

# Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan

## *Summary of Input from 11/27/07 Public Workshop*

### A: SWOT Analysis

In a “free for all” group discussion, workshop participants were asked to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the Town of LeRay. Out of this list, workshop participants were then asked to vote on which Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats were the most important to them in the town.

The results of these exercises are summarized below.

#### 1) Complete listing of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

##### Strengths

Proximity to Fort Drum

Lots of undeveloped/open lands

Diversity of the community

Good schools

Convenient stopping place when going to points north on Route 11

Good hunting

Small town aspect

Proximity to Canada, 1000 Islands, Adirondacks, Syracuse

Lower taxes in comparison to surrounding areas

##### Weaknesses

Proximity to Fort Drum

Weather in the area, especially in the winter

Lack of proximity and access to major airports

Taxes

Lack of recreational trails in the area

Lack of a true community center in LeRay

Lack of public transportation

Too much thru traffic to Fort Drum

Escalating housing costs in the area

Increasing crime

Lack of complete infrastructure system in the town, forcing dependence on neighboring communities to provide services.

### Opportunities

Power independence, through use of alternative energy sources, such as wind power, biofuels, and small generation plants.

Putting a plan in place for community development

Enhancement of recreation opportunities, especially for youths, including "alternative sports" such as BMX and skateboarding

Movie Theater (Family Focused)

Sit-down eating establishments

Economic opportunities related to Fort Drum

Supporting local businesses, including agriculture and small businesses

Preservation of land by providing options to landowners such as a purchase of development rights program that will limit the development of viable farmland by large-scale developers

Increased outdoor motorized recreational opportunities, such as snowmobile and ATV trails

Adult entertainment establishments within LeRay

Location of a stand-alone supermarket within LeRay

Commercial and residential infill within the villages and hamlets

Location of a health club within LeRay

Increased business development in the town

Improving access to the Black River, and awareness of rental opportunities for outdoor equipment

Creating more natural looking, attractive development in LeRay

Sensitivity and support for local, small-scale developers

### Threats

Traffic conflicts, especially for farm operations

Lack of vision amongst local residents and officials for where LeRay is and should be going.

Rush to development

Large, non-local companies threatening local businesses

Fort Drum as a closed society

Competition from businesses and services located within Fort Drum (I.e. Self-Storage facilities)

Frequent deployments from Fort Drum

Overbuilding and deterioration of sub-standard housing

Inadequate housing supply

Mismatch of housing prices versus incomes of non-military, permanent population living in area, due to military BHA.

Rising assessments for local landowners in commercial areas, due to growth along corridors pricing local landowners off of land

## 2) Most Important Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

### *Top Strengths*

Proximity to Fort Drum

Small town atmosphere

Low taxes in comparison to surrounding areas

## *Top Weaknesses*

High taxes  
Lack of complete infrastructure and reliance on adjoining communities  
Escalating housing costs

## *Top Opportunities*

Supporting existing local businesses  
Power independence via alternative energy sources  
Enhancement of recreational and youth sports in the area

## *Top Threats*

The existing rush to develop the area  
Existing and possible future building of sub-standard housing  
Rising taxes due to increased property assessments along commercial corridors.

## **B: Breakout Groups Discussion**

Workshop participants divided into breakout groups to discuss issues and opportunities associated with specific resources, opportunities, and issue areas within the Town of LeRay. The results of these breakout group discussions have been organized by the specific subarea discussed by the individual breakout group.

### *Commercial Corridors, Transportation, & Infrastructure*

At the present time, there is no public transit option connecting the town to employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities in the City and Town of Watertown. Transit service serving LeRay, Fort Drum, and Watertown would provide options for seniors and youths, provide additional options for those without vehicles, and lessen the number of vehicles travelling on Routes 11, 342, & 3

The creation of new traffic patterns on Route 11 that limit left hand turns in the area between Route 342 and the Fort Drum entrance could create safety concerns

The possibility of improvements being made to straighten and make Route 342 into four lanes within the Town, even if the Northern Alternative to the Fort Drum Corridor Study is constructed

The need for a traffic signal on Route 342 at the entrance to the Calcium Primary School and the Eagle Ridge subdivision, since buses leaving Eagle Ridge will be forced to travel several miles, due to the absence of a traffic signal

The need for lighting on roadways, especially along Route 11 between Route 342 and the main entrance to Fort Drum

With the proposed water district coming to the area between Routes 11 and 3 west of Fort Drum, there is the possibility that sewer will come too and development will then be steered to this section of the town

The need to create additional parking opportunities in the Village of Evans Mills, either through surface parking facilities or, preferably, through diagonal on-street parking

Extension of the sidewalk system from the southern boundary of Evans Mills to the Town Hall, and eventually, to the Pleasant Creek Meadows apartments

### *Natural Resources & Recreation*

Lack of knowledge of existing resources in the area by incoming residents

A need to extend the DANC trail through the Town of LeRay

The possible future use of the town landfill as a park facility

The need to create opportunities for the preservation of open space as new development occurs in the area

Exploration of different methods of protection of key open spaces and farmlands, possibly through grants

Extension of sidewalks and trails to the Village of Evans Mills ball fields to form a loop trail.

Expansion of organized youth recreation opportunities within the Town of LeRay, possibly through the shared use of the existing James Cox Memorial RC Field

The building of a large central park for the township similar to Thompson Park in Watertown or the park in Carthage

### *Agriculture*

The need of tax breaks for local farmers, especially from school taxes.

Allowing local farmers to continue to be able to farm fruits and vegetables and sell them at roadside stands (most of purchasers are local residents, since most Fort Drum soldiers and family members pass by these on the way to Wal-Mart or the commissary?)

At the present time, there are roughly 6 working dairy farms remaining in the Town of LeRay. A priority should be to preserve, and if possible, increase the number of dairy farms that can survive in the Town of LeRay.