Page: 26

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
1.6 Encourage the development of home businesses. Priority #2	1.6.1. Update the Village's zoning and land use regulations to allow for home businesses. This will include, but not be limited to, a definition of a home business and requirements that businesses in residential zoning districts be compatible with, and not disturb, the character of residential neighborhoods.		Short-term	Page: 27
CODE ENFORCEMENT				
2.1 All properties in the Village of Homer shall be in compliance with all Village regulations. Priority #1	2.1.1. Increase the financial resources for Code Enforcement as necessary to provide proactive Code Enforcement. 2.1.2. Include a citizen educational component as part of the Code Enforcement effort.		Immediate Immediate	Page: 29 Page: 29
2.2 The Village will adopt Code Enforcement policies that complement and enhance its Code Enforcement Program. Priority #1	2.2.1. The Village will conduct a comprehensive review of its Code Enforcement policies. 2.2.2. Stricter enforcement of all codes will be the centerpiece of policy changes. 2.2.3. Procedures will be developed to ensure a consistent prosecution of violations. 2.2.4. The Village will pursue the establishment of a Code Enforcement Court, if possible, in conjunction with other local governments.		Immediate Immediate Short-term	Page: 29 Page: 29 Page: 29
2.3 Review and update Village building code/local laws/policies, including monetary and other penalties for non-compliance, and make changes as needed. Priority #2	2.3.1. The Village will amend or adopt stricter/and better defined local codes, where necessary. 2.3.2. The Village will periodically review and update its penalties for violators of building codes/local laws. 2.3.3. The Village will periodically review its building code fee/permit schedules.		Short-term Short-term Short-term	Page: 29 Page: 29 Page: 29

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS				
<p>3.1: Improve the character of highway commercial corridors to create a sense of place consistent with the historic and aesthetic character of the Village.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #1</p>	<p>3.1.1. Create a Highway Commercial Corridors Overlay zoning district within the Village zoning code, which shall encompass all parcels contiguous to Route 281 between Clinton Street (Route 41) and Cayuga Street intersections and contiguous to Route 11 from Copeland to the Village line.</p> <p>3.1.2. Amend the zoning regulations and zoning map to include the Highway Commercial Corridors Overlay zoning district.</p> <p>3.1.3. For all properties within the overlay, site plan requirements shall be revised to limit the amount of unbroken paved areas, and to require landscaping and greenspace on street frontages and in parking areas.</p> <p>3.1.4. For all projects within the overlay, site plan requirements may include, for example, curbed and landscaped medians along the edge of the roadway that are of consistent design (similar widths, plantings and trees) along the street frontage; protection of mature trees on site; planting of new trees (specifying minimum caliper) at both the roadway edge and within the lot, landscaped planting areas around the edges of buildings, and designated areas for snow removal/storage. Requisite items shall be shown on a site plan before permitting and approval.</p> <p>3.1.5. Minimum design guidelines should be developed that govern new construction, improvements or redevelopment exceeding 50% of assessed value, or upon a transfer of ownership for all properties within the overlay. The guidelines should require pitched roofs; stone, brick, or clapboard siding, and other architectural features consistent with the character and predominant architecture in the Village. The maximum size of buildings should be limited to match the size and scale of predominant architecture in the Village.</p>		<p>Short-term</p> <p>Short-term</p> <p>Short-term</p> <p>Short-term</p> <p>Short-term</p>	<p>Page: 32</p> <p>Page: 32</p> <p>Page: 33</p> <p>Page: 33</p> <p>Page: 33</p>

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
	<p>3.1.6. Within the overlay district, primary site signage (not including directional signs) for commercial and industrial properties should be limited to monument style signs less than eight (8) feet tall. Such signs should be well-designed and constructed and be externally lit. Animated signage should be prohibited. Internally lit building mounted sign should be discouraged. The overall number and size of building and site signs should be limited. Non-conforming signs should be amortized for 10 years.</p>		Short-term	Page: 33
	<p>3.1.7. Within the overlay district, primary site signage for residentially zoned properties should be of a smaller scale than signage in commercial areas. Building mounted signs and internally lit and/or animated should be prohibited. Freestanding signs should be higher than six (6) feet. Non-conforming signs should be amortized for 10 years.</p>		Short-term	Page: 33
	<p>3.1.8. Within the overlay, the standards for home occupations should be relaxed to allow for more variety and larger scale businesses with appropriate signage and parking and also allowing a commercial use and residential use to occupy the same building.</p>		Short-term	Page: 33
	<p>3.1.9. Within the overlay, commercial uses shall be allowed within residential structures in residentially-zoned areas contiguous to the highway. Such commercial uses may occupy the entire building so long as the residential character of the building's exterior is maintained. The type of allowable commercial uses should be limited to those compatible with neighboring residential properties.</p>		Short-term	Page: 33

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
<p>3.2 Enhance the aesthetic character of Route 281 in order to develop a sense of place consistent with the character of the Village and to promote tourism, recreation, and business development within the Village.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #2</p>	<p>3.2.1. The Village will seek funding for a streetscape improvement and beautification effort for the Route 281 Corridor, which shall include, as appropriate, removal of asphalt paving between the sidewalk and street and installation of paving blocks, removable street-scale planters, and appropriate landscaping and other design features such as lighting and sidewalks.</p>		Short-term	Page: 34
<p>3.3 Enhance the aesthetic character of commercially and industrially zoned areas situated along Route 11 in order to eliminate blight, develop a sense of place consistent with the character of the Village, and to promote tourism, recreation, and business development within the Village.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #3</p>	<p>3.3.1. The Village will seek funding for a streetscape improvement and beautification effort for the Route 11 (adjacent to and south of the I-81 interchange), which shall include, as appropriate, removal of asphalt paving between the sidewalk and street and installation of paving blocks, removable street-scale planters, appropriate landscaping and other design features such as lighting and sidewalks. Particular emphasis should be placed on the area directly across from the I-81 off ramp.</p> <p>3.3.2. Support efforts to restore the historic Circus House as an attraction in the community.</p> <p>3.3.3. Encourage relocation of businesses located on the east side of the highway within the floodway and redevelop the area as a waterfront ribbon park</p>		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Page: 34</p> <p>Page: 34</p> <p>Page: 34</p>

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT				
4.1 Preserve, enhance, remove blight and beautify the historic character of the Central Business District (CBD). Priority #2	4.1.1. Seek funding sources and other incentives to assist owners of commercial properties in the CBD to renovate buildings, upgrade facades; install appropriate signage; and redevelop interiors for housing, retail, and commercial office use. Market rate rental housing should be encouraged. 4.1.2. Develop incentives to encourage property owners to utilize “green” building techniques or to seek LEED certification to improve energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the Village’s built environment. 4.1.3. Develop an Historic District Overlay zoning district for the CBD. Within the overlay, new construction should maintain existing architectural styles in scale, proportion, composition, materials, and design. 4.1.4. Establish an architectural review commission to ensure that renovations on existing buildings maintain historic materials, designs, and treatments. 4.1.5. Revise the sign ordinance to ensure that signage in the CBD is consistent with the historic character of the downtown.		Short-term Ongoing Immediate Immediate Immediate	Page: 41 Page: 41 Page: 41 Page: 41 Page: 41

