



TOWN OF CORTLAND, ILLINOIS

# 2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

September 2023





# Acknowledgments

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## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

The Town of Cortland began the process of preparing a new comprehensive plan in 2021. Recognizing that much has changed since the existing plan was last updated in 2007, the Town felt that a new plan based on current conditions and an anticipated future would better serve the community. The 2023 Cortland Comprehensive Plan charts that future path for the next 10+ years.

A comprehensive plan is a process as much as a document. Creating a comprehensive plan is an opportunity for Town officials, residents, businesses, and other organizations to think about what they would like the future of the community to be and share those ideas with each other. The community did this by participating in resident and business surveys, sharing comments on a dedicated project website, and providing comments on the plan during a public hearing conducted by the Planning Commission and discussion at

a Town Board meeting. In addition, an appointed group of Cortland residents representing a variety of community interests served on a Comprehensive Plan Task Force that participated in four work sessions where they developed the vision, goals, and strategies included in the plan.

The plan focuses on physical attributes such as land use, access and mobility, and natural resources, but affects all aspects of the community. While this plan is presented as a final document, it should not be viewed as permanent. The plan should be reviewed regularly, typically every five years, to ensure that it still reflects the interests and features of the community and surrounding area. Additionally, the plan can be modified at any time through the amendment process. This process requires Plan Commission review at a public hearing and final approval from the Town Board.

The 2023 Cortland Comprehensive Plan presents a vision for the community, which is what the community will work towards in the coming years. The plan will guide Town officials in decision making as they review proposed developments and allocate resources for municipal projects. The plan also shows prospective developers, entrepreneurs, and investors what Cortland finds desirable and how to shape their proposals to best fit the Town's vision.

The plan includes suggestions for implementation, including strategies, suggested projects, and potential resources that will help guide the Town as it works towards achieving its vision and goals.

Taken altogether, the 2023 Comprehensive Plan promotes a positive image of Cortland as a progressive, forward-looking community ready to shape its future.

The plan is organized into the following chapters:

- Community Profile
- Community Framework
- Town Plan
- Implementation

Numerous maps, including the Future Land Use Plan, can be found in the document. Additional information is available in the Appendix.



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CHAPTER 2

# Community Profile

Located in eastern DeKalb County, Cortland is one of the first towns beyond Kane County and the main Chicago metropolitan area. Cortland is situated east of the City of DeKalb, which is home to Northern Illinois University, as well as southeast of the City of Sycamore. Cortland has superior regional access via I-88 and IL Route 38.

The general planning area for Cortland runs north to Barber Greene Road, east to Airport Road, south to I-88, and west to Webster Road. The northern and western edges of the Town's planning area are influenced by boundary agreements with Sycamore and DeKalb, respectively.

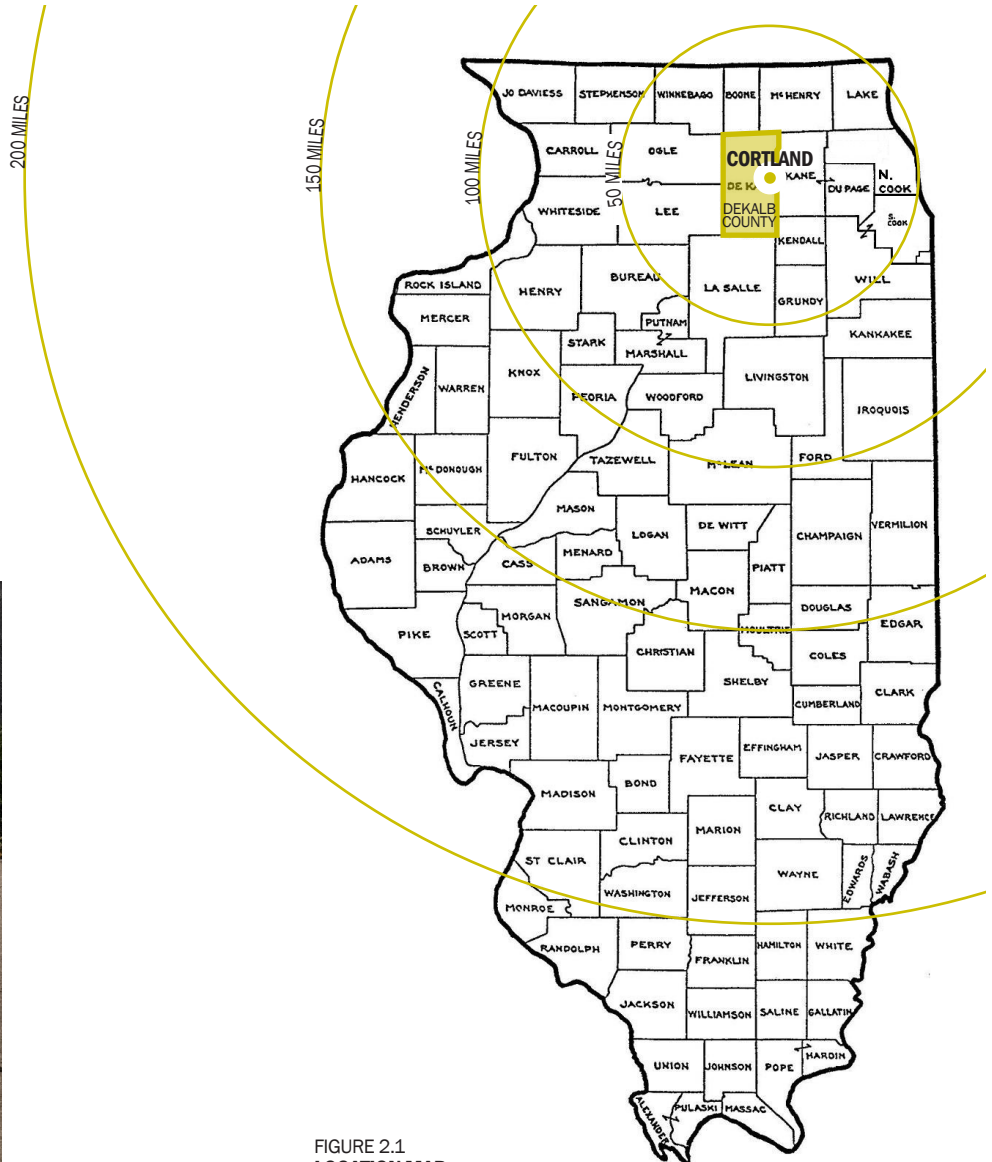
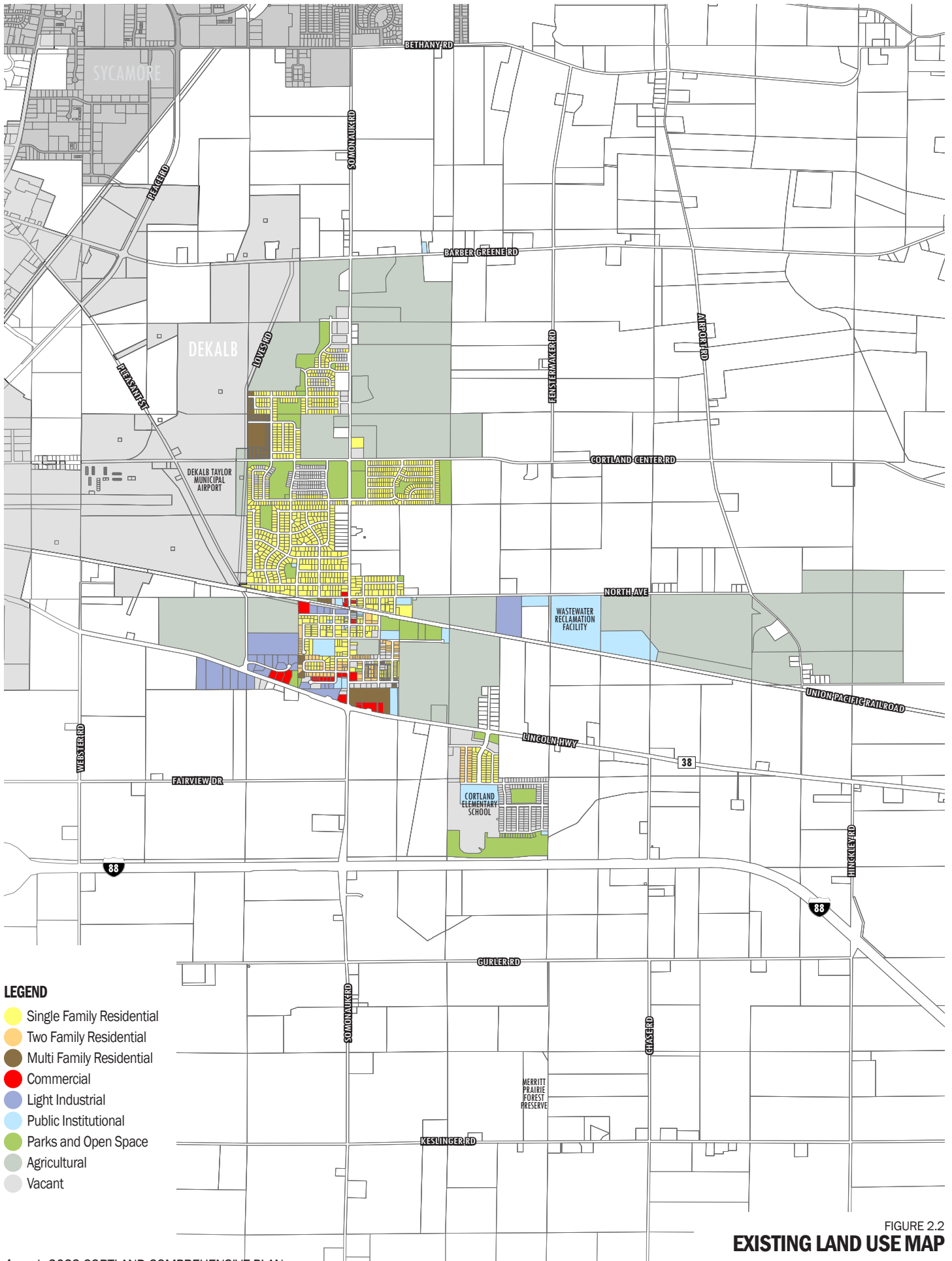


FIGURE 2.1  
LOCATION MAP





**LEGEND**

- Single Family Residential
- Two Family Residential
- Multi Family Residential
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Public Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Agricultural
- Vacant

FIGURE 2.2  
**EXISTING LAND USE MAP**



## EXISTING LAND USE

The present state of land use in Cortland forms a solid foundation to plan for future growth and development. Cortland's existing land use composition is summarized in the Existing Land Use Map and land use pie chart provided in Figures 2.2 and 2.3, respectively.

Agricultural land comprises about 58.8% of total existing land use within Cortland's current municipal limits, which highlights its longstanding character as a rural community. Much of this agricultural land is located on Cortland's east and north sides, of which the latter is viewed as one of the Town's primary growth areas due to recent development trends and access to Somonauk Road.

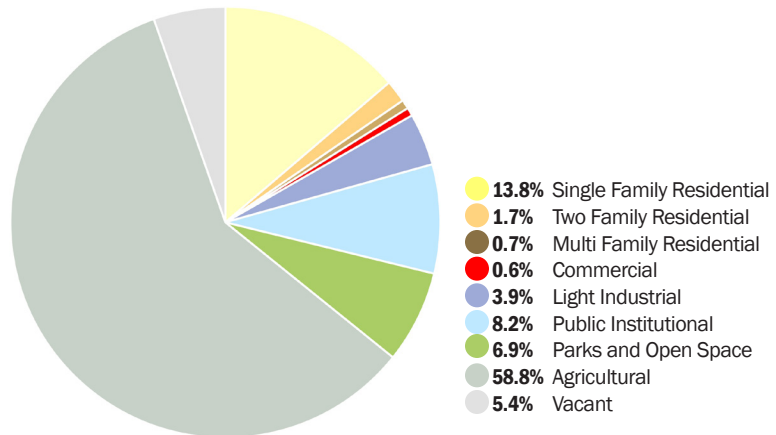
About 16.2% of land use is devoted to residential land use types, including a majority (13.8%) for single family residential. Approximately 2.4% of land use is allocated to other residential use types like two family (1.7%) and multi family (0.7%) options, which accentuates the limited diversity in Cortland's housing stock.

Less than 5% of Cortland's present land use is allocated to commercial and industrial uses, which is significantly impacted by the extensive growth of such development in neighboring DeKalb and Sycamore. A majority of Cortland's current commercial development (0.6%) is concentrated along Somonauk Road between the railroad and IL Route 38. Current industrial uses (3.9%) are generally located in the same area, with most industrial situated on Cortland's far southern end along IL Route 38.

Public institutional uses, including civic uses and schools, make up 8.2% of land use. Parks and open space comprise an additional 6.9%.

While about 5.4% of land is considered vacant, a significant portion of vacant land includes parcels that have been platted for residential use but remain undeveloped. Platted but undeveloped parcels provide an integral opportunity to efficiently manage growth in Cortland, as summarized in the Town Plan in Chapter 4.

FIGURE 2.3  
EXISTING LAND USE COMPOSITION



Cortland Community Library and Town Hall in town core (top); Barb City Roasters (middle left); Sam's Family Restaurant (middle right); single family home (bottom)



**KEY COMMUNITY TRENDS**

- After doubling in the 1990s and then doubling again between 2000 and 2010, population growth in Cortland moderated in the 2010s. Between 2010 and 2020, the total population in Cortland grew 3.0%.
- Population growth in Cortland generally outpaced the county. In 1960, Cortland represented 0.9% of the population. By 2020, Cortland represented 4.4% of the county population.
- The population in Cortland is somewhat more diverse than DeKalb County. Hispanic residents represented 13.5% of the population in Cortland and 11.4% in the county, and African Americans represented 11.4% compared to 7.2% countywide.
- Cortland residents are typically younger than in the county overall, with less than 10% of residents of retirement age. The median age is 30.2, compared to 31.3 in DeKalb County.
- Over the past decade, the number of households in Cortland grew 22.5%. The number of family households decreased 0.5% while the number of non-family households more than doubled.
- The average family in Cortland has 3.48 people compared to 3.24 countywide. Cortland also has a larger share of households with children- 36.1% compared to 27.4% in the county.
- In 2019, there were 370 jobs in Cortland and 1,890 residents with jobs. There are substantial commuter flows in Cortland, with nearly all jobs held by nonresidents, and nearly all residents commuting out.
- There were 304 Cortland residents who work in DeKalb and 164 who work in Sycamore. Other significant places of work included St. Charles with 95 outbound commuters, and Chicago with 75 commuters.
- There were 54 workers who commuted to Cortland from DeKalb and 32 workers who commuted in from Sycamore. The remaining inbound commuters were divided across many places, each sending 10 workers or fewer.
- The top three industries by employment for Cortland residents were manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and retail trade.
- The COVID 19 pandemic did not appear to have a lasting effect on retail sales in Cortland. Total retail sales tax collections were higher in 2021 than they were in 2019.
- Between 2015 and 2020, the total property tax base in Cortland grew by 34.0%, which is consistent with the countywide increase of 30.0%.
- Between August 1st 2019 and August 1st 2022, there were 212 homes sold in Cortland. Homes sold in 2022 were typically worth about \$30,000 more than homes sold in the same quarter for 2021.

**COMMUNITY CONDITIONS**

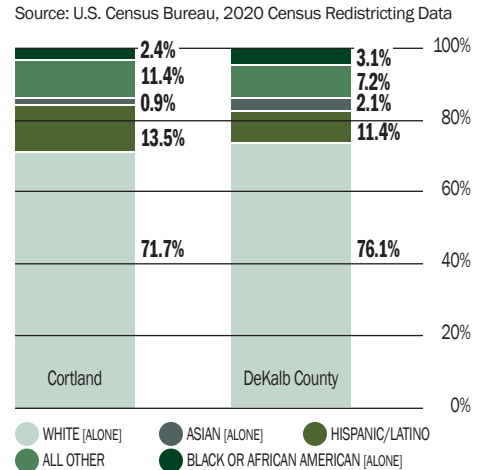
The total population in Cortland has generally increased since 1960. The population decreased 5.5% in the 1980s, but has increased in each decade since. The population doubled in the 1990s and then doubled again in the 2000s with growth stabilizing in the 2010s. Between 2010 and 2020, the total population in Cortland grew 3.0%.

