

Chapter 3: Vision, Policy and Objectives



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Vision Statement

“It is the vision of the City of Oswego to be a great place to grow up, raise a family, pursue a career, and retire comfortably. It will be a place known for its:

- Safe & attractive neighborhoods
- Scenic natural resources & sustainable development practices
- Diverse leisure & cultural assets
- Positive community attitude & leadership
- Strong local economy & tourism industry
- Quality community resources & educational system
- Vital downtown area
- Cooperative spirit

The city will strive to achieve this vision through effective leadership, by empowering its citizens, capitalizing on its assets, and ensuring future investments are designed in a manner that minimize the City’s environmental footprint and leave a rich heritage for generations to enjoy.”

Overview

Based on feedback received from the New Visions Initiative, described in Chapter 2, several policy areas were identified for the City. The policy statements and objectives for each policy area relate to the vision for the City of Oswego. Each of the eight policy areas are outlined throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The Vision for the City of Oswego was developed based on feedback generated by the steering committee, stakeholders and public.

Community members expressed similar goals including the need to strengthen city-wide and regional partnerships, strengthen residential neighborhoods, and capitalize on the tourism potential of the City’s heritage and natural resources.

Feedback obtained from the public was used to formulate the policy and objectives for the City of Oswego.

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1. Community Attitude & Leadership

Policy:

It is the policy of the City of Oswego to create a positive atmosphere in which communication, leadership and collective action are supported as residents and civic leaders work together to address the community's common goals. The city as a whole will celebrate community life and encourage residents and civic leaders to respect one another, collaborate, share their ideas and work together to make our community the best small city on the great lakes.

Objectives:

1. Publicize the Vision and Mission statements and the direction proposed in the City of Oswego 2020 Vision Comprehensive Plan.
2. Continue to foster a more positive relationship between SUNY Oswego, its students and the City.
3. Capitalize on all leadership opportunities within the community (i.e., faith community, business leaders, etc.).
4. Encourage constructive communication among residents, government, merchants and civic leaders.
5. Continually recruit new volunteers and develop new leaders in the community.



City Hall — Oswego, NY.



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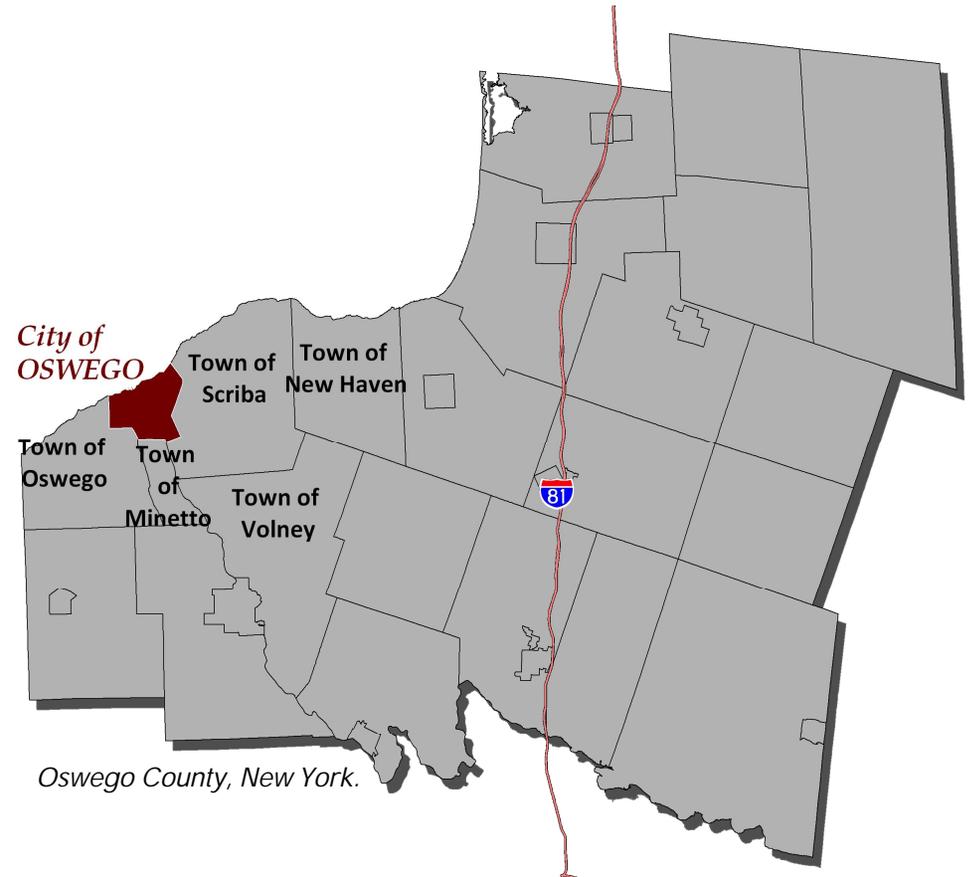
2. Regional Partnerships