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
<p>4.2 Improve the area of the downtown between Main Street and the Tioughnioga River by minimizing flood hazards and providing public access to the waterfront.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #3</p>	<p>4.2.1. As properties in the floodway are damaged, removed, or otherwise available for redevelopment, property should be acquired (or easements obtained) and redeveloped for a downtown waterfront promenade, trail, or ribbon park. Reconstruction of damaged properties within the floodway should be prohibited.</p>		Ongoing	Page: 42
	<p>4.2.2. In cooperation with property owners who own property facing the Tioughnioga River, seek partnership with conservation organizations that might wish to purchase waterfront properties outright or obtain easements to preserve these lands.</p>		Ongoing	Page: 42
	<p>4.2.3. Revise zoning regulations to allow for development of cluster housing, including townhouses or mixed use buildings on residential lots within the CBD zone. Mixed use buildings may have retail, service, or professional office establishments on the first floor, as appropriate, with housing on upper floors. These dwelling units will provide a local market for downtown businesses and could be attractive to both young professionals and aging residents looking to downsize. Views and access to the River would increase the desirability of these units. Housing choices should include ownership and rental opportunities.</p>		Immediate	Page: 42
	<p>4.2.4. Seek funding to provide financial incentives to renovate historically important properties located outside of the floodway on Water, Wall, and Pine Streets for residential, commercial, and/or mixed use.</p>		Immediate	Page: 42
	<p>4.2.5. Encourage the development of businesses in the CBD that service and support river activities or otherwise capitalize on the riverfront location.</p>		Ongoing	Page: 42
	<p>4.2.6. Seek funding to preserve, renovate, and beautify the historic lenticular truss bridges crossing the River to ensure that the bridges are maintained for pedestrian and perhaps vehicular traffic.</p>		Immediate	Page: 42
	<p>4.2.7. Improve public parking areas with new landscaping in order to increase the amount of greenspace.</p>		Immediate	Page: 42

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
TRANSPORTATION				
5.1 Enhance and encourage pedestrian and bicycle routes that promote connectivity and good health while reducing our reliance on vehicles. Priority #1	5.1.1. Identify gaps within the Village’s existing sidewalk system that could serve as key links to destinations in and around the Village (parks, schools, shopping, jobs, etc.). 5.1.2. Identify gaps within the Village’s existing bikeway system that could serve as key links to destinations in and around the Village (parks, schools, shopping, jobs, etc.). Construct the needed improvements. 5.1.3. Construct needed improvements to the Village sidewalk and bikeway systems. 5.1.4. Promote and support the completion of a river walk that will link the Village of Homer to the City of Cortland. 5.1.5. Promote and support development of a designated trail from the Village to the Lime Hollow Nature Center. 5.1.6. Include requirements, as part of the Site Plan Review, for all new projects to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle routes and facilities as part of the new development, as may be appropriate. 5.1.7. Develop maps for public distribution to Increase public awareness of designated sidewalks, trails, and bicycle routes. 5.1.8. Develop informational brochure for public distribution that details the health and environmental benefits of using non-motorized forms of transportation.		Short-term Short-term Short-term Short-term Short-term Short-term Short-term Short-term	Page: 46 Page: 46 Page: 46 Page: 47 Page: 47 Page: 47 Page: 47 Page: 47

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
<p>5.2 Improve, develop, and promote the use of public transportation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #3</p>	<p>5.2.1. Work with representatives of the City of Cortland, Cortland County, and Cortland Transit to improve service and to provide incentives to increase the use of the system.</p> <p>5.2.2. Support an evaluation of both Cortland and Tompkins County’s public transit systems that will examine the potential benefits and efficiencies that could be realized by coordinating and/or consolidating the systems.</p> <p>5.2.3. Support the continued evaluation, promotion, and development of commuter rail service linking Syracuse, Cortland and Binghamton.</p> <p>5.2.4. Seek grant funding for the installation of bus shelters within the Village.</p> <p>5.2.5. Pursue capital improvements program that increases opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle usage and safety thereof.</p>		<p>Short-term</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Page: 47</p> <p>Page: 47</p> <p>Page: 47</p> <p>Page: 47</p> <p>Page: 47</p>
<p>5.3 Reduce the number of large trucks passing through the Village, which have “out of town” destinations.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #2</p>	<p>5.3.1. Support all NYS DOT efforts to create a workable approach to controlling truck traffic through downtown Homer.</p> <p>5.3.2. Support additional roadway signage that will aid in re-direct truck drivers from using the downtown route.</p>		<p>Short-term</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Page: 47</p> <p>Page: 47</p>
<p>5.4 As part of overall capital improvements program, continue to target existing streets in need of repair.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #1</p>	<p>5.4.1. Pursue capital improvements that remedy storm water flooding; and address infrastructure repair and replacement as part of the project.</p> <p>5.4.2. Identify streets and locations where improvements/maintenance are most needed.</p> <p>5.4.3. Evaluate flooding at streets and railroad crossings.</p> <p>5.4.4. When applicable, coordinate designs with other agencies that are involved (DOT) that meet the needs of the Village.</p> <p>5.4.5. Seek outside financial assistance to funding needed capital improvements.</p>		<p>Immediate</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Page: 48</p> <p>Page: 48</p> <p>Page: 48</p> <p>Page: 48</p> <p>Page: 48</p>

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
5.5 Institute access management planning within the Village. Priority #1	5.5.1. Develop regulation governing and requiring access management plans for multiple-family residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment.		Immediate	Page: 48
	5.5.2. As part of access management plan requirements, reduce the number of curb cuts allowed on Route 281.		Immediate	Page: 48
	5.5.3. As part of access management plan requirements, evaluate allowable widths of curb cuts.		Immediate	Page: 48
PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE				
6.1 Identify underutilized spaces and facilities that have potential to create additional and/or improved recreational opportunities. Priority #2	6.1.1. Update the inventory of all existing recreation facilities and open spaces.		Short-term	Page: 52
	6.1.2. Conduct use survey to ascertain program usage and public use of all existing recreational facilities and open spaces within the community.		Short-term	Page: 52
	6.1.3. Conduct a condition assessment of all existing recreational facilities and open spaces within the community.		Short-term	Page: 52
	6.1.4. Conduct review of the present recreation delivery system, programs, and distribution of facilities to insure coverage for all interests and ages.		Short-term	Page: 53
	6.1.5. Conduct a needs assessment to match identified Recreational needs with available facilities and open space.		Short-term	Page: 53
6.2 Increase recreation and open space and preserve scenic resources within the Village. Priority #3	6.2.1. Improve connectivity between Durkee Park and downtown via the undeveloped Village property between the park and the Water Street pedestrian bridge.		Ongoing	Page: 53
	6.2.2. Develop phased plan to construct a trail between Durkee Park and downtown via the undeveloped Village property between the park and the Water Street pedestrian bridge.		Ongoing	Page: 53
	6.2.3. Oversee and organize local community organization, citizens, schools, and colleges to each participate in implementing the trail plan, with minimal assistance by the Village.		Ongoing	Page: 53
	6.2.4. Develop programming or educational brochure to focus attention on understanding, conservation, and increased usage of the Tioughnioga River.		Ongoing	Page: 53