Population growth in Cortland generally outpaced DeKalb County. In 1960, Cortland represented 0.9% of the population. By 2020, Cortland represented 4.4% of the county population.

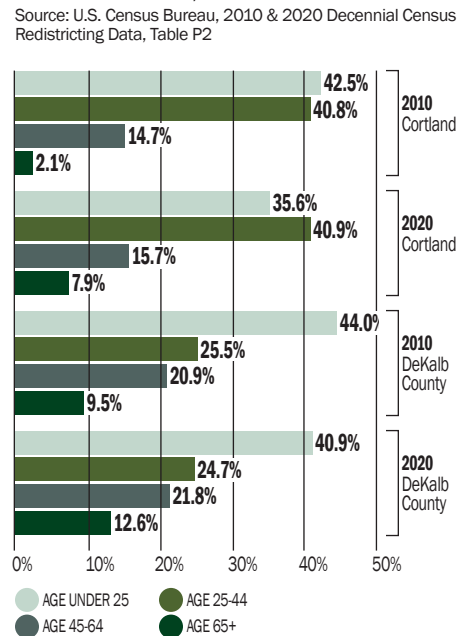
The population in Cortland is somewhat more diverse than DeKalb County, as illustrated in Figure 2.4. About 71.7% of Cortland residents identify as white compared to 76.1% in the county. Hispanic residents represented 13.5% of the population in Cortland and 11.4% in the county, and African Americans represented 11.4% compared to 7.2% countywide.

As shown in Figure 2.5, the largest share of the population in Cortland is in the 25-44 age group, which represents mid-career young adults. Cortland residents are typically younger than in the county overall, with less than 10% of residents of retirement age. Regardless, the share of residents in Cortland of age 65 or older more than tripled between 2010 and 2020. For reference, the median age in Cortland is 30.2, compared to 31.3 in DeKalb County overall.

**FIGURE 2.4**  
**POPULATION BY RACE & ETHNICITY, 2020**



**FIGURE 2.5**  
**POPULATION BY AGE, 2010 AND 2020**



Educational attainment for Cortland residents aged 25 or higher is consistent with education in the county as a whole. About 43.2% of Cortland residents had an Associate's Degree or higher, compared to 42.8% in DeKalb County. About 5.5% of Cortland residents did not complete high school, compared to 7.9% in the county.

According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey, there are currently 1,419 households in Cortland, an increase of 22.5% since 2006-2010. The number of family households decreased 0.5% while the number of non-family households (e.g., people living alone, unmarried couples without children) more than doubled from 214 to 480. Consistent with the increase in non-family households, the average household size in Cortland decreased from 3.28 to 3.00 over the past decade. For reference, the total number of households countywide increased 2.1%, and the countywide average household size increased from 2.52 to 2.59.

About 66.2% of households in Cortland are family households compared to 59.5% of households in DeKalb County. The average family in Cortland has 3.48 people compared to 3.24 countywide. Cortland also has a larger share of households with children with 36.1% compared to 27.4% in the county. Non-family households represented 33.8% of total households in Cortland, compared to 40.4% in DeKalb County.

Cortland residents typically have higher incomes than DeKalb County residents as a whole. The median household in Cortland has \$74,821 in income compared to \$62,533 in DeKalb County. About 5.1% of Cortland households had incomes less than \$15,000, compared to 11.5% of households countywide.

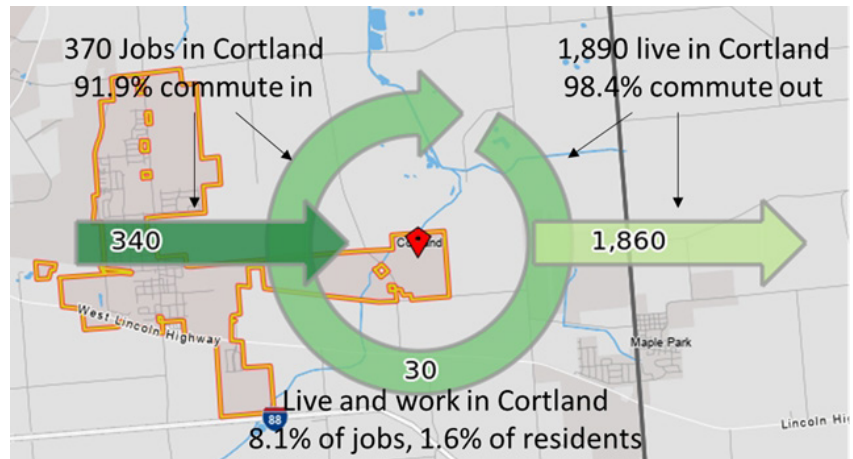


## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

In 2019, there were 370 jobs in Cortland and 1,890 residents with jobs. The graphic in Figure 2.6 highlights the substantial commuter flows in Cortland, with nearly all jobs held by nonresidents, and nearly all residents employed outside of Cortland. About 30 jobs located in Cortland were held by residents, representing 8.1% of jobs and 1.6% of the residents.

FIGURE 2.6  
**CORTLAND COMMUTER FLOWS, 2019**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2013-2019



About 45.4% of the workers in Cortland live in DeKalb County, and 32.5% of Cortland residents work within DeKalb County. There were 304 residents who work in the City of DeKalb and 164 who work in Sycamore. Other significant places of work for Cortland residents included St. Charles with 95 outbound commuters, and Chicago with 75 commuters.

There were 54 workers who commuted to Cortland from DeKalb and 32 workers who commuted in from Sycamore. The remaining inbound commuters were divided across many places, each sending 10 workers or fewer. Aurora, Chicago, and Elgin each had 10 workers in Cortland. About 10.8% of Cortland workers commute in from Kane County and 5.1% commute in from Cook County.

Care must be taken when interpreting these commuter patterns, as 2019 is the latest data available and does not

FIGURE 2.7  
**JOBS LOCATED IN CORTLAND, 2013-2019**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2013-2019

Industry	Jobs in 2013	Jobs in 2019	Share in 2019	Jobs Change
Retail Trade	54	78	21.1%	24
Manufacturing	94	70	18.9%	-24
Construction	14	66	17.8%	52
Wholesale Trade	38	47	12.7%	9
Admin & Support, Waste Mgmt and Remediation	19	25	6.8%	6
Public Administration	3	18	4.9%	15
Health Care and Social Assistance	4	15	4.1%	11
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	11	14	3.8%	3
Accommodations and Food Services	4	9	2.4%	5
Information	0	7	1.9%	7
Finance and Insurance	4	7	1.9%	3
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3	7	1.9%	4
Transportation and Warehousing	3	3	0.8%	0
Other Services, excluding Public Administration	0	3	0.8%	3
Educational Services	0	1	0.3%	1
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>370</b>		<b>119</b>



include the effects of remote work and business closures beginning in 2020.

Of the 370 jobs located in Cortland, the largest share was in retail trade with 78 jobs (21.1%), as summarized in the table in Figure 2.7. The second largest industry was manufacturing with 70 jobs (18.9%). About 66 jobs were in construction (17.8%). Manufacturing employment fell since 2013, while all other sectors had increased employment.

As summarized in the table in Figure 2.8, the top three industries by employment for Cortland residents were manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and retail trade. The number of residents employed in manufacturing increased 25.7% between 2013 and 2019, compared to a 13.6% increase in the total number of employed residents. The number of residents with jobs in health care and

social assistance increased 8.5% and the number of residents with jobs in retail trade increased 8.7%.

The COVID 19 pandemic did not appear to have a lasting effect on retail sales in Cortland. The table in Figure 2.9 indicates that total retail sales tax collections in Cortland were higher in 2021 than they were in 2019. The largest share of sales tax comes from gas stations, which declined 6.3% between 2019 and 2020, but then returned to 2019 levels in 2021. The second largest source of sales tax revenue is lumber, building, and hardware stores. Sales in this category increased 38.4% between 2019 and 2021. The third largest category was sales from drug stores and miscellaneous retailers, which had limited sales in 2019, but increased to more than \$55,000 in 2021. There were substantial increases in sales from miscellaneous retail and the

“Agriculture & All Others” categories, which suggests that additional retailers opened in 2021.

Between 2015 and 2020, the chart in Figure 2.10 indicates that total property tax base in Cortland grew by 34.0%, which is consistent with the countywide increase of 30.0%. Nearly 90% of the total property tax base in Cortland is residential, compared to 60.0% of DeKalb County. Commercial and industrial properties represent considerably lower shares of the property tax base compared to the county as a whole.

FIGURE 2.8  
**EMPLOYMENT FOR CORTLAND RESIDENTS, 2013-19**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2013-2019

Industry	Jobs in 2013	Jobs in 2019	Share in 2019	% Change
Manufacturing	222	279	14.8%	25.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	212	230	12.2%	8.5%
Retail Trade	196	213	11.3%	8.7%
Educational Services	257	203	10.7%	-21.0%
Accommodations and Food Services	101	139	7.4%	37.6%
Construction	82	128	6.8%	56.1%
Wholesale Trade	108	113	6.0%	4.6%
Admin & Support, Waste Mgmt and Remediation	75	107	5.7%	42.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	60	84	4.4%	40.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	64	80	4.2%	25.0%
Other Services, excluding Public Administration	43	66	3.5%	53.5%
Finance and Insurance	44	58	3.1%	31.8%
Public Administration	73	57	3.0%	-21.9%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	17	30	1.6%	76.5%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	24	30	1.6%	25.0%
Information	30	27	1.4%	-10.0%
Mgmt of Companies and Enterprises	22	22	1.2%	0.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	15	11	0.6%	-26.7%
Utilities	19	10	0.5%	-47.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	3	0.2%	-
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>1,664</b>	<b>1,890</b>		<b>13.6%</b>

FIGURE 2.9  
**SALES TAX RECEIPTS IN CORTLAND, 2019-21**

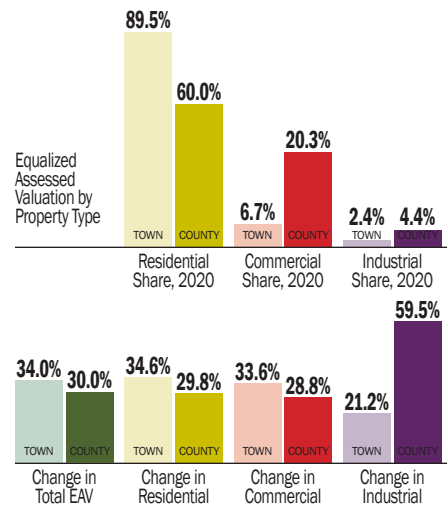
Source: Illinois Department of Revenue, Sales Tax Statistics, 2019-2021

Retailer Type	2019	2021	% Change
Automotive, Filling Stations	\$172,219	\$173,716	0.9%
Lumber, Building, Hardware	\$116,824	\$161,647	38.4%
Drugs, Misc. Retail	\$3,180	\$55,717	1652.7%
Agriculture, All Others	\$1,847	\$37,595	1935.7%
Manufacturers	\$22,347	\$19,771	-11.5%
Food	\$12,626	\$12,712	0.7%
All Others*	\$7,946	\$11,838	49.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$336,988</b>	<b>\$472,997</b>	<b>40.4%</b>

\* Calculated as the total minus components. This represents the sum of sales tax from retailers in categories with insufficient data due to publication standards for sectors with fewer retailers. This category includes general merchandise drinking and eating places, apparel, and furniture.

FIGURE 2.10  
**EAV BY PROPERTY TYPE, 2015-2020**

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue, Sales Tax Statistics, Tables 15 and 28, 2015 and 2020



\* Shares do not total 100% because not all categories are shown



Between August 1, 2019, and August 1, 2022 (latest available at time of writing), there were 212 homes sold in Cortland, with average home sale prices sold in Cortland summarized in Figure 2.11. The average home sold for \$202,467, had 3.4 bedrooms and 1,856 square feet. Over this time, the average sale price increased 25.4%. The average sale price was its lowest in the 4th quarter of 2019, when the homes sold were considerably smaller than average for the area, which was 1,504 square feet compared to the average of 1,856 over the three-year period. Homes sold in 2022 were typically worth about \$30,000 more than homes sold in the same quarter for 2021.

Counts of home sales in Cortland are difficult to compare over time, due to seasonal fluctuations and limited numbers of sales. Regardless, home sales appear to be stable when comparing year-over-year, as illustrated on the chart in Figure 2.12. There were 77 home sales in 2020 and 75 sales in 2021. There were 23 home sales in the first six months of 2022, compared to 29 home sales in the first six months of 2021.

FIGURE 2.11  
**AVERAGE HOME SALE PRICE BY QUARTER** | CORTLAND TOWN LIMITS, AUGUST 2019 – JULY 2022  
 Source: Zillow.com sales listed as of August 1, 2022

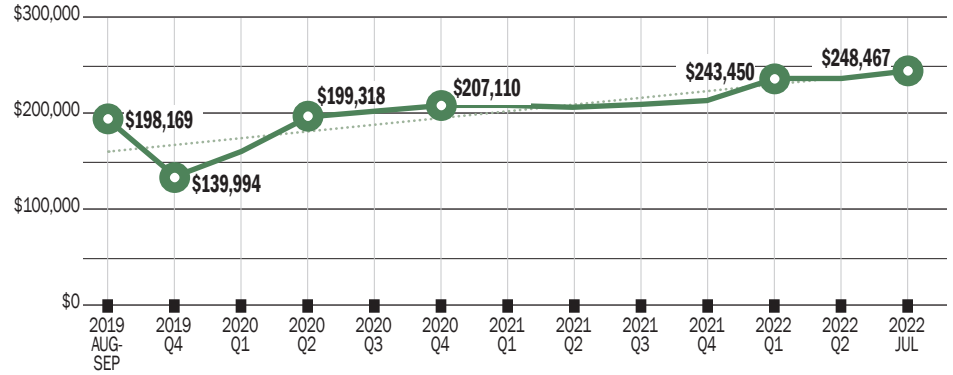
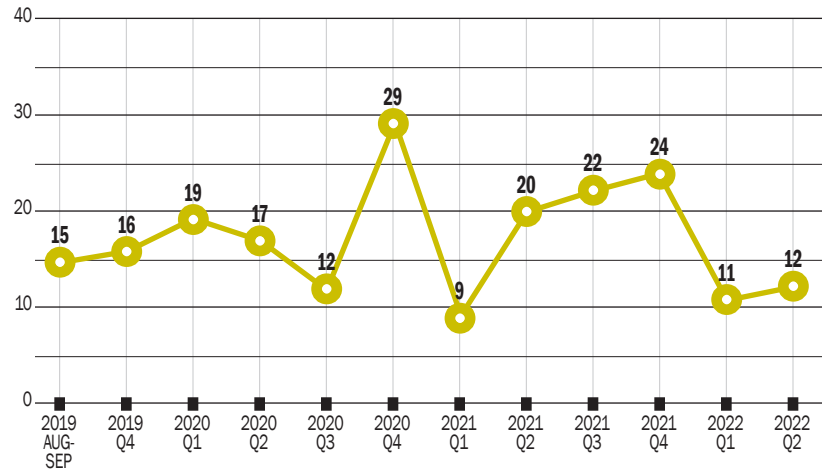


FIGURE 2.12  
**COUNTS OF HOME SALES BY QUARTER** | CORTLAND TOWN LIMITS, AUGUST 2019 – JULY 2022  
 Source: Zillow.com sales listed as of August 1, 2022



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# CHAPTER 3 Community Framework

A comprehensive plan is typically supported by a community framework – including a vision, goals, and objectives – to guide the Town’s approach to future growth and development. The Comprehensive Plan Task Force helped shape the Town of Cortland’s vision, goals, and objectives. The vision developed by the Task Force describes what the Town aspires to be. It is a snapshot of what one would find in Cortland in an ideal future. The objectives lay the foundation for the Implementation Plan in Chapter 5, which outlines strategies and projects that Town officials and their partners can pursue to put the Comprehensive Plan into action.

