

APPENDIX H – PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

This project was initiated by the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO), a “regional membership organization that partners with many government and economic development entities at the Federal, State and local level. The purpose of FDRLO is to foster effective communication and cooperation between the military and civilian communities of the Fort Drum region. FDRLO has played a key role over the years in building strong ties between Fort Drum and the surrounding communities; promoting the North Country region to Army families as an attractive place to live; and leading efforts to support Fort Drum and keep it off from the Department of Defense’s most recent Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list.” As the primary contact between the military and civilian communities, FDRLO commissioned this study to help facilitate communication regarding planning and quality of life on Fort Drum and in the surrounding communities.

This spirit of communication has been brought to bear on the development of the Fort Drum Growth Management Strategy. Behan Planning Associates, LLC, as the lead consultant on the project, was charged with designing and implementing an open and comprehensive public outreach process to ensure that the Growth Management Strategy reflects the values, goals and knowledge of regional communities and Fort Drum. Specifically, the following public outreach efforts were conducted as part of this planning process:



Stakeholder and Local Leader Interviews

A series of stakeholder and small focus group interviews were conducted in all three counties to get a clearer understanding of the issues and opportunities facing the region. Interviews were also used in a targeted manner, to secure important data. A concerted effort was made to conduct interviews in person, although some initial interviews, as well as follow up questions from in-person interviews, were conducted by phone. Those interviewed represented a large and diverse cross section of viewpoints and experiences, from local business, political and community leaders, to local residents, to military and civilian Fort Drum personnel. The results of these interviews greatly informed the direction and focus of this project.

Focus Group and Roundtable Meetings

A series of focus group meetings were held in the region, to focus on specific issues or geographic areas. These meetings consisted of presentations followed by question and answer sessions as well as open discussion and exchange of ideas. It should be noted that a representative from FDRLO and the Fort Drum Community Planner attended virtually every focus group meeting held during the course of this project. Specifically, the following meetings were held:

- January 2008 – “St Lawrence County Round Table,” Canton
- March 2008 – “Gate Communities Meeting,” LeRay
- April 2008 – “Lewis County Round Table,” Lowville
- April 2008 – “Preliminary Strategies and Partnerships Focus Group Meeting,” On-Post at Fort Drum
- June 2008 – “Wheeler Sack AAF/South Post Area Focus Group Meeting,” West Carthage
- June 2008 – “North Post Training Area Focus Group Meeting,” Philadelphia
- July 2008 – “Communication Strategies Focus Group Meeting,” Watertown

Public Meetings and Workshops

The following public meetings and workshops were held during the course of this project:

February 2008 – “Kick-Off” Presentation

Early findings related to the Fort Drum Community Growth Management Strategy were presented to local residents at Jefferson Community College in Watertown as part of the Tug Hill Commission’s Regional Growth Management Workshop Series. After the presentation, between 80 and 100 area residents discussed the presentation, with a focus on growth and development in the region and recent changes at Fort Drum.

June 2008 – “Envisioning Growth”

In June 2008, three public workshops were conducted in the region (one in each county – Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Lewis) to discuss the future implications of growth on a regional scale, as well as to discuss growth in a more concrete manner, utilizing a community preference exercise that asked participants to rate images depicting various forms of development. The content and results of these workshops are described in detail in Chapter 3 of this plan.

October 2008 – Presentation of Fort Drum Growth Management Strategy

In October 2008, three public workshops were conducted in the region (one in each county – Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Lewis) to present findings and recommendations of the Fort Drum Growth Management Strategy. Public feedback from these meetings was incorporated into the final draft of the Fort Drum Growth Management Strategy.