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
	6.2.5. Seek cooperation from landowners adjacent to the Tioughnioga River to obtain easements for a multi-use riverfront recreation trail. 6.2.6. Create overnight camping opportunities at Durkee Park. 6.2.7. Investigate the possibility of establishing a conservation area/nature preserve in and around the wetlands near the Town garage.		Ongoing Ongoing Short-term	Page: 53 Page: 53 Page: 53
6.3 Minimize the environmental risks of commercial development and improve pedestrian and traffic safety along the Tioughnioga River at the Village “gateway” along Route 11 (south). Create a ribbon park/ green space along the Tioughnioga River in this location. Priority #2	6.3.1. Identify properties to be considered for relocation. 6.3.2. Identify potential alternate sites including for commercial properties including the present I.D. Booth/Verizon parcel. 6.3.3. Seek funding sources or other assistance to relocate existing commercial properties adjacent to the river to more suitable locations. 6.3.4. Allow only commercial uses that enhance the riverfront location and Route 11 (south) Village gateway.		Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Page: 53 Page: 53 Page: 53 Page: 54 Page: 54
6.4 Support and promote the development of school and/or community gardens which will not only educate but also reduce the community’s reliance on imported goods. Priority #2	6.4.1. Investigate all legal and/or Ag & Markets issues related to community gardens to understand the possibilities and limits. 6.4.2. Provide input and assistance for locating sites for community gardens including Village properties that are underutilized. 6.4.3. Coordinate with the schools to insure continuity of community gardens during the summer months when school is out. 6.4.4. Seek grant funding to establish community gardens.		Short-term Short-term Short-term Short-term	Page: 54 Page: 54 Page: 54 Page: 54

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
6.5 Increase and provide accessibility for all population segments to essential services, schools, Village offices, and recreational facilities. Priority #1	6.5.1. Require installation of sidewalks and street connectivity for all new development to enhance the walkability, sustainability, recreational opportunities, and aesthetic appeal of the Village.		Immediate	Page: 54
	6.5.2. Construct sidewalks (at least on one side) on all streets within the Village that currently do not have them.		Immediate	Page: 54
6.6 Coordinate use of sports facilities and events between the Village, Schools, Towns of Homer and Cortlandville, and the McDonald Sports Center and regional community events. Priority #2	6.6.1. Initiate and implement quarterly meetings between agency representatives to coordinate planned events, to avoid scheduling conflicts, and for increased efficiency.		Short-term	Page: 54
	6.6.2. Through the Village Recreation Department, initiate computerized scheduling and post schedule on Village website.		Short-term	Page: 54
MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE				
7.1 Insist that adequate fire protection is available and that additional proactive measures are taken to insure that the downtown area, in particular, will not be subject to a destructive fire. Priority #1	7.1.1. Conduct a comprehensive “worst case scenario” evaluation of the downtown fire protection system (location and number of hydrants, fire flows, pipe sizes, etc.).		Immediate	Page: 58
	7.1.2. Inventory existing buildings to determine which fire safety equipment is presently installed, such as sprinkler systems, alarms, construction materials, and their present uses to determine the fire risk.		Immediate	Page: 58
	7.1.3. Promote and assist in the installation of sprinkler systems, firewalls, and alarms in the buildings where needed.		Immediate	Page: 58

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
7.2 Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing water system. Priority #1	7.2.1. Continue to pursue all measures of identifying leaks so as to reduce the “lost water” volume associated with the present water system.		Immediate	Page: 58
	7.2.2. Pursue available funding to supplement cost of a leak detection system.		Immediate	Page: 58
	7.2.3. Develop a phased capital project improvement plan to identify and replace all undersized water mains.		Ongoing	Page: 58
7.3 Insure the long term safety and reliability of the public water system. Priority #3	7.3.1. Continue to evaluate the “upgradient” risks associated with the present well location and continue to coordinate with the Town of Homer.		Immediate	Page: 59
	7.3.2. Coordinate with the County Health Department in recognizing and adopting the Wellhead Protection Zone in the Village and incorporate required restrictions into the zoning.		Immediate	Page: 59
	7.3.3. Conduct a definitive pump test on the alternate wells along Hooker Avenue to determine suitability for use.		Immediate	Page: 59
	7.3.4. Consider “out-of-district” extensions to serve other nearby properties that have inadequate or marginal sources.		Ongoing	Page: 59
	7.3.5. Adopt aquifer protection overlay zoning district that extends Area 1 Aquifer Protection District as established by the Town of Homer into the Village of Homer. The purpose of the overlay is to protect the aquifer by allowing development that is consistent with protection of the ground water resource.		Immediate	Page: 59
7.4 Continue to repair and replace sewer mains and investigate “unauthorized” discharges so as to reduce inflow and infiltration. Priority #3	7.4.1. Regularly review most recent “inflow and infiltration” data and develop phased approach to reduce.		Short-term	Page: 59
	7.4.2. Continue to TV sewer mains and prepare a phased plan to repair priority locations		Ongoing	Page: 59

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
<p>7.5 Seek creative alternative uses for storm water runoff that can benefit the community.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #2</p>	<p>7.5.1. Investigate and develop information concerning re-use of stormwater collected at residential properties such as rain gardens, re-directed downspout flows, rainwater irrigation system.</p> <p>7.5.2. Allow utilization of green infrastructure such as vegetated swales, porous pavement, and natural stormwater management to reduce flooding risk and improve water quality.</p> <p>7.5.3. Develop educational brochure for public distribution to educate the public and urge the use of green infrastructure.</p>		<p>Short-term</p> <p>Short-term</p> <p>Short-term</p>	<p>Page: 59</p> <p>Page: 59</p> <p>Page: 59</p>
<p>7.6 Seek alternative power power sources to generate electricity and develop a phased program to initially serve small Village facilities (Village Office, downtown lights, etc.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #2</p>	<p>7.6.1. Investigate the upcoming legislation associated with the new law increasing the “Net Metering” for businesses and municipalities who utilize renewable energy sources.</p> <p>7.6.2. Become informed on all forms of renewable energy sources that could benefit and be applicable to the Village.</p>		<p>Short-term</p> <p>Short-term</p>	<p>Page: 60</p> <p>Page: 60</p>
<p>7.7 Relocate overhead power lines to underground locations.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #1</p>	<p>7.7.1. Develop regulations to require or encourage installation of underground power lines for new development and major redevelopment projects.</p> <p>7.7.2. Pursue funding source to bury/relocate overhead power lines within the Village.</p>		<p>Short-term</p>	<p>Page: 60</p> <p>Page: 60</p>