The goals and objectives are categorized by the nine primary topics, which are graphically illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. These topics form the policy framework of the Comprehensive Plan. The graphic below illustrates how the various topics covered by the Comprehensive Plan are interdependent and work in conjunction with each other to build a cohesive and holistically supportive community.

### VISION STATEMENT

*Cortland is a connected, forward-thinking community that values its agricultural roots, focuses on strategic progress, and offers a high quality of life.*

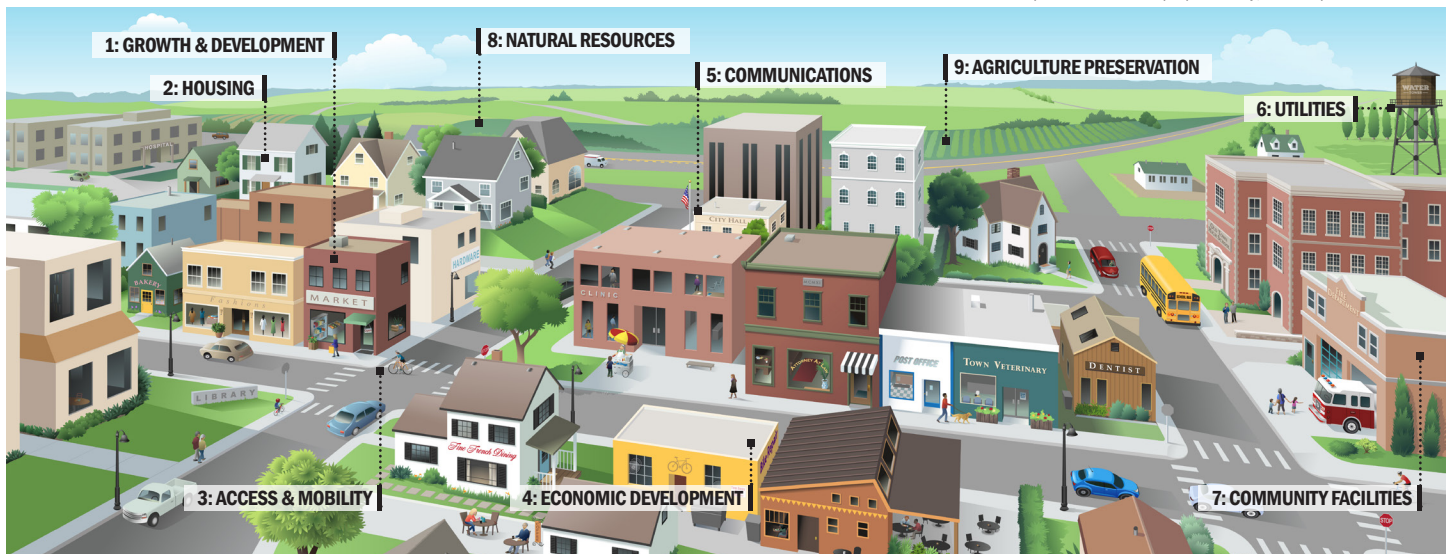
### POLICY FRAMEWORK

Goals and objectives are summarized in this chapter. Strategies for each objective are provided in Chapter 5: Implementation.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY
An achievable outcome that supports a common vision.	A specific, measurable step to achieve a goal.	A project or action to meet the objective.

FIGURE 3.1  
PRIMARY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TOPICS

Note: Graphic for illustration purposes only; not a depiction of Cortland



**PRIORITIZING OBJECTIVES**

Prioritized objectives guide the Town when allocating resources, pursuing grants and funding, budgeting staff time, building community support, and laying the groundwork for subsequent tasks and projects. The Task Force prioritized the objectives through a ranking system. They were asked to consider the following factors:

- How achievable is this objective?
- How much of a positive impact would achieving this objective have on the community?
- How interested is the community in this objective?
- Is funding necessary and if so, is it available?
- Can this objective be achieved quickly, generating additional local interest and momentum?

Based on the goals and objectives outlined in Chapter 3, each objective was ranked within its goal category rather than across goal categories. The Task Force ranked each objective as high, medium, or lower priority.

- HIGH PRIORITY
- MEDIUM PRIORITY
- LOWER PRIORITY

However, objectives will not always be addressed in priority order if opportunities or obstacles may arise that enter into the decision making process. All objectives are still important to achieving the Town’s vision, regardless of their level of priority.

The prioritized objectives are shown in the following tables.



**GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

# 1: Growth & Development

**GOAL** | *Cortland will grow in an intentional and cohesive manner.*

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
1.1	Guide Cortland’s growth in accordance with the comprehensive plan to avoid haphazard or piecemeal development.	● HIGH
1.2	Support a diverse population.	● HIGH
1.3	Collaborate with schools and other public service providers and utilities to match capacity with population growth.	● HIGH
1.4	Balance growth to maintain a small-town character.	● HIGH
1.5	Build out existing incomplete and platted residential subdivisions.	● MEDIUM
1.6	Pursue annexation where appropriate.	● MEDIUM
1.7	Serve as an example of a sustainable community.	● LOWER
1.8	Develop infill sites.	● LOWER

# 2: Housing

**GOAL** | *Cortland will offer a variety of housing to meet different needs.*

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
2.1	Balance renter and owner-occupied units.	● HIGH
2.2	Consider large lot subdivisions and larger homes.	● MEDIUM

# 3: Access & Mobility

**GOAL** | *Cortland will be well connected internally and with neighboring communities through a variety of mobility options.*

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
3.1	Build an interconnected trail network.	● HIGH
3.2	Prioritize and phase sidewalk improvements in the Town’s annual capital improvement plan.	● HIGH
3.3	Promote a healthy lifestyle for all residents.	● HIGH
3.4	Examine transportation connections in the region.	● MEDIUM
3.5	Support public transportation options such as a park and ride facility.	● MEDIUM
3.6	Support sustainable transportation such as electric vehicles.	● LOWER





**GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

## 4: Economic Development

**GOAL** | Cortland will prosper as a community by attracting new businesses and growing existing businesses.

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
4.1	Attract retail along Somonauk Road and Route 38.	● HIGH
4.2	Pursue growth that enhances the tax base.	● HIGH
4.3	Encourage the growth of existing and small businesses	● HIGH
4.4	Consider environmental impact of proposed businesses.	● MEDIUM
4.5	Leverage proximity of the airport and its growth potential.	● MEDIUM
4.6	Prioritize light industrial and research and development businesses.	● MEDIUM
4.7	Maintain communication with DeKalb County to evaluate long term status of the existing landfill.	● LOWER

## 5: Communications

**GOAL** | Cortland will encourage growth and development through outstanding communication.

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
5.1	Develop a communications plan to attract business and industry to Cortland.	● HIGH
5.2	Establish and maintain easy two-way communications channels with Town government for businesses and residents.	● MEDIUM
5.3	Make information on potential development available on the Town's website.	● MEDIUM

## 6: Utilities

**GOAL** | Cortland will ensure its utilities efficiently meet the needs of the community.

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
6.1	Coordinate utility projects to save on future infrastructure expenses.	● HIGH
6.2	Fill in gaps in high-speed internet service to ensure all homes, businesses, and public buildings have reliable access.	● HIGH

## 7: Community Facilities

**GOAL** | Cortland will focus its community facilities on meeting the needs of all residents and strengthening key locations.

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
7.1	Provide equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities.	● HIGH
7.2	Continue ongoing evaluation of the recently acquired former school site for renovation for municipal use.	● HIGH
7.3	Strengthen town core as a focal point for the community.	● MEDIUM
7.4	Provide an indoor gathering space for community and private events.	● LOWER

## 8: Natural Resources

**GOAL** | Cortland will work with the area's native attributes to preserve natural resources.

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
8.1	Encourage native landscaping for storm water management.	● HIGH
8.2	Preserve existing natural areas.	● HIGH
8.3	Investigate prairie restoration.	● MEDIUM

## 9: Agriculture Preservation

**GOAL** | Cortland will preserve its agricultural assets.

#	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY
9.1	Identify agricultural buildings with reuse potential.	● MEDIUM
9.2	Preserve agricultural land.	● LOWER



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# Town Plan

## CHAPTER 4

The Town Plan is the core element of the Cortland Comprehensive Plan, providing recommendations for future land use, housing, economic development, access and mobility, community facilities and assets, natural resources, utilities, and infrastructure. Building upon the community profile and framework in the previous chapters), the Town Plan synthesizes the findings and policies from the planning process to formulate a guide for sensible growth and sustainable development in Cortland for the next 10+ years.

### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The principal intent of the Future Land Use Plan is to maintain Cortland's small town character while positioning it for growth. New development will help enhance Cortland's quality-of-life through a balanced composition of land uses providing residential, commercial, employment, civic, and recreational opportunities.

When reviewing the Future Land Use Plan, it is important to understand its generalized nature. Given the scale at which municipal comprehensive planning occurs, only broad areas of land use are indicated. On specific parcels of land, certain exceptions may be appropriate. For example, a daycare center located within a residential neighborhood may be permitted even though the Future Land Use Plan does not strictly indicate a commercial use in the neighborhood; such exceptions should be addressed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with all municipal ordinances.

#### Future Land Use Plan Map

The Future Land Use Plan Map, which is provided in Figure 4.1, depicts all projected land uses within the current municipal limits and within the Town's 1½-mile planning area, excluding areas that are incorporated into Sycamore to the north and DeKalb to the west. The map illustrates Cortland's long term growth capacity which includes moderate development to accommodate desired growth.

The map illustrates the arrangement of future land uses, particularly with respect to existing land uses, past development patterns, and recent trends. In addition, the map provides areas of substantial agricultural land and open space conservation to create a naturalized growth boundary for Cortland. The potential for the Town to extend public utilities to certain areas served as an additional determining factor to assess future land uses.



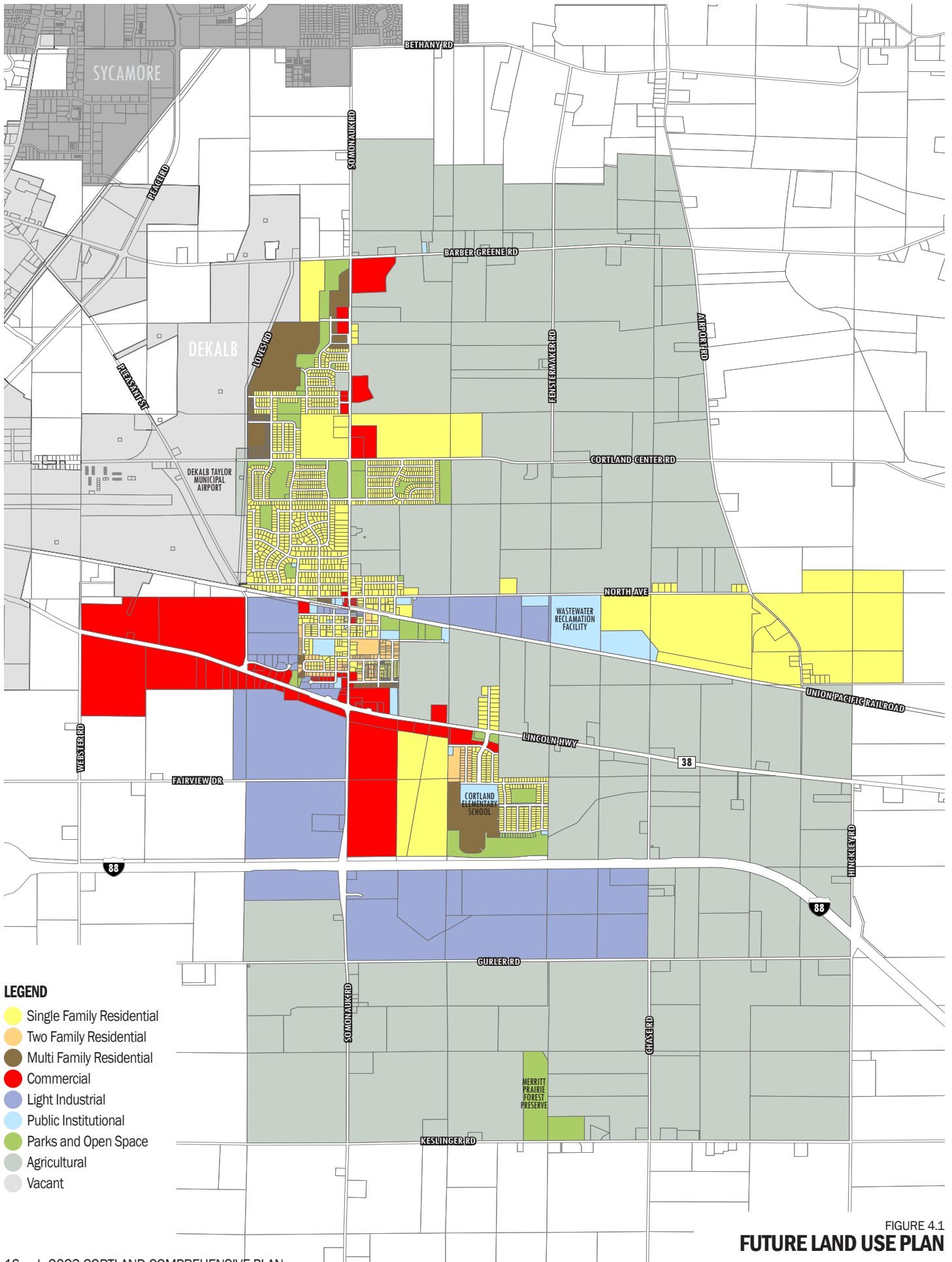


FIGURE 4.1  
**FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

### Platted but Undeveloped Residential Parcels

The change in residential street patterns across Cortland is a primary indicator of the Town’s residential growth over the past 20+ years. In particular, the curvilinear street patterns in more recent subdivisions contrast to the historical grid street pattern that characterizes Cortland’s core area immediately north and south of the railroad.

While recent subdivisions like Nature’s Crossing, Richland Trails, and Chestnut Grove are well established on Cortland’s northern and southern growth areas, many of the platted lots remain undeveloped. This served as another determining factor for the Future Land Use Plan, particularly guiding different land use buildout scenarios that have the most significant impact on Cortland’s population growth and capacity to provide municipal services.

### Land Use Scenario Planning

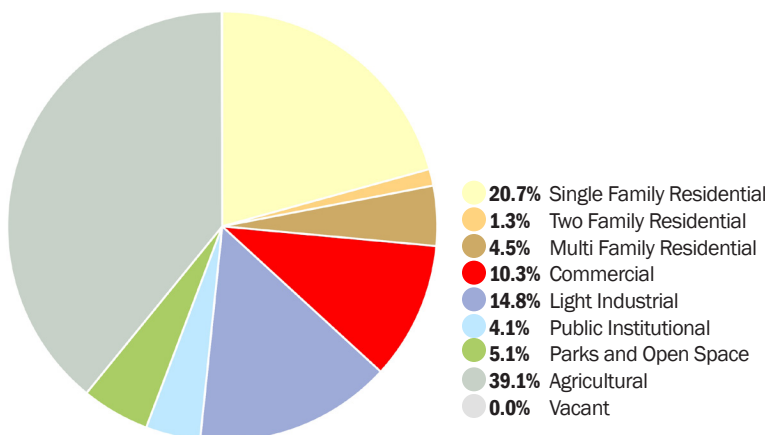
A series of three land use buildout scenarios is provided in Figure 4.3 (full page maps of the three scenarios are provided in the Appendix). Each scenario illustrates how the buildout of these platted but undeveloped residential parcels can be paired with additional residential development of varying degrees. The resulting three scenarios generate different population projections that guided the decision making on an appropriate level of growth for Cortland.

