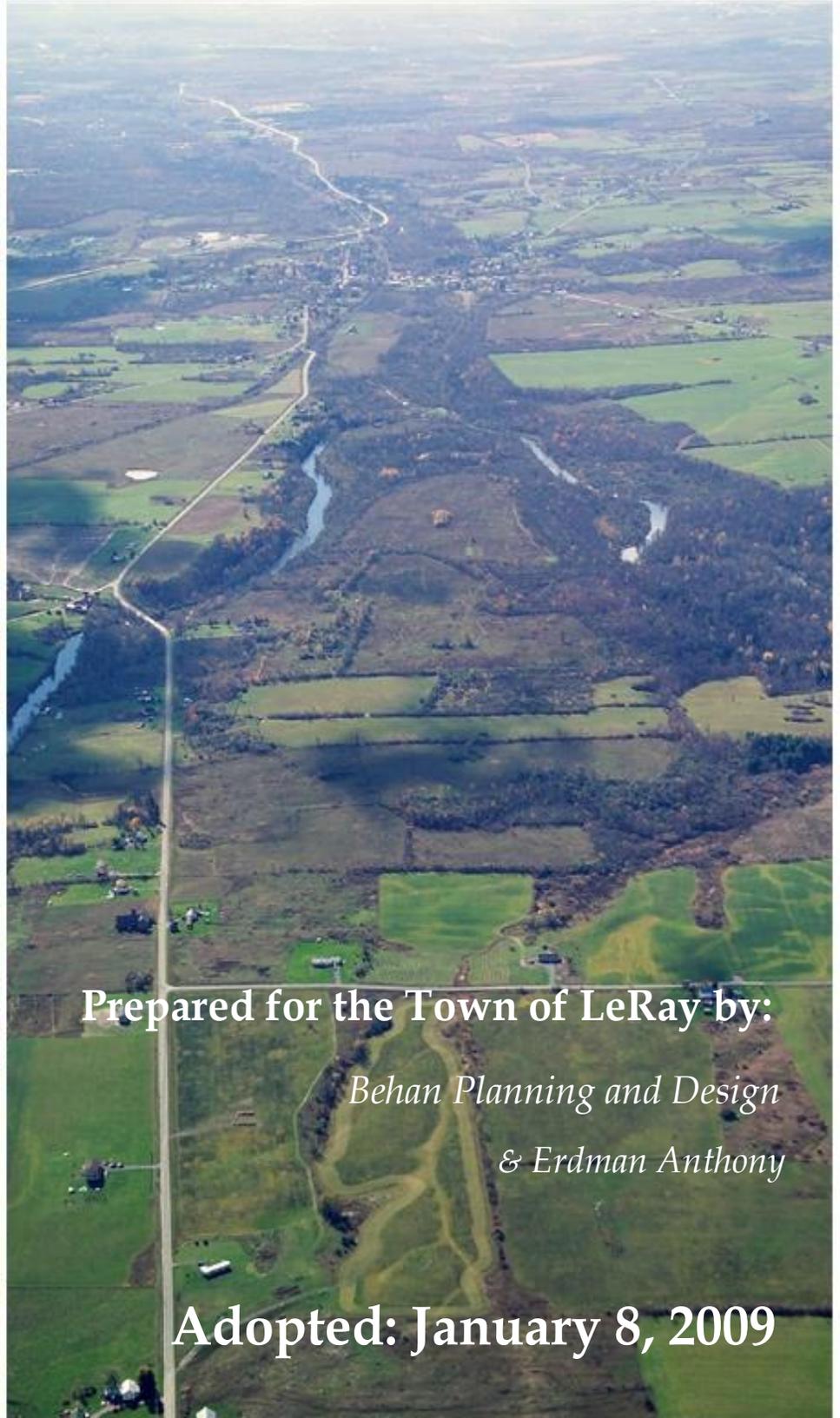


# Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan

and

## Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement



Prepared for the Town of LeRay by:

*Behan Planning and Design  
& Erdman Anthony*

**Adopted: January 8, 2009**



**Name of Action:** Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan

**Location of Action:** Town of LeRay, Jefferson County, New York

**Lead Agency:** **Town Board of the Town of LeRay**  
**8650 LeRay Street**  
**LeRay, New York 13637-3191**  
**Contact: Ronald C. Taylor, Supervisor**  
**Phone: 315-629-4052**