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
7.8 Provide Wi-Fi (wireless internet) on a community wide basis within the Village. Priority #1	7.8.1. Identify a knowledgeable staff member to periodically monitor the latest developments, Statewide and nationally, on the technical and legal/jurisdictional issues concerning provision of Wi-Fi (wireless Internet) on a community wide basis.		Short-term	Page: 60
	7.8.2. Identify a knowledgeable staff member who will attend periodic seminars/workshops which focus on the issue of communitywide wireless internet service.		Immediate	Page: 60
	7.8.3. Investigate the cost of providing communitywide wireless internet service.		Short-term	Page: 60
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES				
8.1 Recognize and promote Village history and the role and value of cultural resources within the Village. Priority #1	8.1.1. Seek funding and support appropriate funding requests to preserve and rehabilitate historic structures within the Village, including housing rehabilitation programs for owner and renter-occupied housing.		Immediate	Page: 64
	8.1.2. Partner with other entities to educate the public on the importance of historic architecture, increase support and appreciation for historic preservation, and celebrate local architecture.		Immediate	Page: 65
	8.1.3. Maintain existing and foster new partnerships with the school district and local preservation organizations to develop elementary, junior high, and high school curriculum programs designed to educate students on the Village's history, historic architecture, and the connections between the built environment and social development of the community.		Ongoing	Page: 65
	8.1.4. Encourage community groups and school officials to provide quality educational and volunteer opportunities aimed at preserving and enhancing Village cultural resources.		Ongoing	Page: 65

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
	8.1.5. Partner with community groups, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, the County Historian, and other interested entities to continue to advance quality cultural events, and educational opportunities which benefit the citizens of the Homer community.		Ongoing	Page: 65
8.2 Recognize the role and value of historic architecture in the Village. Priority #2	8.2.1 Amend the zoning regulations and zoning map to include an Historic District overlay zoning district that, at a minimum, governs new development and redevelopment in the historic corridor along Route 11. 8.2.2. Establish an Architectural Review Board to oversee preservation of local historic structures and ensure that alterations/changes to existing structures are historically appropriate. Historic review should be limited to those areas or issues of concern to the Village. 8.2.3. To ensure fair and objective design review, clear and concise design guidelines should be established as part of the zoning code or as a stand-alone ordinance to guide the Architectural Review Board.		Immediate Immediate Immediate	Page: 65 Page: 65 Page: 65
8.3 Leverage historic, cultural, and waterfront resources within the Village to improve the local economy and quality of life Priority #3	8.3.1 Foster partnerships among local museums and cultural institutions, including the Phillips Free Library, Homer Center for the Arts, Central New York Living History Museum, and others to develop joint marketing campaigns, wayfinding systems, joint events, and other cooperative efforts. 8.3.2 Develop an arts and cultural trail linking local institutions, the waterfront, and the downtown historic district.		Ongoing Ongoing	Page: 65 Page: 65

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
EMERGENCY SERVICE				
<p>9.1 The Village of Homer will provide/contract for emergency services for its citizens so that they can live peaceably, healthfully, and safely in the community.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #3</p>	<p>9.1.1. Continue to assist emergency services entities in searching and applying for grant funds when opportunities become available.</p> <p>9.1.2. The Village Planning and Zoning Boards will consider and determine the impact of any new development on emergency services and the possible need to expand fire and police.</p> <p>9.1.3. Modify procedures for site plan review to require applicants to contribute, including in-kind contributions, to emergency services if it is determined that there will be an impact on emergency services.</p>		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Page: 67</p> <p>Page: 67</p> <p>Page: 67</p>
<p>9.2 The Village of Homer will provide emergency services in a cost effective manner while ensuring adequate and timely coverage.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #3</p>	<p>9.2.1. Continue to fund police and fire services, at the same time incorporating cost savings measures such as sharing services with nearby municipalities.</p> <p>9.2.3. Equip fire and police personnel with the necessary equipment and technology to do their job and to protect paid and volunteer personnel as the need arises and its budget allows.</p> <p>9.2.4. House emergency services in adequate facilities.</p> <p>9.2.5. The Village will continue to investigate the issue of consolidation and/or reorganization of its police and fire departments.</p>		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Page: 67</p> <p>Page: 67</p> <p>Page: 67</p> <p>Page: 67</p>

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
9.3 Provide for safety of Village employees, elected and appointed and officials, and citizens conducting business at municipal buildings. Priority #2	9.3.1. Ensure that all municipal buildings have the proper security equipment and procedures to ensure that employees, and elected and appointed personnel are adequately protected.		Short-term	Page: 68
	9.3.2. Develop security procedures for protection of Village employees, elected and appointed personnel, and citizens who work in or frequent municipal buildings during working hours or for official public purpose.		Short-term	Page: 68
	9.3.3. Install better security equipment in municipal buildings as needed and as affordable including facilities shared with the Town of Homer.		Short-term	Page: 68
EMERGENCY SERVICES: AMBULANCE				
9.4 The Village of Homer will assure adequate emergency services for ambulance coverage. Priority #3	9.4.1. Facilitate public outreach so that the citizens and property owners of the Village are aware of ambulance services.		Immediate	Page: 68

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES – HOMER SCHOOL DISTRICT				
10.1 Encourage persons associated with the school district, including but not limited to faculty, staff, parents, students, visitors, and others to patronize Village businesses. Priority #2	10.1.1. Work with the Homer Business Association and the Homer School District to provide a welcome packet for new district employees. 10.1.2. Work with Village businesses on advertising in media related to school events.		Short-term Short-term	Page: 70 Page: 70
10.2 Provide hands-on work experience for students including internships and community service. Priority #3	10.2.1. Facilitate the development of programs at the school so that students can work for pay or meet community service requirements in Village businesses, government, or not-for-profit organizations. 10.2.2. Continue to work to develop programs so that job training in the schools match the skill sets needed by area businesses.		Ongoing Ongoing	Page: 70 Page: 70
10.3 Work with the school district to identify lands which would allow for growth of the school district within the Village boundaries. Priority #3	10.3.1. Encourage expansion(s) of the school district within the Village boundaries.		Ongoing	Page: 70
10.4 Consolidate Village and school services to the fullest extent possible. Priority #2	10.4.1. Work with the school district on cost sharing on items and services such as fuel for vehicles. 10.4.2. Work with the school on issues such as recycling and energy efficiency.		Short-term Short-term	Page: 70 Page: 70