The Task Force selected Scenario B as the preferred land use planning scenario due to its moderate population projection, which balanced buildout of the platted but undeveloped residential parcels with limited additional residential development, which is depicted as the preferred scenario in the Future Land Use Plan in Figure 4.1. Future land use composition is summarized in Figure 4.2.

### Population Projections

Based on the Future Land Use Plan, buildout of all undeveloped residential plats, infill parcels, and limited new residential development generates about 5,724 new residents. Add that population increase to Cortland’s 2020 population of 4,519 residents provides a population projection of 10,243 total residents at full buildout.

FIGURE 4.2  
FUTURE LAND USE COMPOSITION



### LAND USE CATEGORIES

#### RESIDENTIAL

Residential uses encompass a diverse set of housing types to provide residents with options that meet varying needs, budgets, and life stages. Single family housing will continue to be the most prominent residential type in Cortland. Two-family and multi-family residential diversify the Town’s housing stock while respecting the single family character of the community. Different residential typologies are summarized on the following pages to highlight different housing types that may be appropriate for Cortland.



- Single Family Residential
- Two-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential

#### COMMERCIAL

Commercial uses provide retail goods and services with stores, restaurants, and businesses that serve the needs of residents and the daytime population generated by offices and other employment centers. Commercial uses are located along Cortland’s major corridors, primarily Somonauk Road and IL Route 38. Various commercial typologies are summarized on the following pages to show businesses and services that may be appropriate for Cortland.



- Commercial

#### EMPLOYMENT GENERATORS

Employment uses provide job opportunities for local residents and job seekers from around the region. With its locational advantages, Cortland will work towards providing for a range of employment generating uses. Light industrial uses may include uses like tech, research and development, offices, etc. that capitalize on the Town’s access to I-88, as well as hybrid industrial/commercial businesses similar to the WeatherTech Factory Store or a brewery with a tasting room or restaurant component. Other industrial uses may include manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, etc. These employment generating typologies are summarized on the following pages.



- Light Industrial

#### COMMUNITY FACILITIES & ASSETS

These elements provide for a range of public/institutional uses like schools, religious institutions, and municipal facilities that provide services, programs, and opportunities that support day-to-day civic life in Cortland. Other community assets include parks, open space, agricultural lands, and environmental features that help preserve Cortland’s rural character and natural resources. Vacant land is also listed as assets given the opportunities they offer the Town to provide new uses that bring benefit to the community.



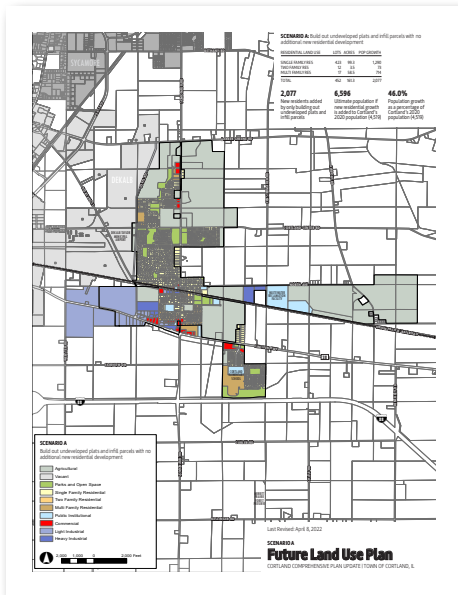
- Public Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Agricultural
- Vacant

**FIGURE 4.3  
LAND USE SCENARIO PLANNING**

As presented to the Comprehensive Plan Task Force, with minor edits, at their April 26, 2022 meeting

**SCENARIO A**

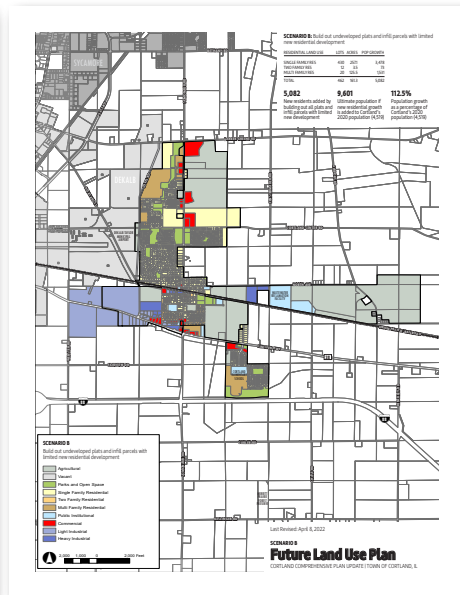
Build out undeveloped plats and infill parcels with no additional residential development



**SCENARIO B**

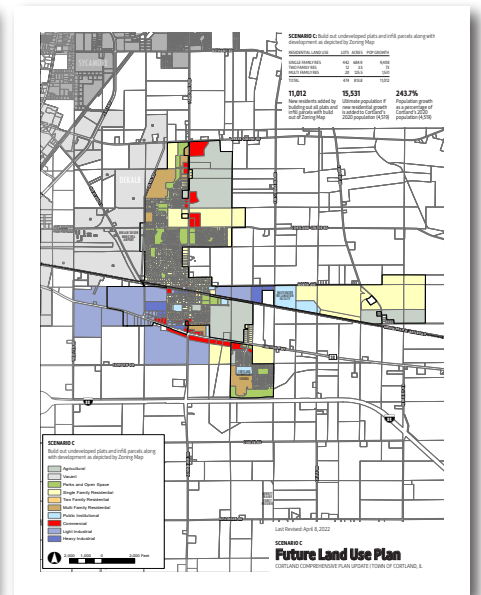
Build out undeveloped plats and infill parcels with limited new residential development

**PREFERRED LAND USE PLANNING SCENARIO**



**SCENARIO C**

Build out undeveloped plats and infill parcels with development as depicted on Zoning Map



RESIDENTIAL LAND USE	LOTS	ACRES	POP GROWTH
SINGLE FAMILY RES	397	94.4	1,211
TWO FAMILY RES	38	3.4	232
MULTI FAMILY RES	17	58.6	715
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>156.4</b>	<b>2,158</b>

**2,158** New residents added by only building out undeveloped plats and infill parcels  
**6,677** Ultimate population if new residential growth is added to Cortland's 2020 population (4,519)  
**47.7%** Population growth as a percentage of Cortland's 2020 population (4,519)

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE	LOTS	ACRES	POP GROWTH
SINGLE FAMILY RES	404	272.5	4,046
TWO FAMILY RES	38	9.1	223
MULTI FAMILY RES	20	165.5	2,020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>447.1</b>	<b>6,289</b>

**6,289** New residents added by building out undeveloped plats and infill parcels and limited new residential development  
**10,808** Ultimate population if new residential growth is added to Cortland's 2020 population (4,519)  
**139.2%** Population growth as a percentage of Cortland's 2020 population (4,519)

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE	LOTS	ACRES	POP GROWTH
SINGLE FAMILY RES	416	680.0	9,329
TWO FAMILY RES	38	3.4	232
MULTI FAMILY RES	20	125.5	1,531
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>808.9</b>	<b>11,092</b>

**11,092** New residents added by building out undeveloped plats and infill parcels and all residential depicted on the Zoning Map  
**15,611** Ultimate population if new residential growth is added to Cortland's 2020 population (4,519)  
**245.5%** Population growth as a percentage of Cortland's 2020 population (4,519)

**LAND USE VS ZONING**

It is important to note that the Future Land Use Plan is not a zoning map. Zoning regulates specific aspects of development, such as yard dimensions and building height, in addition to the location of certain types of uses within districts. Thus, zoning is a useful tool for protecting the use of property and community character, even if the zoning map does not exactly align with the land use map.

On the other hand, the Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide where certain types of development are to be located and is not intended to restrict the use of land. A land use plan indicates, in a general manner, the location of current and future uses of land for various types of development. It is meant to be a guide for establishing more finely-tuned regulations such as zoning and to guide decision making which may involve public or private investment in property development.

The degree to which a zoning map will conform to a land use map depends on two factors: (1) how finely-tuned the land use map is in terms of dividing land uses into those which conform to districts, and (2) how often the zoning map is amended. Once the updated Comprehensive Plan is approved by Town officials, one of the first follow-up tasks is typically to update the Town's zoning regulations and map to ensure they align with the land use and development policies outlined in the plan.

Typically, a land use map is changed much less frequently than a zoning map because it is intended to encompass a longer time frame, embody a broad community vision, and provide a more general guide for town growth and development.



## DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

Viewing potential development concepts through the lens of development typologies allows the community to consider various housing options, business types, employment generators, and general development approaches that are appropriate for a community with a character and profile like Cortland. For example, recommending a concept that allows for businesses like a café or specialty grocer points more towards community support for these general uses, rather than targeting specific businesses like a Starbucks or Buffalo Wild Wings. Similarly, a concept that calls for a business park may accommodate a range of uses, from professional offices and healthcare facilities to coworking spaces and a satellite college campus.

The development typologies provide Town officials with a general sense of the types of development to pursue for Cortland, whether it is national brands or locally-owned businesses. In addition, the typologies provide a foundation for the Future Land Use Plan.

As provided on the following pages, the general description for each development typology looks ahead to how each development type may influence how Cortland grows and develops into the future.

In addition, the development typologies provide for a more balanced mix of land uses that promote the following objectives:

- Account for adequate utilities and infrastructure capacity
- Diversify the local housing stock
- Expand the Town's tax base
- Enhance employment options
- Complement Cortland's rural heritage
- Support stewardship of the natural environment
- Advance a more sustainable and resilient local economy

## DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

# Residential

While Cortland has primarily developed as a single-family residential community, the Town's housing stock has a notable share of two-family and multi-family housing options. The Comprehensive Plan recommends continual diversification of the local housing stock to provide options that meet varying budgets, life stages, family structures, and housing needs. This may include providing options like senior housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and large lot subdivisions.

Part of Cortland's housing approach will focus on building out residential lots that have already been platted in unfinished subdivisions or infill sites. This approach is a key component of the Town's preferred land use planning scenario, which is summarized in Figure 4.3. This approach also includes allowing for limited residential development in other parts of Cortland, particularly the northern portion of the community on the east and west sides of Somonauk Road.

As the Town considers new residential development, it may look to some of its current neighborhoods as prototypes, as highlighted in the sample images below.

Detached single family homes (top); attached single family homes like townhouses, duplexes, and multiplexes (center); multi-family homes like apartments and condos (bottom)



DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

# Commercial

Cortland's commercial base is fairly limited, with businesses primarily located in the core area, as well as certain points along Somonauk Road and IL Route 38. Current businesses comprise a mix of retail, services, and restaurants or food establishments, with almost all locally owned and very few name brands. Community members have shown interest in expanding the commercial base with a greater diversity of goods and services, particularly supporting local entrepreneurs and small business owners. Strong support for existing small businesses should continue and will help to shape the character of Cortland's commercial development.

Expansion of Cortland's commercial base will enhance the Town's tax base. Market conditions, demographics, and local assets often dictate where certain businesses will locate. The Town should be proactive in attracting the types of businesses that meet local needs, match community priorities, and boost the tax base. Cortland has a prime opportunity to fill niches that are not adequately offered in the DeKalb/Sycamore/Cortland area, such as businesses focused on family entertainment and recreation.

Cortland's two primary commercial areas should continue to be the focus for new businesses and considered as gateways into the community. Avoiding scattered commercial development will strengthen the quality and quantity of all other land uses in Cortland. It will also reduce the cost of development since infrastructure and services will not need to be extended. Transportation is a critical component to serve commercial centers and can be maximized in a more focused area.

Cafés and bakeries (top left); brunch spots (top center); grocery stores (top right); experience-based businesses like Pinot's Palette (middle left); restaurants (center); boutique or specialty shops (middle right); youth-centric businesses like indoor play areas, creative arts, sports and recreation, etc. (bottom left); farm-based businesses like Wiltse's Farm in Maple Park (bottom center); personal care businesses like yoga, pilates, massage therapy, etc. (bottom right)



DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

# Office

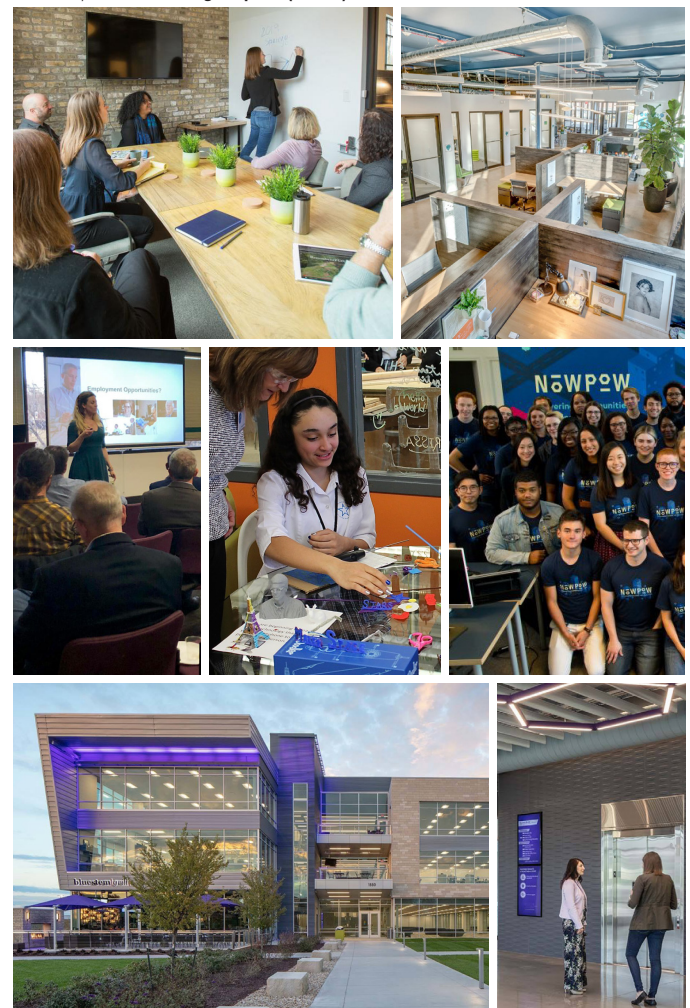
While office uses are typically viewed as being part of commercial or industrial development, they fit into a particular segment of a community's employment base and economic development strategy. As the map on the following page shows, extensive growth of industrial and office uses is occurring in a significant portion of the Cortland/DeKalb/Sycamore region. Cortland can capture some of the office growth, even as much of that growth has developed in DeKalb and Sycamore.

Office/business parks are increasingly making room for unique tenants. While corporate headquarters, professional offices, and banking/financial services are common, the examples illustrated below can enhance the tenant mix of an office/business park, provide spaces for local entrepreneurs, and diversify employment opportunities available to the local workforce.

Healthcare is one of the more prominent growth markets, particularly as the region manages more growth and the senior population continues to age. Coworking spaces and business incubators support small businesses and entrepreneurs with facilities, classes, and access to shared resources. Makerspaces support creators of all ages, from at-home hobbyists and amateur builders to school STEM classes and robotics teams. Colleges, universities, and other education organizations often seek to expand their footprint in unique office settings. Same with tech startups to provide a suite of meeting spaces, resources, and amenities to recruit top-tier talent and like-minded businesses.

Examples of these spaces include Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital (Sycamore), Northern Illinois University (DeKalb), 25N Coworking (Geneva), and Fox.Build (St. Charles).