Policy:

It is the policy of the City of Oswego to seek out opportunities for inter-municipal relationships that will strengthen the regional economy, protect sensitive environmental resources and preserve features that are essential to local character. The city recognizes that its future well-being is directly tied to its ability to work with surrounding communities. The City of Oswego also understands the importance of establishing connections with Canadian cities along Lake Ontario.

Objectives:

1. Increase cooperation and collaboration with the County in an effort to provide more comprehensive services and minimize duplication of services (i.e., tourism, commerce).
2. Strengthen relationships with surrounding municipalities and government agencies in an effort to pursue common goals (i.e. economic development).
3. Increase awareness of regional heritage and cultural resources (i.e., underground railroad, waterways and transportation corridor development).
4. Capitalize on the expansion and improvements being made in neighboring towns and cities.
5. Work with regional partners in adjacent towns and cities to develop a strategic plan for economic development, tourism promotion and environmental conservation.



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3. Community Resources & Education

Policy:

It is the policy of the City of Oswego to have community resources and educational institutions that meet the needs of residents and support local businesses. The city enjoys the health and safety benefits provided through various municipal services (police, fire and snow removal, etc.). A strong emphasis on education continues as relationships with Oswego City School District and SUNY Oswego are strengthened. The community's well-being is addressed by various non-profit social service agencies, health care providers, adult and youth organizations, the park system, historical and cultural organizations located in the city. The collective efforts of these groups and services are essential to the health, success and well-being of the community and its residents.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen relations with SUNY Oswego and the Oswego City School District.
2. Continue and improve delivery of services necessary to ensure residents' health, safety and welfare (i.e. utilities, education, etc.) .
3. Maintain or increase the amount of park and open space accessible to residents and visitors.
4. Establish a system for sharing information about available services in Oswego, with emphasis on targeting new residents.
5. Expand health care resources, especially in women's health and specialized fields.
6. Create additional conference, performance and exhibit space in the downtown area to showcase local, regional and national artists.



Armory Building — Oswego, NY.