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Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
<p>10.5 Develop programs that encourage more children to walk safely to school.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #1</p>	<p>10.5.1. The Village will continue to encourage sidewalk and trail infrastructure improvements to make walking to school more feasible.</p>		Immediate	Page: 70
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION				
<p>11.1 The Village will continue to work with surrounding and nearby municipalities, the Homer School District, and Cortland County government to minimize costs and maximize services.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #2</p>	<p>11.1.1. Continue the policy to share equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and services to maximize the benefit to Homer Village taxpayers.</p> <p>11.1.2. Consolidate services/departments, share equipment purchases, and share facilities where it makes sense and saves costs.</p>		Short-term	Page: 72
			Short-term	Page: 72
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT				
<p>12.1 Ensure that future development and redevelopment within the Village will complement the natural environment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #1</p>	<p>12.1.1. Work with surrounding local governments, particularly the Towns of Homer and Cortlandville, to ensure that adequate stormwater runoff/retention ponds are in place for all new development.</p> <p>12.1.2. Enact local law to regulate stormwater runoff and retention.</p> <p>12.1.3. Enact aquifer protection zone consistent with Town of Homer regulations to protect aquifer and recharge areas.</p>		Immediate	Page: 84
			Immediate	Page: 84
			Immediate	Page: 84

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
	<p>12.1.4. Amend zoning to allow alternative parking technologies for redevelopment on existing and development of new sites, allowing the use of paving stones, permeable pavement, or other green technologies that address, minimize, redirect, or treat runoff from parking lots. Include this as an element of site plan review.</p> <p>12.1.5. Limit or prohibit development in designated wetlands. Development proposals adjacent to wetlands should be scrutinized and carefully planned to minimize impacts on wetlands.</p> <p>12.1.6. Limit or prohibit development in areas with slopes greater than 15%.</p> <p>12.1.7. Implement the actions and recommendations contained in the Tioughnioga Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.</p> <p>12.1.8. For all development proposals that exceed 10,000 square feet, require review by the Soil & Water Conservation District.</p> <p>12.1.9. Adopt regulation establishing a wellhead protection zone around the Newton Water Works wells and apply proactive zoning to it, working with Cortland County Planning, Health Department, and Soil and Water Conservation District.</p>		<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Page: 85</p> <p>Page: 85</p> <p>Page: 85</p> <p>Page: 85</p> <p>Page: 85</p> <p>Page: 85</p>
<p>12.2 Enable redevelopment and use of brownfield sites consistent with the Vision of the Village.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #1</p>	<p>12.2.1. Seek designation as a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) for appropriate areas within Village.</p> <p>12.2.1. Prepare and submit a pre-nomination study and an application to the Brownfields Opportunity Areas program.</p> <p>12.2.3. If BOA is not pursued, inventory Brownfield sites within the Village to enable landowners to apply for clean up funding, and to redevelop these sites for various types of infill development.</p>		<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Page: 85</p> <p>Page: 85</p> <p>Page: 85</p>

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
<p>12.3 Be proactive in appropriate redevelopment/reuse of properties affected by a major flood event.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #3</p>	12.3.1. In the event of a major flood affecting properties in the floodway (established by FEMA), assemble parcels to create a park or other open space/recreation areas on parcels that are no longer developable in the downtown along the Tioughnioga River.		Ongoing	Page: 85
	12.3.2. Assemble parcels between Route 11 and the Tioughnioga River, which are situated in the floodway, to create a ribbon park or other open space/recreational areas.		Ongoing	Page: 86
	12.3.3. Consider adopting by ordinance more stringent regulations than FEMA has for development in both flood zones and floodways to eliminate or substantially control development in these sensitive areas.		Ongoing	Page: 86
<p>12.4 Take a leadership role in sustainability initiatives by modeling sustainable construction and business practices.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #3</p>	12.4.1. Add incentives to zoning code to encourage energy conservation and efficiencies and the use of alternative energy sources.		Ongoing	Page: 86
	12.4.2. Promote energy efficiency for new or existing structures such as green build standards, alternative energy sources, and/or new energy saving technologies.		Ongoing	Page: 86
	12.4.3. Promote the development and the use of alternative energy sources such as wind, geothermal, and solar in all Village building projects. Adopt regulations governing the use and siting of such technologies.		Immediate	Page: 86
	12.4.4. Encourage developers to seek LEED certification or use other green building technologies.		Ongoing	Page: 86
	12.4.5. Enact local law governing the installation and use of wood burning boilers.		Short-term	Page: 86

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
12.5 Protect natural resources within the Village. Priority #2	12.5.1. Identify and map habitat of natural resources of interest, such as boar and indigenous wild turkey, deer, coyote, and plant populations.		Short-term	Page: 86
	12.5.2. Establish inventory of natural resources including flora and fauna specimen.		Short-term	Page: 86
LAND USE AND ZONING				
13.1 Enhance and preserve the visual and aesthetic integrity of the major gateways into the Village. Priority #1	13.1.1. Determine the appropriate boundaries and location for gateways to the Village.		Immediate	Page: 99
	13.1.2. Develop and adopt a gateway overlay zoning district with regulatory provisions governing development of all properties situated within the overlay.		Immediate	Page: 99
	13.1.3. Develop and adopt site plan review procedures to encourage aesthetically pleasing visual entrances into the Village for persons who reside in the Village and for persons entering the Village for business, recreation, tourism, or other purposes. Within the Gateway area, emphasis should be paid to landscape requirements, site design, signage, and appropriate site plan review standards which enhance and protect the visual and aesthetic integrity of the gateway, preserve the historic character of the Village, and promote proactive improvement of existing developed properties.		Immediate	Page: 99

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
<p>13.2 Increase opportunities for growth and development of compatible retail and commercial establishments within the Village outside of the historic district.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #2</p>	<p>13.2.1 The Village will consider changes to the zoning code and zoning map that allow mixed density, mixed use, and infill development at appropriate locations throughout the Village that maintain the scale, size, and character of the Village, allowing for increased opportunity for neighborhood retail and commercial establishments through the special permit process.</p>		Immediate	Page: 100
	<p>13.2.2. The Village will amend its land use regulations to expand the opportunity for home businesses that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Items such as dimensional requirements, parking, and signage will be addressed to allow compatible home occupations through the special permit process.</p>		Immediate	Page: 100
<p>13.3 Provide housing options for all income, age, and ability segments of the population with opportunity for mixed-use developments.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Priority #3</p>	<p>13.3.1. Rezone the existing Industrial District south of Route 41 (bordered on the east by the railroad and on the west by Fulton Street) to accommodate a Transit Adjacent or Transit Oriented Development-style development that will take advantage of possible passenger rail service in the future and allow mixed housing densities and mixed residential, retail, and service establishments.</p>		Immediate	Page: 100
	<p>13.3.2. Modify the zoning code to allow for development of medium to high-density cluster-style developments that increase housing opportunities but also preserve green space and scenic resources using the special permit process. Possible locations include land currently zoned PDDR, and parcels zoned R-1 bordering the Village that are currently undeveloped.</p>		Immediate	Page: 100

