

City of Corning Comprehensive Plan
Public Open House – Thursday, June 13, 2024

Summary

Board: The Future of Corning

Question: How would you describe the City of Corning?

Overall, the city is seen as a welcoming, safe, and friendly place with a vibrant downtown, strong sense of community, and a good mix of small-town charm and urban amenities.

1. Activities & Events:

- a. A lot of fun activities, live music events, and diverse art community support.
- b. Lots to do downtown, including outdoor concerts and murals.
- c. A place that hosts festivals and has potential for more events in the civic plaza.
- d. More fun needed on Market Street and positive development of parks.

2. Community and Atmosphere:

- a. Close-knit and "inspired" community with a balance of small-town charm and arts.
- b. Friendly, welcoming, and accepting environment.
- c. Safe, pleasant, and family-friendly place.
- d. Sense of community and inclusivity.
- e. Strong downtown area with beautiful buildings and parks.

3. Urban & Rural Balance:

- a. Small town with a rich history and vibrant historic downtown.
- b. Quaint, safe, and tourism-friendly.
- c. Combines the serenity and natural beauty of a rural town with the walkability and diverse business area of an urban city.
- d. Much more vibrant and cosmopolitan compared to other similar-sized towns/cities.

4. Walkability & Accessibility:

- a. Proximity of amenities.
- b. Walkable with good sidewalks and parks.
- c. Small river city with strong corporate influences.

5. Family & Living:

- a. Perfect for raising children, though fewer opportunities for teenagers.
- b. Good schools and recreation options.
- c. A great place to live, work, and raise a family.
- d. Family-friendly zones and supportive for seniors with facilities like the OFA and Senior Center.

6. Economic & Business Environment:

- a. Home to many independent small businesses, promoting local shopping.
- b. A business town that is inviting and has a lot to offer.
- c. Elements that can foster sustainability with walkable/bikeable areas.
- d. Parking challenges on Market Street.
- e. Need for more fun and entertainment options to enhance downtown vibrancy and activity.

7. Opportunities & Potential:
 - a. Untapped potential, especially on Main Street and Market Street.
 - b. Potential for growth in “equal opportunity” parks and development of a pool.
 - c. Great quality of life but lacking opportunities for younger adults to stay after college.
 - d. Generally pleasant but not fully living up to its potential.
8. Safety & Affordability:
 - a. Considered more affordable than big cities.
 - b. Safe and secure environment, especially important for seniors.

Board: The Future of Corning

Question: What are your biggest hopes for the future?

The biggest hopes for the future include improved infrastructure, better city management, and enhanced public amenities and transportation. Economic growth and community aspirations focus on supporting local businesses, affordable housing, superior public schools, inclusivity, and arts funding. Environmental sustainability, visionary leadership, and a thriving, safe, and diverse community with strong local support are also key priorities.

1. Infrastructure & Development:
 - a. Improved parks and playgrounds, making them attractive and well-maintained.
 - b. More public art, including interactive and sculpture parks.
 - c. Grants for fixing up older homes and maintaining properties.
 - d. Better city management and leadership with modern goals.
 - e. Enhanced recycling facilities and functional public restrooms.
 - f. Better parking solutions and improved public transportation.
2. Economic Growth & Employment:
 - a. Continued growth of local businesses and the community.
 - b. Attracting and retaining more major employers and entrepreneurs.
 - c. Encouraging small, locally-owned businesses and keeping chain stores out.
 - d. Affordable housing options and better-maintained rental properties.
 - e. Development of work force housing to support a diverse community.
3. Community & Quality of Life:
 - a. Enhanced public schools, aiming to be the best in the state.
 - b. Creating a welcoming, inclusive, and diverse community, particularly for the LGBTQ+ community.
 - c. More arts funding and a vibrant public art scene.
 - d. Improved public amenities, such as pools, bus services, and seating near markets.
 - e. Increased community engagement through volunteering & supporting local artists.
4. Environment & Sustainability:
 - a. Planting more trees and focusing on environmental sustainability city-wide.
 - b. Climate-smart programs and lead remediation for “non-GLW” properties.
 - c. Promoting outdoor recreation and maintaining green spaces.
 - d. Keeping public pools open and creating more outdoor community events.