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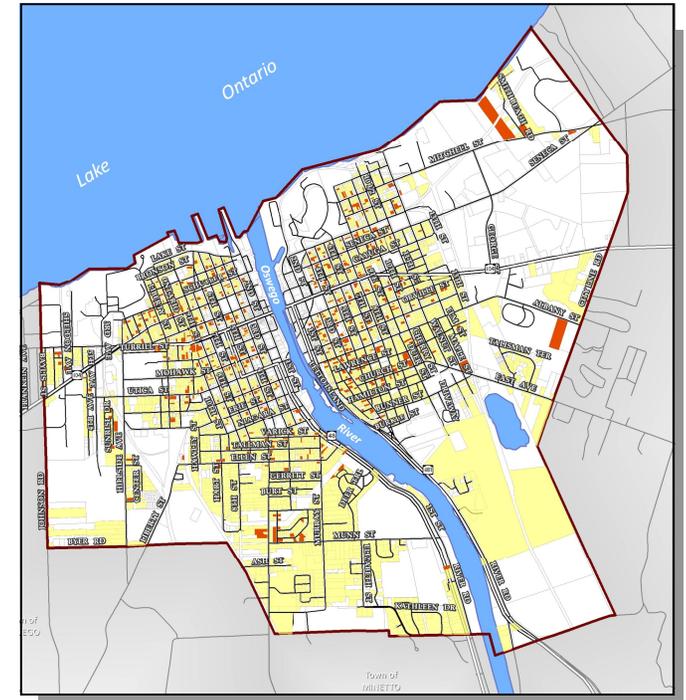
4. Neighborhoods

Policy:

It is the policy of the City of Oswego to have neighborhoods that are a source of community pride and healthy lifestyles. The existing neighborhoods within the city accommodate a variety of lifestyles, while enhancing the daily lives of residents and visitors by providing safe and convenient access to downtown, local parks, the waterfront, and other various community resources. The preservation of the historic character, aesthetic appeal and traditional style of existing neighborhoods should continue to be a priority of the community.

Objectives:

1. Improve appearance and aesthetic appeal of housing stock and neighborhoods.
2. Preserve and promote the significant architectural heritage of residential, retail and commercial spaces throughout the city.
3. Expand current range (i.e. size, cost, type, density) of housing options while working to improve the overall property values in the area.
4. Preserve existing trees and tree lawns, and encourage the planting of additional trees where appropriate.
5. Ensure safety of pedestrians and motorists along neighborhood streets by enforcing traffic laws.
6. Improve zoning and code enforcement to ensure consistent standards are being set and followed.
7. Increase residential living opportunities downtown.
8. Ensure that utilities and maintenance services do not detract from neighborhoods.
9. Explore alternative parking strategies.
10. Ensure that recreation opportunities exist within or in close proximity of each neighborhood.



Dispersion of residential neighborhoods in the City of Oswego.

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5. Leisure & Culture

Policy:

It is the policy of the City of Oswego to provide and promote its wide variety of leisure and cultural opportunities to the community and beyond. Lake Ontario and the Canal present significant opportunities for waterfront and water-related activities and events. In addition, Oswego enjoys several historical attractions, such as Fort Ontario, Safe Haven Museum, the Oswego Civic Arts Center and the Marine Museum, which draw regional and national attention. Oswego will continue to support its existing cultural assets and leisure activities as well as provide new opportunities for residents and visitors.

Objectives:

1. Expand recreational activities related to Lake Ontario including the public access to the Lake and expanded boating and fishing facilities.
2. Promote the city's unique heritage in the events and attractions conducted throughout the year.
3. Expand recreational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of residents in every age group.
4. Increase collaboration with SUNY Oswego and the Oswego School District to provide a wide variety of arts and cultural choices to residents and visitors.
5. Improve the coordination of cultural activities and communication among all sponsoring parties.
6. Complete trail system connecting significant cultural/historical landmarks.
7. Place cultural uses in the downtown area.



Breitbeck Park — Oswego, NY.



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6. Local Commerce and Tourism

Policy:

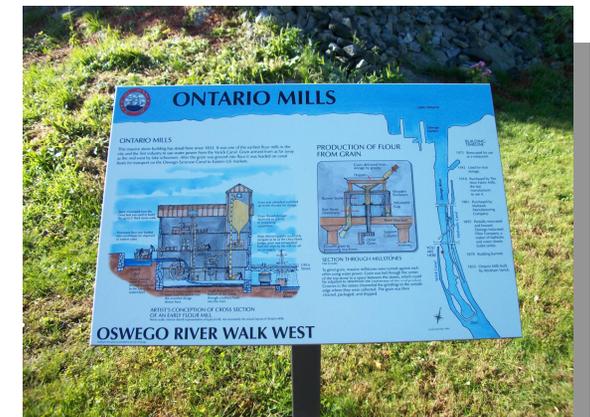
It is the policy of the City of Oswego to be a community that attracts and maintains diverse, successful businesses and offers a creative environment that is supportive of innovation. The City continues to collaborate with educational institutions, local businesses and manufacturers to jumpstart innovation through research and development. These initiatives seek to develop well-paying jobs; offer meaningful career opportunities; and provide long term economic stability to the community. The City's International Port, shipping, electrical generating facilities, health care network, and SUNY Oswego are some examples of the major employers that require our continued support. In order to retain our young people, the City recognizes the need to provide a wide variety of industries, retail and service opportunities that will be a source for long-term careers. In addition, the City will promote itself as a center for technology and tourism by marketing its quality of life to communities throughout the region and abroad, as well as to its own residents.

Objectives:

1. Improve sustainable transportation access especially related to rail, cycling and waterways.
2. Reduce energy costs and support alternative energy production.
3. Capitalize on the tourism potential of the City's heritage and natural resources.
4. Improve branding and consistent signage throughout the City to encourage tourism and improve quality of life.
5. Ensure that the City of Oswego is easily accessible to all people.
6. Increase utilization of Port facilities.
7. Expand the Micro enterprise and Oswego Network of Entrepreneurs and promote "Buy Local" campaigns.
8. Expand the tax base through nurturing new business and housing development and expanding job opportunities within the City of Oswego.
9. Improve visibility of tourist events and conferences through networking.



City of Oswego Lighthouse.



Interpretive signage at Oswego River Walk West.

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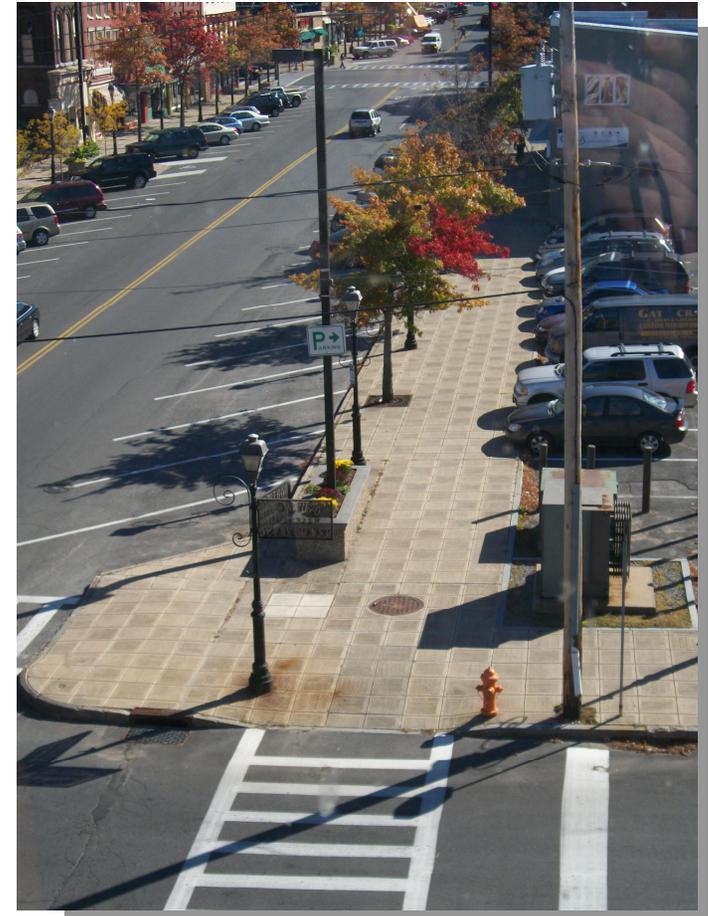
7. Main Street/Downtown

Policy:

It is the policy of the City of Oswego to have a vibrant, visually appealing Main Street / downtown area which offers residents and visitors a variety of services, shopping opportunities, cultural attractions, job opportunities and unique housing options. The city recognizes that downtown's success requires safe, easy access for both pedestrians and motorists. In addition, the diversity and appeal of the products and services offered by downtown merchants, as well as the purchasing power of the community, will directly impact the area's vitality.