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
	13.4.4 As part of the zoning code revisions, evaluate the allowable uses in each zoning district and modify as appropriate to the current development and demographic needs of the community.		Immediate	Page: 101
	13.4.5 As part of the zoning code revision, revise existing regulations and/or develop additional zoning districts that accommodate mixed-density and/or mixed-used development, and cluster housing.		Immediate	Page: 101
	13.4.6 As part of the zoning code revisions, develop and adopt an R-3 zoning district intended to preserve single-family residential neighborhoods located in areas currently zoned R-2.		Immediate	Page: 101
	13.4.7. As part of the zoning code revisions, the code will specify a periodic review to take place at a minimum of every five years to assess the code's consistency with the comprehensive plan, compliance with State law, and to ensure that it meets the needs of the community.		Immediate	Page: 101
	13.4.8. As part of the zoning code revision, the Village will review and revise regulations governing signs within the Village.		Immediate	Page: 101
	13.4.9. As part of the zoning code revision, the Village will enact an amortization schedule to bring all existing signs into compliance with new sign regulations if enacted.		Immediate	Page: 101
	13.4.10. As part of the zoning code revision, the Village will develop incentives such as increased FAR, density bonuses, or relaxing certain dimensional requirements to encourage the use of green infrastructure, sustainable planning techniques, or LEED certified construction (e.g., a green roof makes allowance for slightly more lot coverage).		Immediate	Page: 101

VI. Action Plan Matrix

Goal	Implementation Measure	Lead	Urgency	Plan Reference
	13.4.11.As part of the zoning code revision, the Village will enact procedures governing site plan review including authorizing the planning board to require professionally prepared sketch plans under specified circumstances, and creating an opportunity for sketch plan conference.		Immediate	Page: 101

Appendices



Region 2 Water

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<http://www.epa.gov/Region2/water/aquifer/cortland/cortland.htm>
Last updated on Monday, August 24th, 2009

Cortland Homer Preble Aquifer System

Support Document

Cortland and Onondaga Counties New York

June 1988

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I. Introduction

A. Statement of Section 1424 (e)

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), Public Law 93-523, of December 16, 1974 contains a provision in Section 1424(e), which states that:

If the Administrator determines, on his own initiative or upon petition, that an area has an aquifer which is the sole or principal drinking water source for the area and which, if contaminated, would create significant hazard to public health, he shall publish notice of that determination in the Federal Register. After the publication of any such notice, no commitment for Federal financial assistance (through a grant, contract, loan guarantee, or otherwise) may be entered into for any project which the Administrator determines may contaminate such aquifer through a recharge zone so as to create a significant hazard to public health, but a commitment for Federal financial assistance may, if authorized under another provision of law, be entered into to plan or design the project to assure that it will not so contaminate the aquifer.

This section allows for the specific designation of areas which are dependent upon ground water supplies. Following designation, the review process will ensure that federal agencies will not commit funds toward projects which may contaminate these ground water supplies.

B. Receipt of Petition

On September 15, 1987 the Cortland County Legislature petitioned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator to declare the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System, as defined in the petition (Appendix A), a sole source aquifer (SSA) under the provisions of the SDWA.

C. Area of Consideration

The boundary of the area specified in the petition submitted by the Cortland County Legislature was defined as portions of five valleys that meet in the vicinity of the City of Cortland. The entire petitioned area is within Cortland County, New York. However, based on EPA's review of the hydrogeologic information, the final SSA designation area has been extended into Onondaga County. The Agency has amended the area for designation because the aquifer extends into Onondaga County. It has been agency policy to designate sole source aquifers based on hydrogeologic criteria rather than political boundaries whenever possible, because contamination of a portion of the aquifer can affect the down gradient portion of the aquifer.

D. Topography

The Cortland-Homer-Preble area is located within the Allegheny Plateaus Province of central New York State (Miller, 1982). Altitudes range from approximately 1,100 to 2,000 feet above sea level.

The entire area was affected by the Wisconsin Stage glaciation (Buller et.al., 1978), ending approximately ten-thousand years (10,000 yrs.) ago (Muller, 1965). The glaciers altered the existing topography and surface water drainage patterns. The resulting terrain consists of relatively flat, sedimentfilled valleys bounded by tillmantled bedrock hills that rise up to nine-hundred (900) feet above the valley floors (Buller et.al., 1978; Miller, 1982).

E. Climate

Precipitation in the Cortland-Homer-Preble area averages approximately forty inches (40") per year (Buller et.al., 1978), evenly distributed throughout the year (McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1982). Winters are harsh, with an average temperature of approximately twenty-four degrees degrees Fahrenheit (McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1982) and average snowfall of sixty inches (60") (Buller et.al., 1978). Temperatures in summer average approximately sixty-six degrees Fahrenheit (McFarland Johnson Engineers, Inc., 1982).

II. Hydrogeology

A. Geologic Framework

The bedrock of the Cortland-Homer-Preble area is predominantly shale, with minor siltstone and fine grained sandstone (Corner and Harsh, 1978; Miller, 1982). These rocks are part of the Genesee Group (Reynolds, 1985) and are Upper Devonian in age (Buller et.al., 1978). The beds are nearly flatlying, with a less than one degree to the southsouthwest (Bul..al., 1978).

Depth to bedrock ranges from zero to five-hundred feet (0-500') below the land surface (Corner and Harsh, 1978; Miller, 1982). The bedrock is nearest the surface in the hills and deepest in the valleys. When exposed at the surface, the shale is weathered and jointed (Corner and Harsh, 1978). Joints and bedding planes provide the only storage areas for significant amounts of water in the bedrock. Because the size and number of joints decrease with depth (Corner and Harsh, 1978) and are open to depths less than one-hundred feet (100') below land surface (McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1982), wells drilled into the bedrock are lowyielding (generally ten to fifty gallons per minute (Buller, 1978; McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1985)).

B. Geologic Setting

The area was subjected to glaciation to glaciation during the Wisconsin Stage Pleistocene Epoch. Much of the bedrock is concealed under the glacial deposits. These deposits are thickest in the valleys.