5. Culture & Recreation:

- a. More performance arts, including big-name music and theater acts.
- b. Creating more events and activities for teenagers and families.
- c. Expanding arts and cultural events, making the city known for its art scene.
- d. Developing public spaces for events, such as a civic plaza and a state park.
- e. Encouraging active theater groups and kid-friendly events.

6. Vision & Leadership:

- a. Visionary and action-oriented leadership with a focus on modernizing the city.
- b. More opportunities for young people and families to stay local.
- c. Using social media to engage with the community and promote city events.
- d. Maintaining a balance of historic preservation and new development.
- e. Creating a comprehensive plan that addresses economic activity, climate change, and sustainability.

7. Transportation & Accessibility:

- a. Improved sidewalks, bicycle-friendly lanes, and pedestrian infrastructure.
- b. Better accessibility for people using wheelchairs or strollers.
- c. Reducing reliance on cars, such as closing Market Street to vehicles during certain events.

8. Overall Hopes:

- a. A thriving city that attracts families and young professionals.
- b. More affordable and diverse housing options.
- c. Continued sense of community and support for local initiatives.
- d. Maintaining safety, kindness, and sustainability as core values.
- e. Ensuring that Corning Inc. remains a stable and supportive presence in the community.
- f. Enhanced public art and recreational facilities that make the city a desirable destination.

Board: Land Use

Question: What are the City's biggest opportunities?

The City's biggest opportunities include enhancing family-friendly amenities and leveraging natural beauty to boost tourism and outdoor activities. Supporting local businesses, utilizing empty buildings, and promoting economic and community development through infrastructure improvements, affordable housing, and downtown events are also key opportunities. Additionally, the city can focus on environmental preservation, cultural & artistic initiatives, and overall quality of life enhancements to attract a diverse demographic and make it a desirable place to live.

1. Family-Friendly Amenities:

- a. Enhance Fallbrook with restrooms, playgrounds, and a Pump Park to attract families.
- b. Develop an aquatics facility similar to Harris Hill and Eldridge, with splash pads, community pools, improved playgrounds, public restrooms, and connected walk/run trails along the river.

2. Tourism and Natural Beauty:
 - a. Leverage the city's proximity to natural beauty and resources.
 - b. Attract large employers to draw a diverse demographic.
 - c. Improve Chemung River access and bike trails.
3. Support for Creative Population and Local Businesses:
 - a. Encourage support for Market Street businesses.
 - b. Engage people in volunteer and financial efforts.
 - c. Expand support for varied businesses with extended hours.
4. Utilization of Empty Buildings:
 - a. Repurpose large empty buildings creatively.
 - b. Consider creative uses for spaces like the old Corelle Store and Planned Parenthood VFW.
5. Economic and Community Development:
 - a. Address low taxes compared to school funding needs.
 - b. Incentivize businesses with improved infrastructure such as pump tracks, bike trails, river access, outdoor dining, and public restrooms.
 - c. Develop downtown events, scenery, and businesses.
 - d. Implement affordable housing initiatives.
 - e. Use grants for restoration and senior housing projects.
6. Outdoor and Recreational Opportunities:
 - a. Promote river view experiences, outdoor dining, and a riverwalk.
 - b. Utilize parks for outdoor concerts, community arts, picnics, and lawn games.
 - c. Audit downtown stores to identify and address gaps.
 - d. Enhance the river for activities like kayaking and group tours.
7. Environmental and Historical Preservation:
 - a. Emphasize residential historic preservation with grants and education.
 - b. Advocate for climate-smart initiatives and compost programs.
 - c. Preserve and expand tree canopy and address environmental factors.
8. Cultural and Artistic Initiatives:
 - a. Appeal to artists and creatives to build a gig economy.
 - b. Incorporate public art and commercial opportunities for engineers and artists.
 - c. Develop mixed-use spaces on Market Street with residential areas above storefronts.
9. Additional Recreational Improvements:
 - a. Improve ice skating rink facilities and connectivity between parks and trails.
 - b. Install natural play elements and outdoor fitness stations.
 - c. Create engaging attractions like a "glass" park to encourage repeat visits.
10. General Quality of Life Enhancements:
 - a. Focus on natural beauty and stable climate to make Corning an attractive place to live.
 - b. Implement children's skate aids and improve bathrooms at recreational facilities.