Community meeting spaces (top right); coworking spaces (top left); business incubator (middle left); makerspaces (center); tech and business startup spaces (middle right); healthcare, higher education, and other learning campuses (bottom)





DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

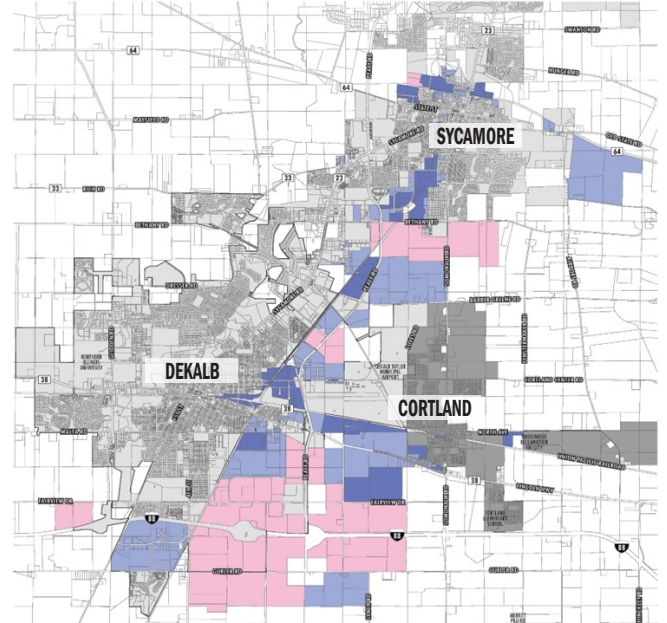
# Industrial

Industrial currently comprises about 3.9% of Cortland’s existing land use. The Future Land Use Plan expands the amount of industrial uses by over 2.5 times. As the map on the right illustrates, a significant portion of the Cortland/DeKalb/Sycamore region is currently undergoing extensive growth of industrial and office uses. While much of that industrial and office growth has developed in DeKalb and Sycamore, the door is open for Cortland to capture some of that growth.

Industrial sites can take a variety of forms and sizes. While industrial buildings will generally occupy a sizable footprint, they can still be designed in such a way that adds positive value to the Town’s character and integrates natural features into their site design. The amenities listed below can also enhance the quality of the site and blend in well with the local transportation network. Light industrial uses should be encouraged as part of mixed use developments or office/business parks.

Hybrid industrial/commercial enterprises are becoming more prominent by providing product creation, warehousing, and sales under a single roof. This model reduces transport and infrastructure costs, as well as attracts customers curious about the source and production of the items they purchase. The sales area or showroom typically occupies less than 20% of the building, with product creation and warehousing comprising the remaining floor area. Examples from the region include the WeatherTech Factory Store (Bolingbrook), Ashley Furniture HomeStore (Romeoville), and “Save” by Yellow Products (St. Charles).

Another popular example is a brewery with a restaurant or tasting room component like Two Brothers Tap House in Warrenville and Obscurity Brewing in Elburn. Hybrid industrial/commercial enterprises may be part of a office/business park, commercial area, or mixed use district.

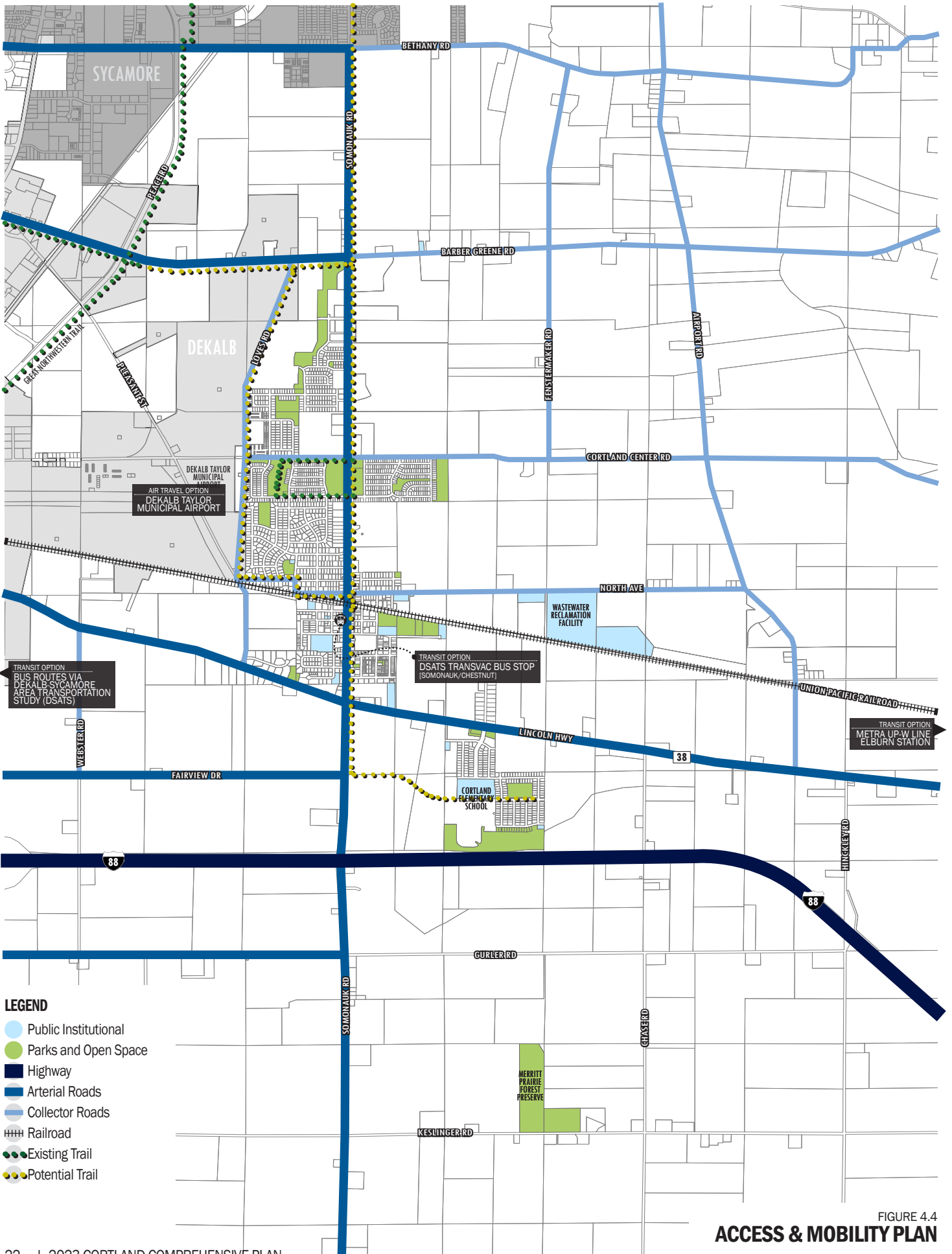


Hybrid industrial/ commercial enterprises (top); breweries and distilleries with or without a restaurant or tasting room component (middle); industrial buildings like warehousing, logistics, manufacturing, etc. (bottom)



- BUILDING DESIGN & SITE AMENITIES**
- Quality building materials
  - Environmentally-appropriate lighting
  - Green space and landscaping
  - Renewable energy and sustainable features
  - Protection of wetlands, trees, and other natural features
  - Trail, sidewalk, and transit options





**LEGEND**

- Public Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Highway
- Arterial Roads
- Collector Roads
- ==== Railroad
- Existing Trail
- Potential Trail

FIGURE 4.4  
**ACCESS & MOBILITY PLAN**

## ACCESS & MOBILITY

Cortland is strategically located just north of an interstate highway (I-88) and along a major state highway (IL Route 38), providing the Town with superior regional transportation connectivity and access that open up opportunities that advance strong community growth and economic development prosperity.

As illustrated on the Access and Mobility Plan Map in Figure 4.4, Cortland’s existing transportation network provides a solid foundation that can be reinforced with periodic improvements and strengthened connections to the regional transportation network, which include opportunities to build up the trail network, expand transit options, and take advantage of proximity to DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport. There are also opportunities to provide safe access and mobility for people of all ages and abilities.

Given the scope and capacity of Cortland’s transportation network, intergovernmental cooperation is integral to improve and maintain a transportation network that adequately serves Cortland, while making the community an attractive destination to build new homes, establish new businesses, and provide jobs for the region.

### TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS

#### ROAD NETWORK

All roads serving Cortland are classified according to their function in the local circulation system:

- **Highways:** I-88
- **Arterial Roads:** IL Route 38, Somonauk Road, Bethany Road and Barber Greene Road (west of Somonauk Road), Fairview Road, Gurler Road
- **Collector Roads:** Bethany Road and Barber Greene Road (east of Somonauk Road), Cortland Center Road, Loves Road, North Avenue, Fenstermaker Road, Airport Road, Webster Road
- **Local Roads:** All other roads

Given their regional coverage, I-88 and IL Route 38 provide a competitive advantage for economic development. Proper roadway classifications help ensure safe and efficient movement of vehicles to accommodate current traffic volumes and anticipate future increases as Cortland experiences growth and development. It also aids in capital improvements programming and in the designation of specialized traffic routes, such as designating specific roads for truck traffic.

#### SIDEWALKS & TRAILS

Small towns like Cortland are often viewed as friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists, even if infrastructure like sidewalks and bike paths are lacking in certain areas. For example, not all neighborhoods have a complete network of sidewalks, which opens up the opportunity to fill in sidewalk gaps where deemed necessary.

The local trail network has improved as new developments created needs for linkages to neighborhoods. For example, trails cut through McPhillips Park and Richland Trails Park, which serve the Town’s relatively newer subdivisions. Similar to filling sidewalk gaps, there are opportunities to create an interconnected network of bike paths, trails, and sidewalks throughout Cortland, including links to regional trails.

A pedestrian- and bike-friendly community also encompasses safe access and mobility for people of all ages and abilities. This includes ADA-compliant facilities at crosswalks, parking lots, and entry points to buildings.

#### TRANSIT

Transit is fairly limited in Cortland, with a DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (DSATS) TransVac bus stop located in town at the intersection of Somonauk Road and Chestnut Avenue. Other options are situated beyond town limits but nearby to provide opportunities for linkages in Cortland. While many commuters utilize the Metra station in Elburn, this creates the potential to establish new transit opportunities like a park ‘n ride facility or shuttle bus service between Cortland and Elburn.

The DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (DSATS) provides bus service to DeKalb and Sycamore but no present routes into Cortland. As Cortland grows, particularly adding employment centers to its economic base, this would open potential to extend existing DSATS bus routes into Cortland via Barber Greene Road and IL Route 38.

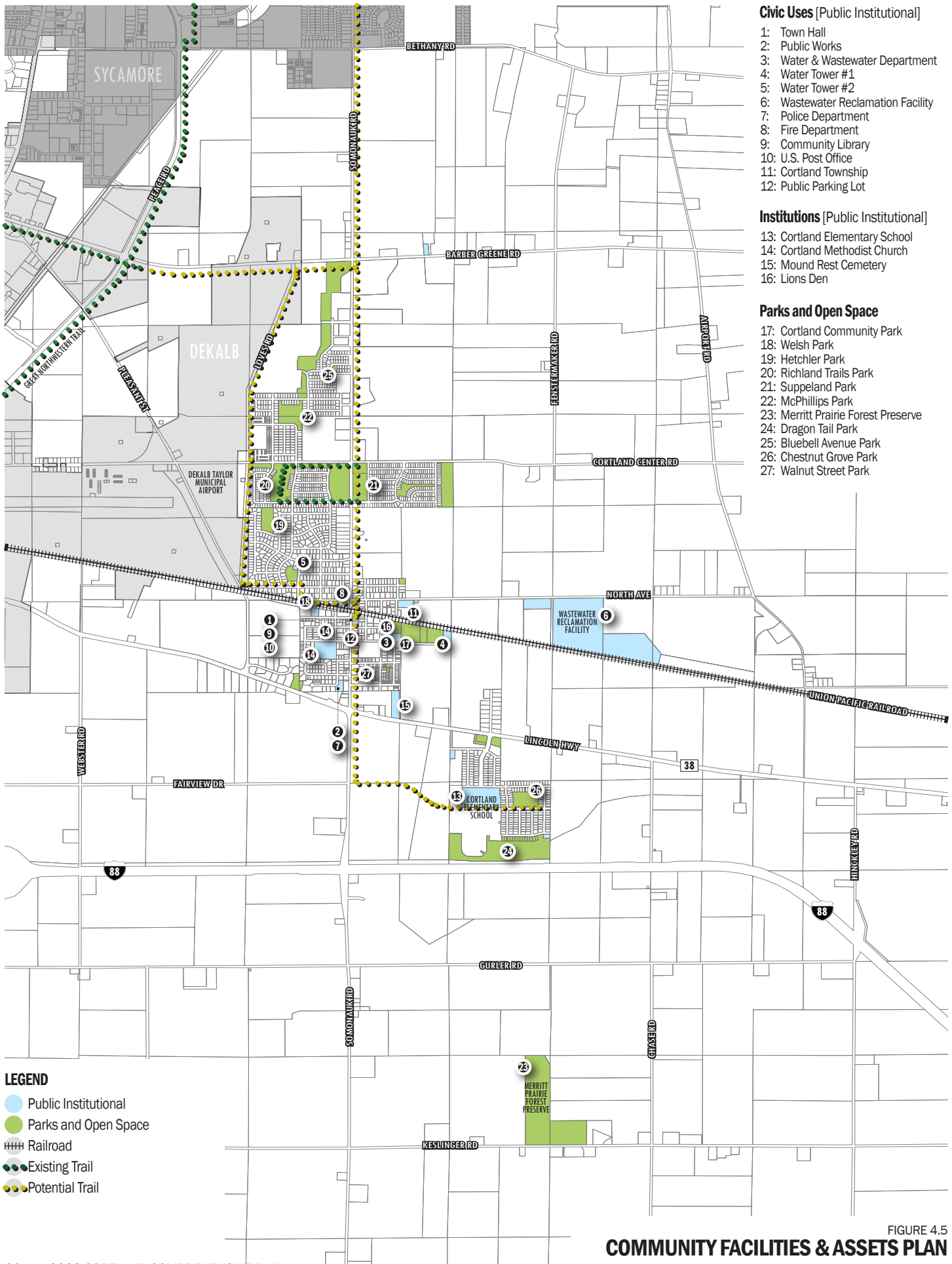
Transit access can also be enhanced by working with local and regional employers that can build a shared shuttle service utilizing pooled resources. Paratransit is also an option to consider.

#### AIRPORT

DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport, which is located outside of Cortland and west of Loves Road, offers aviation and meeting facilities to businesses and travelers in the DeKalb County area. Given Cortland’s adjacent location to the airport, there is potential to pursue businesses and recreation opportunities with aviation themes. This may include but are not limited to aviation themed restaurants and other businesses near the airport.

While DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport is classified as a local airport, IDOT’s 2022 Illinois Aviation System Plan indicates certain improvements could help with reclassification as a regional airport, which would open up a wider net of opportunities.





**Civic Uses [Public Institutional]**

- 1: Town Hall
- 2: Public Works
- 3: Water & Wastewater Department
- 4: Water Tower #1
- 5: Water Tower #2
- 6: Wastewater Reclamation Facility
- 7: Police Department
- 8: Fire Department
- 9: Community Library
- 10: U.S. Post Office
- 11: Cortland Township
- 12: Public Parking Lot

**Institutions [Public Institutional]**

- 13: Cortland Elementary School
- 14: Cortland Methodist Church
- 15: Mound Rest Cemetery
- 16: Lions Den

**Parks and Open Space**

- 17: Cortland Community Park
- 18: Welsh Park
- 19: Hetchler Park
- 20: Richland Trails Park
- 21: Suppeland Park
- 22: McPhillips Park
- 23: Merritt Prairie Forest Preserve
- 24: Dragon Tail Park
- 25: Bluebell Avenue Park
- 26: Chestnut Grove Park
- 27: Walnut Street Park

**LEGEND**

- Public Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- ==== Railroad
- Existing Trail
- Potential Trail

FIGURE 4.5

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES & ASSETS PLAN**

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES & ASSETS

Community facilities and public infrastructure are generally comprised of services, resources, and institutions that meet the civic, cultural, social, recreational, educational, and spiritual needs of the community. Though different in nature, community facilities and public infrastructure form the physical backbone of a community, providing essential services and functions to the community.

As summarized on the Community Facilities and Assets Plan Map in Figure 4.5, Cortland is served by a broad system of community facilities and public infrastructure, including: municipal services, public safety, utilities, school, library, historic resources, and parks and recreation. However, a small town like Cortland is limited in its offerings of other facilities, such as healthcare facilities and religious institutions.

While community facilities are maintained and operated by a range of providers, including municipal, public, quasi-public, and private entities, public infrastructure generally encompasses municipal services and utilities that are vital to the daily function of Cortland’s residents, businesses, and institutions.