Several types of deposits were left by the glaciers. Each is described below (descriptions from McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1982):

- Stratified Drift:** The aquifers that can support public water supply wells are composed of stratified drift and outwash deposits. Stratified drift is the fairly wellsorted sand and gravel found along the valley walls. It was deposited by streams flowing between the glacier and the bedrock hills.
- Outwash Deposits:** Outwash is sand and gravel deposited by streams flowing from the face of the melting glacier. It is extensive in the Cortland-Homer-Preble area, filling the valleys with continuous deposits up to two-hundred feet (240') thick. Outwash deposits comprise the most productive aquifers in the area.
- Till:** The most widespread glacial deposit is till, an unsorted mixture of silt, clay, sand, gravel, and rock fragments. In Cortland County, the till is mainly silt and clay, and has low permeability. The till therefore enhances runoff from the upland areas and limits recharge to the bedrock. Till is exposed in the uplands portion of the area.
- Moraine:** Material pushed in front, or to the side of the advancing glacier forms a moraine. Moraines generally represent the furthest advance of a glacier. In the Cortland-Homer-Preble area, moraines are found at valley heads. They are comprised of the redespited material left by previous glacialactivity, and consist of stratified sand and gravel interbedded with poorly sorted silt and clay. Because of low permeability, the moraines act as ground water divides.
- Glacial Lake:** Glacial lakes were formed in the valleys as the glacier retreated, because the existing drainage outlet had become closed by moraine deposition. Lake sediments, consisting of finegrained sand, silt and clay were deposited. These sediments, which range from ten to three-hundred feet (10-300') thick, have low permeability and act as a confining unit between aquifers.

C. Ground Water Hydrology

Ground water moves through inter-granular openings in the unconsolidated deposits and through cleavage planes, joints and fractures in the consolidated rocks of the area. As stated above, the yield from bedrock wells in the Cortland-HomerPreble area is low. However, the yield is sufficient for domestic supplies and upland wells are completed into bedrock (Buller, 1978).

The most productive aquifers in the area are the outwash sands and gravels found in the major stream valleys. In the Homer-Preble valley, it is the surficial outwash aquifer that provides the majority of drinking water. Its saturated thickness averages fifty-five feet (55') (Buller et.al., 1978) and yields may exceed one-thousand gallons per minute (1,000 gpd) (Miller, 1982). The base of the aquifer is defined by a lacustrine clay layer at a depth of approximately sixty feet (60') below the land surface (Buller, 1978). There is a thin layer of sand between the clay and bedrock; its potential as a source of water is unknown (Miller, 1982).

In the southern portion of the area, there is a confined outwash aquifer as well as a surficial outwash aquifer. Both are present within the City of Cortland and the valleys of the East and Main Branches of the Toughniga River (Reynolds, 1987). Current well yields are as high as four-hundred gallons per minute (400 gpm) (McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1985).

Southwest of the City of Cortland, the sands and gravel of the aquifer have been interpreted to represent kame terraces and icedisintegration deposits (Miller, 1982).

The water table in the Cortland-Homer-Preble area generally occurs at depths less than twenty-five feet (25') below the land surface in the major stream valleys (Buller, 1978; Buller et.al., 1978; Miller, 1982; McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc. 1985). In the upland areas, the water table may be as deep as one-hundred feet (100') below the land surface (McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1985), although this is still well above the valley floors.

Although the relatively impermeable till limits infiltration, recharge to the upland ground water system is derived from precipitation (McFarland-Johnson Engineers, Inc, 1985). In the valleys, the surficial aquifer is recharged by infiltration of precipitation, infiltration from losing streams, and upland sources (Buller et.al., 1978), such as runoff and streams from the hills (McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1985; Reynolds, 1987) and very minor recharge from the bedrock (Buller et.al., 1978; Miller 1982. According to Reynolds (1987), the confined aquifer (where present) is recharged by the surficial aquifer wherever they are in hydraulic contact. This occurs through the stratified drift deposits along the valley walls, which connect the two aquifers, and wherever the confining lacustrine unit is absent.

In the upland areas, the ground water flow is toward and into the streams (Buller et.al., 1978; McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1985). Upland streams are gaining (i.e., they act as ground water sinks) (McFarland-Johnson Engineers, Inc., 1985). Once they reach the valley floors, however, some of the water recharges the aquifer (Buller et.al., 1978).

In the major valleys, ground water flows toward the center from the valley walls (Buller et.al., 1978). There is also flow in the river's downstream direction (Buller et.al., 1978; 1978; Corner and Harsh Inc., 1985; Reynolds, 1987). After the valleys meet near the City of Cortland, flow is southeast, following the Toughniga River valley out of the area (Buller et.al., 1978).

1. Recharge

The recharge area is delineated by the designated valleys and the upland area which drain into them. All precipitation within these boundaries has the possibility of recharging the aquifer system.

2. Discharge

Discharge from the aquifer system is by seepage into gaining reaches of streams, evapotranspiration, flow to pumping the area wells and flow out of the area (Buller et.al., 1978; McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc., 1985; Reynolds, 1987).

3. Streamflow Source Zone

The streamflow source zone is the upstream area of losing streams which flow into the recharge area. For the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System, this area is defined as the portion of the Toughniga River basin upstream of the southeastern end of the designated area (near Blodgett Mills), as shown on Figure 1. The project review area is coincident with the designated aquifer area, its recharge area, and streamflow source zone.

D. Ground Water Quality

Data provided by the Cortland County Health Department (CCDH) in the petition indicate that all of the ground water in the area contains less than three-hundred milligrams per liter (300 mg/l) total dissolved solids and ranges in temperature from three to nine degrees Centigrade. The pH ranges from slightly acidic to slightly alkaline water varies from moderately to very hard (6.5 to 8.0). The water varies from moderately to very hard (85 to 250 mg/l).

The overall quality of the ground water is good, although there has been contamination of several private wells in the southwestern portion of the area by organic solvents (up to (200 parts per billion)). All public water supply wells meet or exceed the appropriate State and Federal drinking water standards.

E. Designated Areas

The area that has been designated as the Sole Source Aquifer is defined as the stratified drift and glacial outwash within the valleys. This area is coincident with that identified as a Primary Water Supply Aquifer by New York State Department of Health (1981) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (1987). The aquifer service area is the same as the aquifer area. Figure 1 shows the location and boundaries of the designated area.

F. Ground Water Use

Table 1 shows the population served and the amount of water withdrawn by public water suppliers within the Aquifer Service Area (ASA). Table 2 shows the estimated population within the ASA relying on private wells. Water use for the population using private wells is estimated based on one hundred gallons per day per person. All information was provided by the Cortland County Health Department.

Table 3 highlights the dependence of the SSA on the petitioned aquifer system. As shown, the area obtains 100% of its drinking water (5,599,813 gallons per day) from the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System.

III. Susceptibility to Contamination

The Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System is highly vulnerable to contamination, due to highly soil permeability and shallow depth to ground water. The following is a discussion of potential sources of contamination, many of which may receive Federal financial assistance through agencies such as the Federal Highway Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Transportation Routes and Facilities

A major interstate highway runs through the proposed designation area. The potential exists for accidental spills on the land overlying the aquifer which could result in serious contamination of the water supply.