Board: Land Use

Question: What are the City's biggest obstacles?

The city's biggest obstacles include a lack of affordable housing, poor neighborhood connectivity, high taxes, and insufficient employment opportunities. Quality of life issues such as limited activities for teenagers and poorly maintained infrastructure also pose challenges. Additionally, there are concerns about community representation, engagement, and the need for better regulation, governance, and clear future planning.

1. Housing:

- a. Lack of affordable housing and insufficient housing density.
- b. Poor connectivity between neighborhoods.
- c. Poorly maintained homes and rentals.
- d. High housing costs and low-quality housing stock.
- e. Absentee landlords and old-fashioned mindsets hindering progress.

2. Quality of Life:

- a. Difficulty in organizing quality of life events due to police opposition.
- b. Need for more fun activities and events, especially for teenagers.
- c. Lack of affordable amenities.
- d. More consistent sidewalks needed.

3. Taxes:

- a. High taxes compared to neighboring areas.
- b. Exploration of other revenue opportunities beyond high taxes.

4. Employment & Economic Development:

- a. More employment opportunities needed for the local community.
- b. Need for a few more large and well-paying employers.
- c. Over-reliance on a single employer that supports the local economy.
- d. Retaining and attracting young, prime working-age people and families.
- e. Need for more high-paying jobs and employers.
- f. Finding and retaining talent.
- g. More support for businesses outside the Gaffer District and off-Market Street.

5. Community Representation & Engagement:

- a. Lack of diversity in representation on boards and management groups.
- b. Perceived division between community leaders and the general public.
- c. Lack of support and buy-in from residents.

6. Infrastructure & Urban Development:

- a. Poorly maintained properties in some areas.
- b. Connectivity with neighboring cities beyond car transportation.
- c. Parking issues.
- d. Need to change building codes to maintain historic integrity.
- e. Need for more land development opportunities.
- f. Perception of Corning as the "City of No" hindering potential development.

7. Civic and Cultural Activities:

- a. Underutilization of the Civic Center Rink for arts, music, dance, and theater during spring, summer, and fall.

- b. Need for more activities and events that do not conflict with the interests of Corning Inc.
- 8. Regulation & Governance:
 - a. Need for more consistent and enforced regulations based on New York State laws.
- 9. Overall Vision & Planning:
 - a. Clear vision for the city's development and future planning.
 - b. Addressing funding challenges to support various initiatives.

Board: Community Values
Prompt: Select your top values.

Value	Count
Environment and Recreation	43
Economic Vitality	30
Arts and Culture	28
Sustainability	22
Growth and Change	17
Connectivity & Accessibility	14
Equity and Inclusion	13
Health and Wellness	9

Other (write-in answers):

- **Housing & Property Management**
 - Affordable Housing: Emphasized repeatedly as a core value, with calls for more affordable rental properties and true middle-income housing options.
 - Landlord Responsibility: A strong demand for landlords to be more responsible for maintaining their properties, with suggestions that neglectful landlords should face penalties.
 - Reducing Substandard Housing: The community seeks ways to reduce substandard housing and improve existing properties, including turning vacant houses into livable homes.
- **Infrastructure & Public Spaces**
 - Park Maintenance: Calls to improve the condition and cleanliness of local parks, including McKinney Park's tennis and basketball courts and the maintenance of public pools.
 - Public Arts: A desire for the implementation of a public arts program to enhance the community's cultural environment.
 - Use of Public Spaces: Increased utilization of public spaces, such as the rink for community events and providing free parking at key locations like the library and City Hall.
- **Environmental & Community Health**
 - Climate Resiliency: The community values initiatives aimed at making the city more resilient to climate change.