As Cortland manages the growth and development of the community, improvements will continually be needed to ensure the services, functions, and utilities provided to the community have adequate capacity, are well-maintained, and are distributed equitably.

## FACILITIES & ASSETS

### SCHOOLS

Cortland is primarily served by DeKalb School District #428, with Cortland Elementary School being the only school facility within Cortland’s municipal limits. Demographics at Cortland Elementary point to the need to ensure teachers, students, and their families have what they need to succeed. Changes in the Town and student populations will need to be monitored to assess future space needs.

Coordination with other school districts like Sycamore School District and Kaneland School District is encouraged to assess how local and regional population growth impacts school enrollments across the various schools serving Cortland and neighboring communities.

### PARKS

Cortland’s park system has continually grown as residential development has increased. Continued population growth could create demand for more park and recreational opportunities, including trails and a mix of indoor/outdoor facilities. The Town is starting a new Parks Advisory Committee to support parks initiatives. Existing parks include:

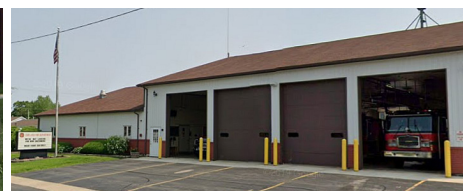
- Cortland Community Park
- Welsh Park
- Hetchler Park
- Dragon Tail Pond
- Chestnut Grove Park
- Bluebell Avenue Park
- Walnut Street Park
- Suppeland Park
- McPhillips Park

### CIVIC USES

A key benefit of Cortland’s core area is its central location for civic uses, including Town Hall, Community Library, Fire Department, and Post Office, which helps to maintain the community’s small town feel and provide daily services in the town core. Other civic uses located beyond the core area are Public Works, Police Department, Water and Wastewater Department, and the Wastewater Reclamation Facility. The continued clustering of civic uses in the core area should be encouraged to sustain this part of Cortland. Most of the Town’s administrative and governmental offices are located at Town Hall.

### OTHER FACILITIES & ASSETS

Cortland is home to a U.S. Post Office, which offers full retail service post office boxes, and curbside delivery to customers. The Post Office is one of the Town’s oldest institutions, dating back to 1892. Located across the street from Town Hall and a block from the Cortland Fire Department, the Post Office adds to the civic nature of Downtown Cortland.



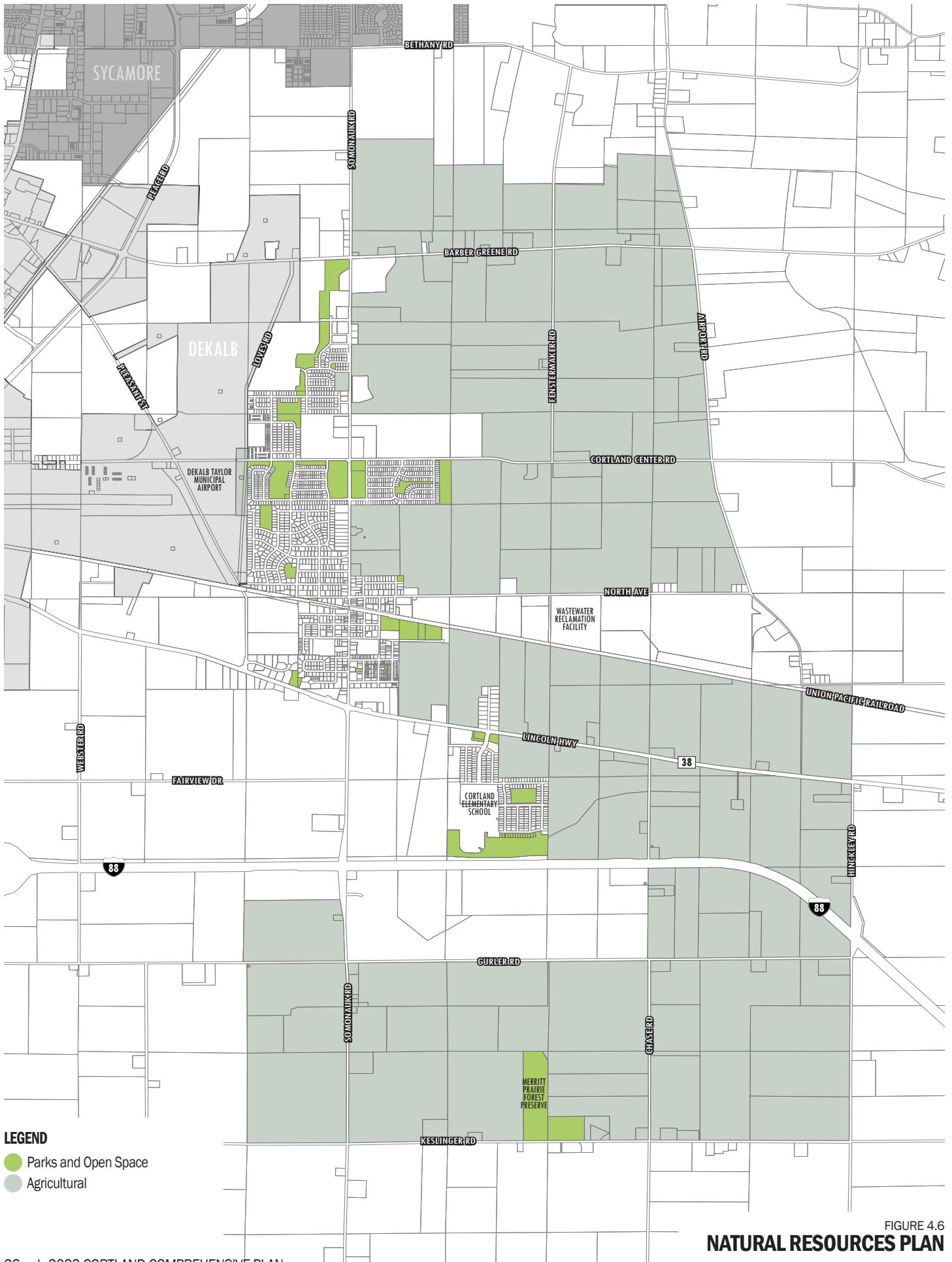


FIGURE 4.6  
**NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN**

# NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural environment within and around Cortland help to define the character of the community and provide recreational opportunities for residents. While conservation of local environmental features and open space will help preserve the small town atmosphere of Cortland, it will also guide the Town’s capacity to sensibly manage growth and development in the future. The Natural Resources Plan Map is provided in Figure 4.6.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Floodplain is entirely situated on the far northeastern section of the Town’s planning area with coverage along the Kishwaukee River and sections of the Union Ditch. Branches of the Union Ditch, including Union Ditch No. 1 and Ditch No. 2, are channelized streams that flow through farm fields to expedite drainage and improve mechanical farming operations. The western portion of the Union Ditch meanders into Cortland’s southern growth area south of IL Route 38.

Wetlands are located at various points around the community and the larger planning area. Many of the wetlands are located within the floodplain along or near the Kishwaukee River and smaller tributaries north of Barber Greene Road.

While the Kishwaukee River is generally located beyond Cortland’s current municipal boundaries, it flows on the outer northeastern section of the larger planning area. Potential open space and greenway connections can link Cortland’s core to the Kishwaukee River as the community considers the prospects for growth north and east of the town.

Aside from small tree patches in neighborhoods, Cortland does not have substantial woodlands.

### AGRICULTURAL LAND

As a community that still has active farms in operation, Cortland counts its agricultural land among its key natural resources. The generally flat topography and natural drainage make Cortland a suitable place for active farming. According to 2016 metrics from the American Farmland Trust, much of the land in and surrounding Cortland is Nationally Significant Agricultural Land which is best suited for long-term production of food and other crops.

Agriculture continues to be a significant aspect in the local and regional economy, even as certain neighboring communities manage development and growth of emerging industries. The protection of agricultural land has a multi-pronged effect:

**(1) Growth management:** Taking a proactive approach to the preservation of agricultural land around Cortland’s northern, eastern, and southern perimeters will create a de facto growth management boundary that protects agricultural resources, curtails sprawling development, and encourages infill and adaptive reuse of existing properties.

**(2) Economically viable farming:** Supporting research and technology needed to cultivate new uses of agricultural products will help keep farming viable by developing markets that support agriculture in Cortland, across DeKalb County, and into the larger region.

**(3) Farm-style design:** Catering to Cortland’s agricultural heritage provides space for a farm-style aesthetic in architectural and site design practices, which are becoming more prevalent to create a unique identity that is rooted in the history and culture of the community. A similar approach could be taken to build upon Cortland’s history as a railroad town.

### OPEN SPACE

Open space preservation is important to Cortland.

#### Conservation Development

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the integration of conservation development principles:

*“whereby a relatively low overall density is maintained on a given tract of land but development is concentrated in one or more locations and surrounded by open space that is used for farming, recreation, [etc.]”*

*“the maximum density [of a development] will ultimately be determined by the amount of open space and building typology ratios provided on any given development parcel,”*

This underscores the critical role of and level of community importance placed on open space conservation in relation to the growth and development of Cortland.

At that time in the mid-2000s, conservation development was intended to ensure up to 50% of land development would be conserved for open space, farm land, recreation, and general land conservation. This new Comprehensive Plan – particularly the underlying vision, goals and objectives, community design principles, and future land use plan – will help determine the extent to which open space preservation will continue to be a key priority for Cortland.

#### Detention Ponds and Green Space

Detention ponds and green space in residential neighborhoods are characterized as open space within Cortland’s planning area. Merritt Prairie Forest Preserve is one of the most notable and largest public open spaces serving the community. Located far south along Keslinger Road, Merritt Prairie Forest Preserve includes about 56 acres with rolling topography covered in a mix of cool season grass pasture and planted prairie. The preserve also includes about 4 acres of wetland mitigation, which provides for biodiversity and expands the native landscape. About 2.5 miles of hiking trails run through the preserve.

#### Other Open Spaces

To be consistent with the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, open spaces will also include formal public spaces (e.g., civic squares, plazas, etc.), facilities for programmed recreational activities, linear trails along road rights-of-way and drainage ways, parkways, and other natural and conservation areas.

Peripheral open spaces, which define the outer edges of Cortland and individual neighborhoods, should also be included, particularly as a means of buffering adjacent uses and creating a green belt to curtail sprawling development.

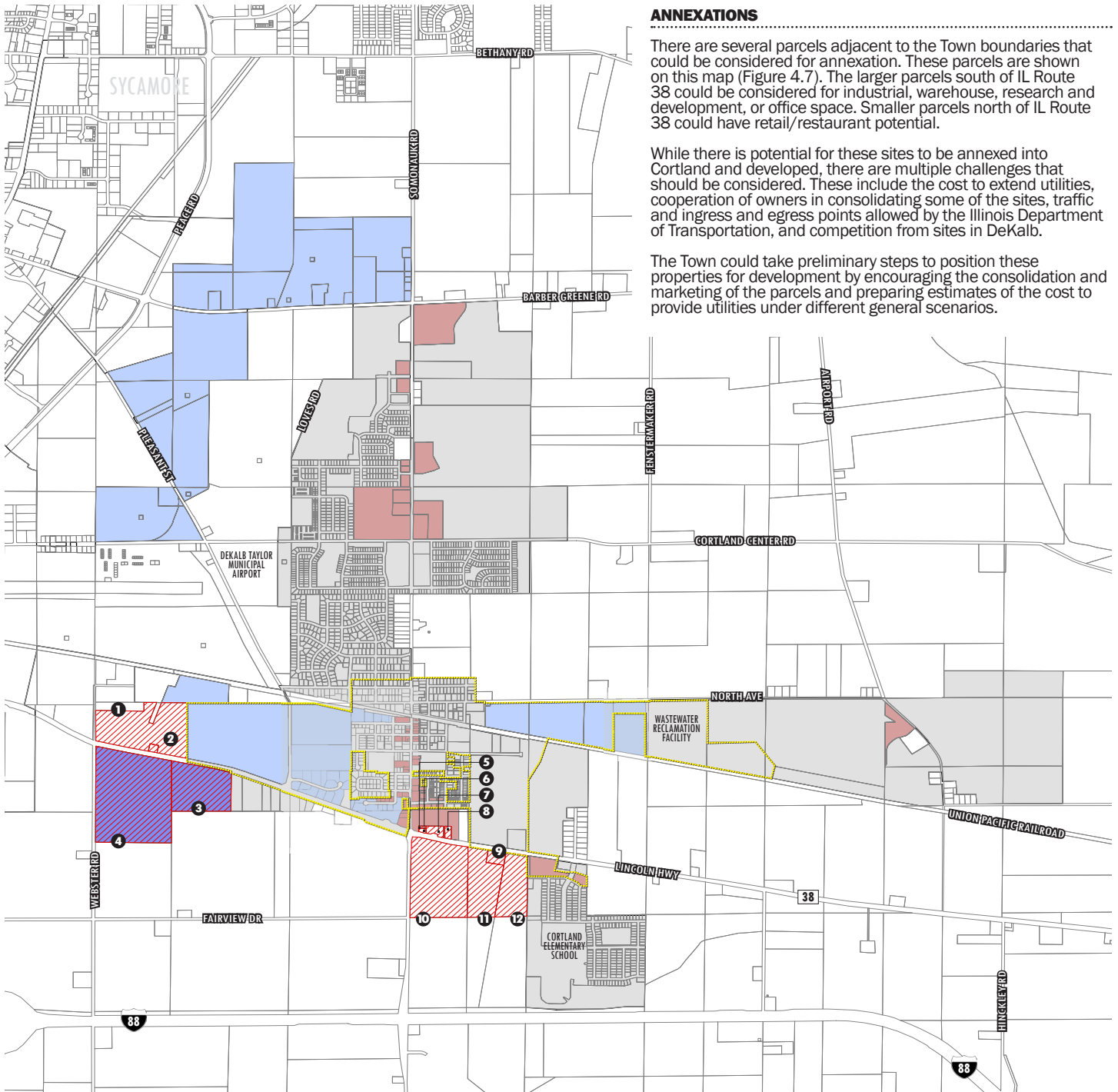


## ANNEXATIONS

There are several parcels adjacent to the Town boundaries that could be considered for annexation. These parcels are shown on this map (Figure 4.7). The larger parcels south of IL Route 38 could be considered for industrial, warehouse, research and development, or office space. Smaller parcels north of IL Route 38 could have retail/restaurant potential.

While there is potential for these sites to be annexed into Cortland and developed, there are multiple challenges that should be considered. These include the cost to extend utilities, cooperation of owners in consolidating some of the sites, traffic and ingress and egress points allowed by the Illinois Department of Transportation, and competition from sites in DeKalb.

The Town could take preliminary steps to position these properties for development by encouraging the consolidation and marketing of the parcels and preparing estimates of the cost to provide utilities under different general scenarios.



Site #	Property Owner / Grantee	PIN	Area (sq ft)	Area (acres)
1	Deegan, Donna	09-30-100-009	2,064,662.49	47.4
2	Deegan, Donna	09-30-100-002	36,518.91	0.8
3	Deegan, Amy and Stacey	09-30-100-010	1,469,691.09	33.7
4	Rote, Sharon and Nolan, Richard	09-30-100-008	3,729,988.65	85.6
5	Oxford Bank and Trust	09-29-400-021	10,887.74	0.2
6	Oxford Bank and Trust	09-29-400-022	16,865.99	0.4
7	Oxford Bank and Trust	09-29-400-023	83,784.26	1.9
8	Bank of America	09-29-400-007	43,534.88	1.0
9	Kelich, Olga	09-29-400-026	127,426.28	2.9
10	Landmeier, Lester and Joyce	09-29-400-028	2,392,901.12	54.9
11	Mahren, Wendy and Mack, Eugene Family Trust	09-29-400-024	1,098,630.24	25.2
12	Mahren, Wendy and Mack, Eugene Family Trust	09-29-400-025	936,767.73	21.5

### LEGEND

- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- ▨ Potential Annexation Parcels
- TIF District Boundary
- Town Boundary

FIGURE 4.7  
**ANNEXATIONS MAP**



## UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

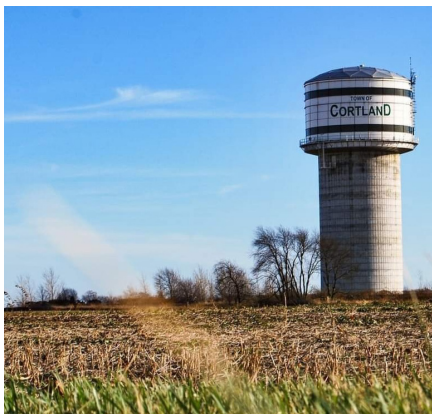
Cortland is generally well served by water and wastewater utility service, which will need to be continually monitored as the Town grows and develops. Expansion of services and new infrastructure may be needed to accommodate such growth, particularly as the Town seeks to annex any land into Cortland and serve them with municipal utilities.