On-site Septic Disposal

There are many areas that depend upon on-site septic-systems for waste disposal. These systems, depending on design and soil conditions, may lead to the contamination of the ground water.

Storm Water Runoff

Rain and snowmelt runoff can carry potential contaminants as it enters the aquifer. These include deicing salts, animal excrement, pesticides, fertilizers, petroleum products, bacteria and particulates from air pollutants.

Commercial and Industrial Facilities

There are various commercial and industrial facilities located within the aquifer system borders. Several of these facilities make, use or store chemicals and substances that could be hazardous if allowed to enter the ground water system. A common example is the storage of heating oil and gasoline, often in underground tanks. Leakage and/or accidental spills from tanks is not uncommon. Dense commercial, industrial, or residential development may also present a potential source of contamination to the aquifer.

Agricultural Practices

Much of the land in the designated area is used for agricultural purposes. Agricultural practices, such as chemical fertilizer application, pesticide and herbicide use, and disposal of animal wastes, can contribute to ground water contamination. This can occur through direct recharge or surface runoff.

Future Development

Future commercial, industrial, and residential development is also a potential source of contamination to the aquifer. The Cortland-Homer-Preble area is under intensive development pressure. It is unlikely to ease in the future. Therefore, projects should be designed to avoid significant increases in contaminant loading to the aquifer system.

IV. Alternative Sources of Drinking Water

There are no alternate sources that can provide the same quantity of drinking water as the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System at a reasonable cost. Nearby surface water sources are the Toughnioga River System (including several lakes north of the Town of Preble) and Skaneateles Lake. The Toughnioga River System is hydraulically connected to Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System, and therefore is not a potential alternate source.

According to a letter received from the City Engineer of Syracuse, the City of Syracuse has the legal authority to use Skaneateles Lake as a water supply. During critical dry periods the lake is not able to meet the needs of Syracuse. Due to these institutional and capacity restrictions, Skaneateles Lake cannot be considered an alternate source of drinking water to the petitioned aquifer system.

There are four community water supply systems within Cortland County that are outside the petitioned area. Each uses ground water potentially available from each. This is shown in Table 4. As seen, the total excess capacity of these systems (622,700 gpd) is inadequate to replace the water supplied by the petitioned aquifer (approximately 5.6 Mggpd).

In addition, there are two public water suppliers west of the petitioned area in Tompkins County that can be considered potential alternate sources. The Village of Dryden obtains drinking water from ground water and the Village of Groton utilizes both ground water and surface water. Data supplied by John Anderson of the Tompkins County Department of Health (shown in Table 5) indicate that the excess capacity of these systems (330,000 gpd) is also inadequate to replace the water from the petitioned aquifer system.

To summarize, the total excess capacity of nearby public water supply systems is approximately 950,000 gpd. This volume is

Insufficient to supply drinking water for the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System become contaminated.

V. Summary

Based upon the information presented, the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System meets the technical requirements for SSA designation. More than fifty percent (50%) of the drinking water for the aquifer service area is supplied by the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System. In addition, there are no economically feasible alternative drinking water sources which could replace the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System. It is therefore recommended that the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System be designated a SSA. Designation will provide an additional review of those projects for which Federal financial assistance is requested, and will ensure ground water protection measures, incorporating state and local measures whenever possible, are built into the projects.

VI. Selected References

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3. Corner, Oliver J. and J.F. Harsh (1978). Digital-model Simulation of the Glacial Outwash Basin, Cortland County, New York. U.S. Geological Survey Water Resource Investigation Open-File Report 78-71. 34 pp.
4. McFarlandJohnson Engineers, Inc. (1982). Central New York Ground Water Management Program for Cortland County - Task I Report on Ground Water Resources. 99 pp.
5. Miller, Todd S. (1982). CortlandHomerPreble Area, in Atlas of Eleven Selected Aquifers in New York State (R. Waller and A. Finch, compilers). U.S. Geological Survey Water Resource Investigation Openfile Report 82553. pp. 1491.72.
6. Miller, Ernest (1965). Quaternary Geology of New York, in Quaternary Geology of the United States (H.F. Wright and E.G. Frey, eds.). Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey: 922 pp.
7. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (1987). Upstate Ground Water Management Program. 232 pp.
8. New York State Department of Health (1981). Report of Ground Water Dependence in New York State. 49 pp.
9. Reynolds, Richard J. (1987). Hydrogeology of the Surficial Outwash Aquifer at Cortland, Cortland County, New York. U.S. Geological Survey Water Resource Investigation Report 85-4090. 43 pp.

VII. Tables

Table 1. Community Water Suppliers Within Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System

Supply	Population Served	Water Usage (gallons per day)
City of Cortland	20,100	3,792,000
Cortandville	2,700	413,600
Homer	4,250	717,800
McGraw	1,300	87,900
Scott	154	9,341
Preble	51	3,200
Green Acres MHP	32	2,000
McBride MHP	54	3,400
Mountainview MHP	86	5,400
Parker Manor MHP	64	4,000
Pine Hill MHP	253	16,000
Ripley Hill MHP	64	4,000
Tully MHP	333	13,672
TOTAL	29,441	5,072,313

MHP = Mobil Home Park
Source: Cortland County Health Department.

Table 2. Private Well Information within Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System

Town	Estimated Population	Estimated Water Usage (gal/day)
Cortandville	2,700	270,000

Homer	1,575	157,500
Preble	860	86,000
Scott	140	14,000
TOTAL	5,275	527,500

Estimate of water usage based on 100 gallons per day per person.
Source: Cortland County Health Department.

Table 3. Current Drinking Water Sources for the Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System Service Area and Percentage of Water Obtained from Each Source

Source \ Use	Public Water Supply	Private and Other	Total
petitioned Aquifer System	90.4	9.6	100%
Other Aquifers	---	---	---
Surface Water	---	---	---
Transported from the Outside	---	---	---
Total	90.4	9.6	100%

Table 4. Alternate Water Sources within Cortland County
(All volumes are gallons per day)

Supplier	Capacity *	Current Usage #	Excess Capacity
Cincinnati	270,000	189,500	80,500
Harford	100,000	4,000	96,000
Marathon	490,000	203,800	286,200
Greek Peak	170,000	10,000	160,000
TOTAL	1,030,000	407,300	622,700

* McFarland-Johnson Engineers, Inc., 1982, Table 6-6.
Source: Cortland County Health Department.

Table 5. Alternate Water Sources within Tompkins County
(All volumes are gallons per day)

Supplier	Capacity	Current Usage	Excess Capacity
Dryden	300,000	200,000	100,000
Groton	610,000	380,000	230,000
TOTAL	910,000	580,000	330,000

Source: John Andersson, Tompkins County Department of Health.

VIII. Figure

Figure 1. Cortland-Homer-Preble Aquifer System Designated Area
(Displayed USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Sheets)

Cortland - Homer - Preble Sole Source Aquifer