- Recycling: There is a call for expanded recycling programs, specifically to include more types of plastics and other materials.
- General Community Well-being
 - Employment: The community sees employment opportunities as a critical component of their values, linked closely with housing affordability.
 - Neighborhood Upkeep: A strong belief that all homes, even vacant ones, should be well-maintained to foster neighborhood pride and safety.

Board: Public Amenity Needs

Prompt: Which public amenities would you like to see added or expanded within the city?

Amenity	Count
Recreation Amenities	50
Streetscape Improvements	33
Downtown Improvements	25
Transportation Options	21
Public Facilities	15
ADA Improvements	8

Other (write-in answers):

- Parks & Recreational Spaces
 - Dog Parks: Strong demand for dog parks, mentioned multiple times.
 - Playground Upgrades: Major upgrades needed for Denison Park’s playground, which is currently broken and unsafe.
 - Bike Racks: Requests for more bike racks around businesses and parks.
 - Canfield Park: Specific mention of improving Canfield Park.
- Public Infrastructure & Facilities
 - Public Art: Incorporate public art into infrastructure, such as benches & bike racks.
 - Bathrooms: Need for working bathrooms at McKinney Park.
 - Parking: Improvements in parking infrastructure, including:
 - Fixing parking meters and adding more free parking options.
 - Simplifying alternate side of the street parking (confuses non-residents)
- Environmental & Community Projects
 - Pet Waste Management: Better control of pet feces in residential areas.
 - Food Composting: City-wide food compost programs.
 - Community Gardens: Increased access to community gardens.
- Housing & Neighborhood Improvement
 - Home Improvement Grants: Opportunities for homeowners to apply for state or county-funded home improvement grants.
 - Neighborhood Beautification: Projects focused on beautifying neighborhoods.
 - Support for Homeowners: Assistance for homeowners to improve ailing properties.
- Education & Community Services
 - Public School Funding: Commitment to funding and enriching public schools.

Additional Comments:

- **Board: Demographic Profile**
 - “Racial Diversity should be checked - seems wrong”

- **Board: Assets & Access**
 - "Repair sidewalks and make neighborhoods more walkable"
 - “Idea: an app where you take a picture, write the address, that gets sent to DPW and they repair the damaged road/sidewalk. Some cities ave an app like this"
 - "Corning can be a very bikeable/walkable city. We need safe bike lanes and safe sidewalks.”
 - “Corning should be the most walkable city in NY but we build for cars instead of kids.”
 - “More walking/cycling paths would be great e.g. a walking/biking path along the river”
 - "Idea: Convert unused RRs into bike trails; work with other neighboring communities and make a single bike network out of unused RRs. "

- **Board: Open Space & Recreation**
 - “Some outdoor exercise equipment i.e. body-weight exercise equipment for adults would be great. In all parks, incl McKinney Park (for example, pull-up bars)”
 - “Canandaigua has a great dog park that is \$3 a year for City residents. Would be nice to have that here too.”
 - “Lets embrace the river instead of acting like it's not there. Create access! The trail is only a start.”
 - “Bike lanes that connect”
 - “Plenty of room on Tioga Ave for a bike land that actually connects to SOMETHING.”

- **Board: Zoning**
 - “Allow ADM's in all districts”
 - “Become a NYS pro housing community”
 - “A walking/biking trail along the river would be great (longer than just on the northside ridge e.g. along the bank to Elmira on southside bank, etc.”
 - “Mixed-use buildings would be nice (1st floor business, higher floors residential)”

- **Board: Land Use**
 - “Public service description isn't clear. Maybe reword as public lands restricted by county, state feds, etc.”
 - “We should have R districts that allow mixed density - this much R is not working. Very dated zoning!”