### UTILITIES

#### WATER

Cortland is currently served by four public water supply wells, which produce approximately 272,468 gallons of water per day. From July 2020 through July 2021, all four public water supply wells generated a total pumpage of treated water ranging between 7.5 to 10 million gallons per month. Well #4 generally pumps a majority of the treated water.

The water system also includes two water towers, with one tower near the Spruce Street/ Amber Avenue intersection and the other tower located at the eastern terminus of Maple Avenue near Cortland Community Park and the Town's Water and Wastewater Department Building. This second tower holds 1 million gallons of water.



#### WASTEWATER

Constructed in 2006, the Town's Wastewater Reclamation Facility is designed to treat 1.5 million gallons of wastewater per day. This lagoon based treatment facility uses disc filters for filtration and ultra-violet technology for disinfection resulting in high quality effluent.

#### STORMWATER

Newer subdivisions integrated detention ponds to aid in stormwater management. Cortland's current stormwater management code is similar to DeKalb County's. Residents see minimal flooding occurrences. The Town should continue to promote best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater management to decrease stormwater runoff, improve quality in downstream creeks, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and minimize impacts on farmland and environmentally sensitive areas.

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

A strong telecommunications system has progressively become a critical facet of a community's infrastructure. This is becoming increasingly more apparent with more people working and learning from home, which requires reliable internet service to ensure residents, workers, and students can interact and access resources. From an economic development perspective, internet service is an important infrastructure element that supports existing businesses and employers, as well as attracts new ones, to support their day-to-day activities and steadfast commerce.

According to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Cortland is presently served by varying levels of internet service, primarily within the Town's existing municipal limits from Barber Greene Road on the north to IL Route 38 on the south. Some internet coverage extends south of IL Route 38 into the Chestnut Grove subdivision and the Cortland Elementary School campus. Internet service is generally defined by different forms of broadband infrastructure, including fixed and wireline, fiber, cable, DSL, and fixed wireless. Any gaps can likely be filled given the adequate coverage of a majority of Cortland and neighboring DeKalb and Sycamore, with infrastructure extending along IL Route 38.

Cortland is presently served by varying levels of broadband infrastructure, including: fixed and wireline, fiber, cable, DSL, and fixed wireless. Any gaps can likely be filled given the adequate coverage of a majority of Cortland and neighboring DeKalb and Sycamore.





**RENEWABLE ENERGY**

As Cortland seeks to grow and develop in a sustainable manner, that includes seeking means to be sustainable with energy generation and consumption. The Town already has taken certain steps to this end, such as integrating standards for solar energy systems into its Zoning Code. As highlighted below, additional steps can be taken to advance the community's commitment to renewable energy.

While renewable energy approaches can be incorporated at a larger community scale, they also enable individual property owners to play a role in being energy conservation stewards and making their own properties more sustainable.

**Solar Energy**

Cortland presently has zoning standards in place to regulate solar farms and other solar energy systems. DeKalb County and some of its municipalities have approved solar farms that produce energy for sale to the grid. The Town of Cortland could consider allowing solar farms within its municipal boundaries or planning area. Some of the vacant parcels may be well-suited for this use and the Town could choose to address this possibility proactively rather than when a project is proposed. Solar farms may also be established as either a long-term use or an interim use.

**Wind Energy**

Similar to solar energy, Cortland's Zoning Code provides standards for wind energy, including wind turbines. This includes compliance with FAA regulations given the proximity to DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport. While zoning standards cover small wind energy conversion systems (SWECS), the Town may seek to update its standards to cover wind farms that may take up larger parcels of land.

**Electric Vehicles**

One of the Access and Mobility objectives is to "support sustainable transportation such as electric vehicles." Another Zoning Code update should include the addition of regulations for electric vehicle charging stations and other infrastructure. Future research would be needed to understand the impacts of electric vehicles and related infrastructure on existing gas stations and how to reuse gas station sites.



**COMMUNITY DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

Cortland's 2007 Comprehensive Plan included a set of community design principles and strategies intended to enhance the physical form and appearance of the community, preserve the agrarian roots of the town, and protect the natural environment. As the 2007 Plan indicated, the community design principles "are a record of the physical form of Cortland and its neighborhoods, today... [but] not a yearning for nostalgia, nor an exclusionary strategy."

The original set of community design principles formed out of the results of an image preference survey and community planning charrette. These interactive outreach activities were designed to identify the design principles that reflected the accepted standards and desires of the Cortland community.

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan continues to support these community design principles and underlying strategies, which are summarized below and on the next page (with minor revisions to the original). They still reflect the type of community envisioned in the vision statement, goals, and plan elements. While the Comprehensive Plan elements help to achieve these design principles and strategies, follow-up efforts will also help to meet these ends. Such follow-up efforts include updating the Zoning Code and other municipal ordinances, preparing a new Town Strategic Plan, and coordinating a full-fledged set of architectural, streetscape, and landscape design guidelines. The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in Chapter 5 will also serve as a beneficial guide.

The complete set of community design principles and strategies from the 2007 Plan are provided in the Appendix.

**1 PRINCIPLE ONE**

**Pedestrian scale shall be the common denominator in neighborhood development in Cortland to create a positive comfortable public realm and facilitate interaction among neighborhood residents.**

- STRATEGY 1.1:  
Human Scale Proportions and Perceptions
- STRATEGY 1.2:  
Semi-Public and Private Spaces
- STRATEGY 1.3:  
Community Spaces
- STRATEGY 1.4:  
A Mix of Houses and People
- STRATEGY 1.5:  
Person-to-Person Interaction
- STRATEGY 1.6:  
Walking and the Pedestrian

**2 PRINCIPLE TWO**

**Neighborhood development in Cortland must complement the natural features of the landscape and respect the natural and man-made environment.**

- STRATEGY 2.1:  
Indigenous Vegetation
- STRATEGY 2.2:  
Responsible Stormwater Management
- STRATEGY 2.3:  
Balanced Interface between Agriculture and Neighborhood Development
- STRATEGY 2.4:  
Suitable Land Development
- STRATEGY 2.5:  
Walking and Biking

**3 PRINCIPLE THREE**

**Neighborhoods in Cortland, and all development within them, shall be designed along pedestrian dimensions and distances through compact form, layout, and streetscape characteristics.**

- STRATEGY 3.1:  
Neighborhood Size and Function based on Walking Scale
- STRATEGY 3.2:  
Intensity of Uses
- STRATEGY 3.3:  
Transit Linkages to Expand Pedestrianism
- STRATEGY 3.4:  
A Network of Sidewalks
- STRATEGY 3.5:  
Continuity in the Streetscape and Built Environment
- STRATEGY 3.6:  
Sidewalk Width
- STRATEGY 3.7:  
Security in Pedestrian Realm
- STRATEGY 3.8:  
Sidewalk Edges
- STRATEGY 3.9:  
Street Lights and Furniture
- STRATEGY 3.10:  
Signs
- STRATEGY 3.11:  
Bicycle Paths





**4 PRINCIPLE FOUR**

Open spaces of all types and sizes for visual and aesthetic qualities, recreational, ecological, agricultural and economic functions shall be provided within, as well as on the periphery of, neighborhoods and the Town.

STRATEGY 4.1:  
Rear Yards

STRATEGY 4.2:  
Front Yards

STRATEGY 4.3:  
Public Spaces

STRATEGY 4.4:  
Active and Passive Recreation

STRATEGY 4.5:  
Peripheral Spaces

STRATEGY 4.6:  
The Parkway (Tree Bank)

**5 PRINCIPLE FIVE**

Cortland must have a central core or focus. Every neighborhood in Cortland must have a core or community focus.

STRATEGY 5.1:  
Neighborhood Core

STRATEGY 5.2:  
Location

STRATEGY 5.3:  
Balanced Land Use

STRATEGY 5.4:  
Design

- Building scale
- Building height
- Site design
- Parking
- Retail street frontage
- Architectural details

**6 PRINCIPLE SIX**

Streets create the form and scale of the community and must accommodate the pedestrian, bicycle, and the motor vehicle.

STRATEGY 6.1:  
Streets with a Positive Community Image

STRATEGY 6.2:  
Interconnected Street Network

STRATEGY 6.3:  
Hierarchy of Streets

STRATEGY 6.4:  
Alleys

STRATEGY 6.5:  
Design Features

**7 PRINCIPLE SEVEN**

Variation within the design conformity creates the most visually positive communities.

STRATEGY 7.1:  
Variety and Variation in Neighborhoods

- Lot width
- Lot depth
- Blocks
- Alleys
- Build-to lines
- Build-up lines
- Non-residential uses
- Housing types

**8 PRINCIPLE EIGHT**

A mix of land uses, housing, jobs, and incomes creates a more balanced community, reduces traffic and maintenance costs, and better fiscal balance for Cortland.

STRATEGY 8.1:  
Mixed and Multiple Uses

STRATEGY 8.2:  
Housing Above Retail

STRATEGY 8.3:  
Housing Mix

STRATEGY 8.4:  
Attainable Housing

STRATEGY 8.5:  
Land Use Boundaries

STRATEGY 8.6:  
Large Floor Area Uses

**9 PRINCIPLE NINE**

Cortland is committed to maintaining its character and quality of place and the character and quality of place within its individual neighborhoods.

STRATEGY 9.1:  
Property Maintenance Codes

STRATEGY 9.2:  
Preservation of Cortland's Heritage

STRATEGY 9.3:  
Sense of Security

STRATEGY 9.4:  
High Level of Public Maintenance



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CHAPTER 5

# Implementation

Cortland has taken a major step towards realizing its vision by updating its a comprehensive plan. Implementing the plan is the next step. Careful consideration of the plan’s guidelines during all relevant deliberations by Town officials is the next step to implement the plan.

The Implementation Plan in this chapter takes the goals and objectives from Chapter 3 a few steps further by adding recommended strategies that help to activate the plan with projects and tasks the Town can take to implement the plan. Potential resources are also listed to provide further guidance for Town officials and local partners.

The plan was developed at a point in time with the knowledge that changing conditions may make revisions necessary. The Town should be open to amending the plan to continually position the community for progress. Periodically, often every five years, the plan should be reviewed in its entirety and an update prepared to respond to significant changes to community conditions, needs, and priorities.



### KEY PARTNERS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Achieving Cortland’s vision will be more likely if key partners come together to implement the plan. These key players and their roles are briefly described below.

#### TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees sets Town policy. Their approval is necessary to establish ordinances, allocate funds, enter contracts, and take other actions. Trustees should be familiar with the plan and consider whether proposed actions will move the Town towards achieving its vision.

#### PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission makes recommendations regarding the growth and development of the community. Planning Commissioners are specifically charged with considering whether proposals align with the Town’s plan. Planning Commissioners should be familiar with the plan and refer to it regularly in their deliberations. In addition, Commissioners should educate developers and others who come before them on the relevance of the plan and encourage applicants to create proposals that enhance the Town’s ability to achieve its vision.

#### RESIDENTS

It is important that residents support the plan and are involved in its implementation. The Town should make it easy for residents to be well informed on planning related issues and encourage them to participate in discussions, workshops, and other opportunities. Additionally, residents can lead the implementation of specific elements of the plan by serving on committees, raising funds, sharing information with their neighbors, volunteering their time, and sharing their expertise.

#### BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Local businesses can support plan implementation by communicating their needs to Town officials. Business success is critical to the Town’s overall success, and communication between the private and public sector is the first step in developing a business-friendly environment. Local financial institutions can support the plan through financing of projects that align with it. Corporations can support the plan through their own site development and growth plans and by supporting projects the Town undertakes. Real estate professionals and developers should be mindful of the kinds of projects that align with the plan.

#### DEKALB COUNTY

The Town should work closely with the County to coordinate growth efforts. The County can provide technical support valuable to the Town. The County’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the Town’s comprehensive plan should be mutually supportive.



## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

# 1: Growth & Development

**GOAL** | Cortland will grow in an intentional and cohesive manner.

<b>OBJECTIVE 1.1</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Guide Cortland's growth in accordance with the comprehensive plan to avoid haphazard or piecemeal development.
<b>STRATEGY 1.1A:</b> Make the Comprehensive Plan easily available on the Town website for access by developers, real estate professionals, and the general public. <b>STRATEGY 1.1B:</b> Educate the Planning Commission and Town Board on how to consult the Comp Plan as part of their regular order of business.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web design support from NIU 40TUDE students <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• APA Illinois Commissioner Training <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.2</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Support a diverse population.
<b>STRATEGY 1.2A:</b> Encourage diversity in the Town Board, committees, and commissions. <b>STRATEGY 1.2B:</b> Include diverse representation in Town visuals. <b>STRATEGY 1.2C:</b> Plan facilities and services that support a diverse range of ages, abilities, and lifestyles.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town statement supporting diversity</li> <li>• Updated recruitment and application processes for Town officials and appointees to encourage diversity</li> <li>• AARP Livable Communities best practices <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.3</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Collaborate with schools and other public service providers and utilities to match capacity with population growth.
<b>STRATEGY 1.3A:</b> Communicate regularly with the school district, fire district, and other service providers as proposed developments go through the Town review and approval process. <b>STRATEGY 1.3B:</b> Establish a schedule for service expansion.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklist for outside review on major projects</li> <li>• Annual State of the Town to review the past year's major developments and projects and preview upcoming ones</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.4</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Balance growth to maintain a small-town character.
<b>STRATEGY 1.4A:</b> Review impacts of proposed developments on population growth, school enrollment, scale of development, etc.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ULI Chicago's Building Health 21st Century Equitable Development Principles and Scorecard <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.5</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM	Build out existing incomplete and platted residential subdivisions.
<b>STRATEGY 1.5A:</b> Investigate obstacles to completion and ease where possible. <b>STRATEGY 1.5B:</b> Explore potential to consolidate certain parcels that may hold potential to include duplexes, triplexes, or other multi-family options to diversify the housing stock.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with owners of incomplete subdivisions</li> <li>• Identification of areas that may be appropriate to build non-single family housing options or large lot subdivisions</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.6</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM	Pursue annexation where appropriate.
<b>STRATEGY 1.6A:</b> Investigate annexation costs and benefits and prioritize parcels. <b>STRATEGY 1.6B:</b> Collaborate with adjacent municipalities to update boundary agreements.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA Annexation Studies <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Annexation Guide (Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington) <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>

Continued on next page



**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

# 1: Growth & Development

**GOAL** | Cortland will grow in an intentional and cohesive manner.

<b>OBJECTIVE 1.7</b> PRIORITY: ● LOWER Serve as an example of a sustainable community.	
<b>STRATEGY 1.7A:</b> Include appropriate regulations regarding sustainable development when updating the Zoning Code, e.g., native landscaping, stormwater management best practices, permeable paving materials, reduction of impervious surfaces, etc. <b>STRATEGY 1.7B:</b> Identify potential locations for pilot installation projects for bioswales, natural detention ponds, parking lots using permeable pavers, etc. <b>STRATEGY 1.7C:</b> Identify potential locations suitable for large scale renewable energy projects, such as solar farms and wind farms	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA Climate Change Resources <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Sustainable Development Code <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.8</b> PRIORITY: ● LOWER Develop infill sites.	
<b>STRATEGY 1.8A:</b> Identify key sites and desired uses. <b>STRATEGY 1.8B:</b> Ensure appropriate uses are identified as permitted or special uses on potential infill sites when updating the Zoning Code. <b>STRATEGY 1.8C:</b> Facilitate development on infill sites.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA Infill Development Resources <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>



**UPDATING THE ZONING CODE & MAP**

Several of the strategies summarized in the Implementation Plan relate to updating the Town's Zoning Code and Zoning Map to align with plan recommendations. Typically, this process to update the Zoning Code and Zoning Map is one of the first steps to follow the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. While the Future Land Use Plan and other recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan serve as a framework to guide growth and development in Cortland, the Zoning Code provides the legally enforceable regulations that guide how property owners can use, develop, and improve their land.