Objectives:

1. Develop a more pedestrian friendly Main Street and downtown area.
2. Improve the appearance of the Main Street / downtown area;
3. Preserve and promote the historical buildings and character.
4. Ensure adequate parking is available to support the uses in the downtown area.
5. Increase the number and diversity of businesses along Main Street; establish "niche" retail opportunities unavailable elsewhere in Oswego.
6. Promote and market the downtown area to city residents and SUNY students, as well as to the region, state and nation.
7. Identify zoning changes that will improve the appearance, usage and maintenance of downtown buildings.
8. Increase the availability and visibility of resources to assist Downtown visitors (i.e., signage, visitor guides, kiosks, etc.).



West First Street in downtown Oswego.



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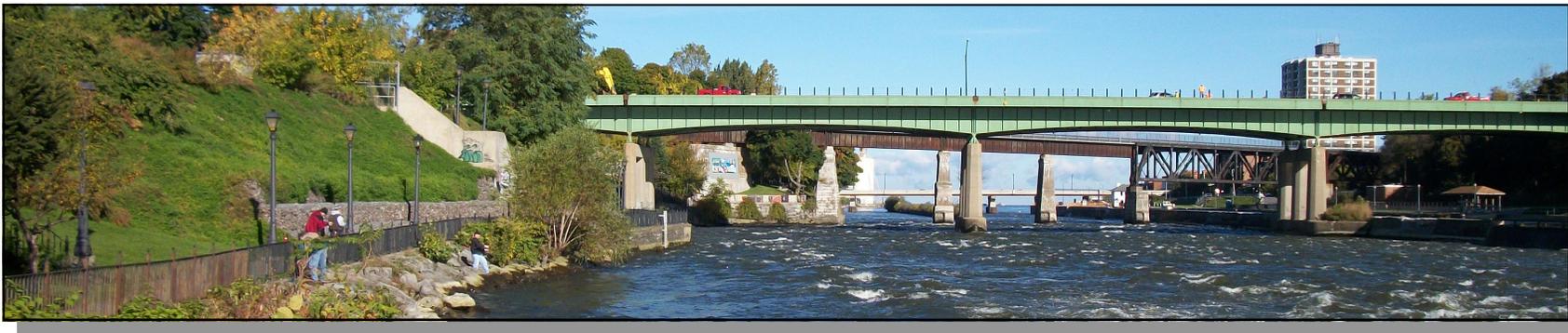
8. Natural Resources & Sustainability

Policy:

It is the policy of the City of Oswego to be a community that preserves and enhances the quality of its natural resources (i.e. air, land, and water) through the combined efforts of its residents, businesses and government. Sustainable development practices, proper zoning guidelines, and community stewardship should be employed to reduce or eliminate the degradation of these resources. In particular, special attention should be given to the waterfront areas (lake and river) due to their environmental, aesthetic and recreational value. The city will protect its natural resources so that future generations can enjoy a similar or improved quality of life and standard of living.

Objectives:

1. Pursue green technologies and energy conservation techniques to minimize the community's environmental footprint.
2. Ensure that future development activities protect and sustain our environment and address coastal erosion.
3. Develop interpretive and educational trails to promote environmental awareness and develop tourist attractions on Oswego County lands.
4. Protect and promote the City's natural resources.
5. Employ safety measures related to nuclear plant operation and storage.
6. Identify, remediate and redevelop brownfield and underutilized properties to expand the tax base and to promote job creation and housing development.



The Oswego River.