

# TOWN OF CORTLANDT MASTER PLAN

## Section B: PURPOSE & NEED

### Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Purpose & Need**

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

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

**Basis for Implementing Changes**

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