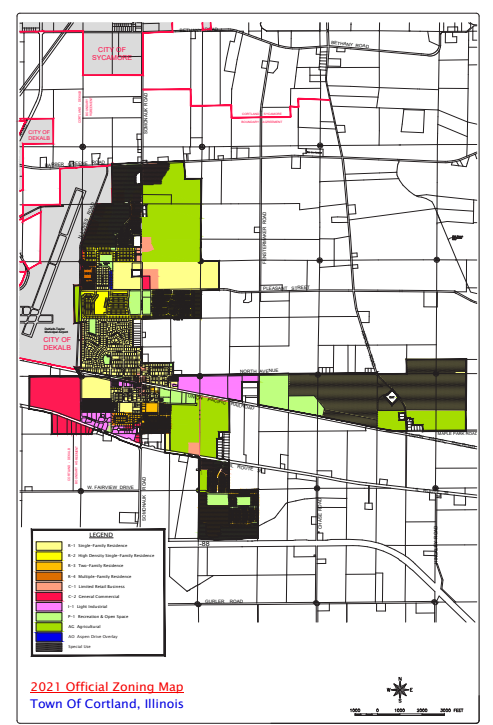
The strategies relating to updating the Zoning Code include:

- Strategy 1.7A: Sustainable development
- Strategy 1.8B: Special uses on infill sites
- Strategy 2.1A: Diverse residential uses
- Strategy 2.2B: Large lot homes
- Strategy 3.6A: Electric vehicles
- Strategy 4.7B: Uses on landfill site
- Strategy 7.2B: Uses on old school site
- Strategy 8.1A: Native plantings
- Strategy 8.2A: Conservation development
- Strategy 8.3A: Prairie restoration

# 2: Housing

**GOAL** | Cortland will offer a variety of housing to meet different needs.

<b>OBJECTIVE 2.1</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH Balance renter and owner-occupied units.	
<b>STRATEGY 2.1A:</b> Ensure a range of residential uses are identified as permitted or special uses when updating the Zoning Code. <b>STRATEGY 2.1B:</b> Coordinate with neighboring municipalities to conduct a regional housing study to identify needs and market potential.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village of Wauconda 2021 Building Code Update <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• CMAP Homes for a Changing Region <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Coordination with DeKalb and Sycamore</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.2</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM Consider large lot subdivisions and larger homes.	
<b>STRATEGY 2.2A:</b> Identify appropriate locations. <b>STRATEGY 2.2B:</b> Ensure residential zoning districts properly allow for large lot homes when updating the Zoning Code.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA Minimum Requirements for Lot and Building Size PAS Report <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>



## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## 3: Access & Mobility

**GOAL** | Cortland will be well connected internally and with neighboring communities through a variety of mobility options.

<b>OBJECTIVE 3.1</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Build an interconnected trail network.
<b>STRATEGY 3.1A:</b> Develop a phasing plan to prioritize buildout of trail segments. <b>STRATEGY 3.1B:</b> Apply for grant funds.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> • Illinois Trails Grant Programs <a href="#">[LINK]</a>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.2</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Prioritize and phase sidewalk improvements in the Town’s annual capital improvement plan.
<b>STRATEGY 3.2A:</b> Identify sidewalks that need improvement and any gaps in the sidewalk network. <b>STRATEGY 3.2B:</b> Develop a phasing plan to prioritize sidewalk improvements over time.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> • AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit <a href="#">[LINK]</a>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.3</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Promote a healthy lifestyle for all residents.
<b>STRATEGY 3.3A:</b> Consider walkability in plan reviews. <b>STRATEGY 3.3B:</b> Build out bike infrastructure around town, including on-street bike lanes, shared use on trails, bike racks in commercial areas and parks, etc.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> • APA Metrics for Planning Healthy Communities <a href="#">[LINK]</a> • AARP Walkability Resources <a href="#">[LINK]</a>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.4</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM	Examine transportation connections in the region.
<b>STRATEGY 3.4A:</b> Coordinate trail connections to the regional trail network. <b>STRATEGY 3.4B:</b> Participate in County-wide transportation planning efforts, including future updates to the 2019 DSATS Active Transportation Plan.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> • DSATS Active Transportation Plan <a href="#">[LINK]</a>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.5</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM	Support public transportation options such as a park and ride facility.
<b>STRATEGY 3.5A:</b> Coordinate informational meetings with the RTA, Metra, Pace, and other transit providers to learn details. <b>STRATEGY 3.5B:</b> Conduct a survey of Cortland and other DeKalb County communities to gauge interest in a park and ride facility.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> • RTA Programs and Projects <a href="#">[LINK]</a> • RTA Access & Parking Strategies for TOD <a href="#">[LINK]</a> • Metra Information <a href="#">[LINK]</a> • PaceBus Information <a href="#">[LINK]</a>
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.6</b> PRIORITY: ● LOWER	Support sustainable transportation such as electric vehicles.
<b>STRATEGY 3.6A:</b> Include appropriate regulations for electric vehicle charging stations when updating the Zoning Code. <b>STRATEGY 3.6B:</b> Identify locations to set up initial set of electric vehicle charging stations.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> • Community Planning Guide for Electric Vehicles <a href="#">[LINK]</a>





**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

# 4: Economic Development

**GOAL** | Cortland will prosper as a community by attracting new businesses and growing existing businesses.

<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4.1</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH</p>	<p>Attract retail along Somonauk Road and Route 38.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 4.1A:</b> Work with local realtors to provide a summary of site data for available sites that developers typically seek when evaluating potential sites. <b>STRATEGY 4.1B:</b> List available sites on the Town’s website. <b>STRATEGY 4.1C:</b> Consider unique uses not present in the DeKalb area that might draw visitors to Cortland.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ULI Chicago Building Healthy 21st Century Retail <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Rooster Ag, Inc. Owner Joe Ludwig, 630-774-5887 <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• DCEDC Available Sites Website <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Funway in Batavia <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4.2</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH</p>	<p>Pursue growth that enhances the tax base.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 4.2A:</b> Require a fiscal analysis to accompany all development proposals.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Reno Fiscal Impact Analysis Guidelines Memo <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4.3</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH</p>	<p>Encourage the growth of existing and small businesses</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 4.3A:</b> Connect businesses with technical assistance. <b>STRATEGY 4.3B:</b> Explore the creation of a small business incubator.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DeKalb County Business Incubator <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Kishwaukee Small Business Development, sbdc@kish.edu <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Fox Valley SCORE Entrepreneur and Small Business Support <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4.4</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM</p>	<p>Consider environmental impact of proposed businesses.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 4.4A:</b> Prioritize health &amp; welfare over possible business revenue.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA Metrics for Planning Healthy Communities <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4.5</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM</p>	<p>Leverage proximity of the airport and its growth potential.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 4.5A:</b> Identify potential aviation-themed businesses to attract near the airport, e.g., skydiving, flight schools, air tours, aviation-themed restaurant, etc. <b>STRATEGY 4.5B:</b> Coordinate with Amazon and other emerging businesses in the region to discuss how airport access may serve them.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport. Renee Riani, Airport Manager, 815-748-8102 <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC), guidance on airport related development <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• 2022 Illinois Aviation Systems Plan <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4.6</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM</p>	<p>Prioritize light industrial and research and development businesses.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 4.6A:</b> Research industrial and R&amp;D uses that benefit from locating near an Amazon facility and other emerging businesses in the region. <b>STRATEGY 4.6B:</b> Coordinate with NIU to identify the types of businesses that may benefit from being located close to a university offering research partnerships, student internships, etc.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA Planning for Freight Logistics and Industrial Development: Lessons Learned (Video) <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4.7</b> PRIORITY: ● LOWER</p>	<p>Maintain communication with DeKalb County to evaluate long term status of the existing landfill.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 4.7A:</b> Discuss potential options for long term use of the landfill site, including coordination with DeKalb County and others involved in the landfill’s operation. <b>STRATEGY 4.7B:</b> Evaluate the implications of potential annexation of the landfill site and any Zoning Code amendments that may be needed to support the site to remain as a landfill or reuse in different forms.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landfill Article: What Happens When a Landfill Is Full? <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Settler’s Hill Landfill End Use Plan <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>



## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## 5: Communications

**GOAL** | Cortland will encourage growth and development through outstanding communication.

<b>OBJECTIVE 5.1</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Develop a communications plan to attract business and industry to Cortland.	
<b>STRATEGY 5.1A:</b> Identify opportunities for Town officials to promote Cortland. <b>STRATEGY 5.1B:</b> Post summary of site data for available sites that developers typically seek when evaluating potential sites.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Council of Shopping Centers <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>Illinois Municipal League <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>Highland Park Communication Plan Example <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) Sites and Buildings Inventory <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>	
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.2</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM	Establish and maintain easy two-way communications channels with Town government for business- and residents.	
<b>STRATEGY 5.2A:</b> Establish and regularly update Town social media accounts. <b>STRATEGY 5.2B:</b> Develop a monthly or quarterly Town newsletter in digital and printed formats. <b>STRATEGY 5.2C:</b> Continue periodic Coffee with Town Officials events to provide informal forums for community interaction. <b>STRATEGY 5.2D:</b> Have a Town booth at community events where information is available and volunteers can answer questions/note comments.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey responses indicate preferred means of contact:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social media (70%)</li> <li>- Direct Email (48%)</li> <li>- Town Website (47%)</li> <li>- US Postal Service (44%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Town newsletter examples             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Village of Maple Park, IL <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>- City of DeKalb, IL <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.3</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM	Make information on potential development available on the Town's website.	
<b>STRATEGY 5.3A:</b> Provide a summary sheet or site plan for proposed developments. <b>STRATEGY 5.3B:</b> Properly link project information to related Planning Commission and Town Board meeting packets.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Geneva Development Projects <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>Online inventory of municipal meeting agendas and minutes <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>	

## 6: Utilities

**GOAL** | Cortland will ensure its utilities efficiently meet the needs of the community.

<b>OBJECTIVE 6.1</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Coordinate utility projects to save on future infrastructure expenses.	
<b>STRATEGY 6.1A:</b> Partner with other communities and districts to coordinate services and resources. <b>STRATEGY 6.1B:</b> Assess the impact of proposed developments on existing utilities infrastructure.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CMAP Infrastructure Coordination Resources <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>ASCE 2022 Report Card for Illinois Infrastructure <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>	
<b>OBJECTIVE 6.2</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Fill in gaps in high-speed internet service to ensure all homes, businesses, and public buildings have reliable access.	
<b>STRATEGY 6.2A:</b> Coordinate with existing and future businesses to identify internet service needs. <b>STRATEGY 6.2B:</b> Work with internet service providers to improve service, expand coverage, and offer up-to-date plans.	<b>RESOURCES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iFiber: High Speed Internet for Northwest Illinois <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>State of Illinois Broadband Expansion <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>	



**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

# 7: Community Facilities

**GOAL** | Cortland will focus its community facilities on meeting the needs of all residents and strengthening key locations.

<b>OBJECTIVE 7.1</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Provide equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities.
<p><b>STRATEGY 7.1A:</b> Ensure total amount of park space meets or exceeds national standards (1.1 acres of park space per 1,000 residents).</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 7.1B:</b> Ensure proposed residential developments provide for park or open space, including trail connections.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 7.1C:</b> Create parks and recreation facilities that accommodate different age groups.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AARP Parks and Public Spaces Resources <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• OSLAD Open Space Grants <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 7.2</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Assess the future use of the former school site.
<p><b>STRATEGY 7.2A:</b> Evaluate viable site redevelopment options.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 7.2B:</b> Ensure appropriate uses are identified as permitted or special uses for the former school site when updating the Zoning Code.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptive Reuse School Site Examples <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• APA Advancing Active Living through Adaptive Reuse <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• A Case for Reusing Old School Buildings <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 7.3</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM	Strengthen town core as a focal point for the community.
<p><b>STRATEGY 7.3A:</b> Prepare an updated plan for the town core.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 7.3B:</b> Prioritize town core as a preferred location for public facilities.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating Resilient and Vibrant Downtowns <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• USDA Downtown Revitalization Resources <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 7.4</b> PRIORITY: ● LOWER	Provide an indoor gathering space for community and private events.
<p><b>STRATEGY 7.4A:</b> Identify potential sites that accommodate gathering spaces.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 7.4B:</b> Coordinate public-private partnership to build out the space.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Elburn Hall Event Center <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>

# 8: Natural Resources

**GOAL** | Cortland will work with the area’s native attributes to preserve natural resources.

<b>OBJECTIVE 8.1</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Encourage native landscaping for storm water management.
<p><b>STRATEGY 8.1A:</b> Ensure a range of native plant types are permitted when updating the landscape requirements of the Zoning Code.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 8.1B:</b> Encourage native landscaping when reviewing planting materials for proposed developments.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tri-County RPC Stormwater Best Management Practices <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Lake County Streams and Stormwater Facilities Guide <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Illinois Dept of Natural Resources Plant List Guide <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 8.2</b> PRIORITY: ● HIGH	Preserve existing natural areas.
<p><b>STRATEGY 8.2A:</b> Consider adding conservation development standards that provide better protections for natural areas and properly integrate them into developments when updating the Zoning Code.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA Conservation Practice Standards <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• CMAP Conservation Design Resource Manual <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• APA Farm Protection Guide <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTIVE 8.3</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM	Investigate prairie restoration.
<p><b>STRATEGY 8.3A:</b> Consider integration of prairie restoration best practices when updating the Zoning Code.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 8.3B:</b> Identify locations for pilot prairie restoration projects.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Illinois Prairie Restoration <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Illinois Dept of Natural Resources Prairies List <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Illinois Dept of Natural Resources Prairies Resources <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>



**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

# 9: Agriculture Preservation

**GOAL** | Cortland will preserve its agricultural assets.

<p><b>OBJECTIVE 9.1</b> PRIORITY: ● MEDIUM</p>	<p>Identify agricultural buildings with reuse potential.</p>	
<p><b>STRATEGY 9.1A:</b> Create an inventory of all vacant or underutilized agricultural buildings.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 9.1B:</b> Work with building owners to explore potential adaptive reuse, e.g., event spaces, agricultural education spaces, food establishments, etc.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maple Park Wiltse’s Farm <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Kane County Barn Event Venue <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Naperville Green Barn <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Waterman Mora Farm <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Elburn Heritage Prairie Farm <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• Aurora Blackberry Farm <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 9.2</b> PRIORITY: ● LOWER</p>	<p>Preserve agricultural land.</p>	
<p><b>STRATEGY 9.2A:</b> Educate owners on preservation options.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY 9.2B:</b> Create an inventory of all agricultural land that should be preserved for: (a) active farming, (b) open space conservation, or (c) potential development. Develop a monthly or quarterly Town newsletter in digital and printed formats.</p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illinois Department of Agriculture Farmland Protection <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> <li>• American Farmland Trust <a href="#">[LINK]</a></li> </ul>	





# Appendix

<b>Complete Demographic Analysis</b>	<b>A1</b>
<b>Future Land Use Plan Scenarios</b>	<b>A2</b>
Scenario A	
Scenario B	
Scenario C	
<b>Community Design Principles</b>	<b>A3</b>
From 2007 Comprehensive Plan	