**Prepared by:** **Behan Planning and Design**  
**274 North Goodman Street, Suite B260**  
**Rochester, NY 14607**

**Erdman Anthony**  
**2165 Brighton Henrietta Town Line Road**  
**Rochester, NY 14623**

**Contact: Lawrence Bice**  
**Phone: 877-698-6429**

**Date of Acceptance:** **November 6, 2008**

**Public Hearing:** **December 11, 2008**

**Comments Due:** **December 21, 2008 or 10 days after the close of  
the public hearing, whichever date is later**



State Environmental Quality Review  
**NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF DRAFT GEIS & COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**and**  
**NOTICE OF SEQR HEARING**

Date: November 6, 2008

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

A Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) and Draft Comprehensive Plan has been completed and accepted by the LeRay Town Board for the Proposed Action described below. The Proposed Action has been classified as a Type I action. The Town Board is acting as lead agency for the proposed action as there are no other Involved Agencies associated with the adoption of the Town Comprehensive Plan.

**Comment Period:** Comments on the DGEIS are requested and will be accepted by the contact person until December 21, 2008 or 10 days after the close of the public hearing, whichever date is later.

**Public Hearing:** A public hearing on the DGEIS has been scheduled for December 11, 2008 at 7:15 P.M., at the LeRay Town Office, 8650 LeRay Street, Evans Mills, New York.

**Name of Action:** Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Description of Action:** The Proposed Action consists of adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Location:** Town of LeRay, Jefferson County, New York

**Potential Environmental Impacts:** Potential impacts to traffic, parks, recreation and open space, community character, and the economy, among other issues, have been identified and evaluated in the DGEIS.

**Lead Agency:** Town of LeRay Town Board  
Town Office  
8650 LeRay Street  
Evans Mills, New York 13637

**A copy of the DGEIS and Draft Comprehensive Plan may be examined at the LeRay Town Clerk's office during office hours, as well as at the Evans Mills Public Library located at 8706 Noble Street, Evans Mills, NY 13637. It is available digitally on the Town's website at [www.townofleray.org](http://www.townofleray.org) under Comprehensive Planning Effort.**

Contact Person: Mary Smith, Town Clerk, LeRay Town Office, 8650 LeRay Street, Evans Mills, New York 13637

Telephone Number: (315) 629-4052

**A Copy of This Notice has been sent to:**

Town of Philadelphia, c/o Town Clerk, 33019 US Rt 11, PO Box 297, Philadelphia, NY 13673

Town of Theresa, c/o Town Clerk, 215 Riverside Ave, Theresa, NY 13691

Town of Orleans, c/o Town Clerk, 20558 Sunrise Ave, PO Box 103, LaFargeville, NY 13656

Town of Pamelaia, c/o Town Clerk, 25859 NYS Rt 37, Watertown, NY 13673

Town of Watertown, c/o Town Clerk, 22867 Co Rt 67, Watertown, NY 13601

Town of Rutland, c/o Town Clerk, 28411 NYS Rt 126, Black River, NY 13612

Village of Black River, c/o Village Clerk, 107 Jefferson Place, Black River, NY 13612

Village of Evans Mills, c/o Village Clerk, 8615 LeRay St, Evans Mills, NY 13637

Jefferson County Planning Board, Elizabeth Lanpher, Chairman, 175 Arsenal St, Watertown, NY 13601

Calcium Fire Department, PO Box 272, Calcium, NY 13616

Evans Mills Fire Department, PO Box 113, Evans Mills, NY 13637

Betty Jones, Ph.D., Community Planner, PAIO, Bldg P10000, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Drive, Fort Drum, NY 13602

Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Permits, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 625 Broadway St, Albany, NY, 12233

US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mr. David Stillwell, Supervisor, 3817 Luker Road, Cortland, NY 13045

New York State Department of Transportation, Mr. Scott Docteur, P.E., 317 Washington St, Watertown, NY 13601

James R. Koch, Business Manager, Indian River Central School District, 32735B Co Rt 29, Philadelphia, NY 13673

NYSDEC Region 6, Mr. Brian Fenlon, Permit Administrator, 317 Washington St, Watertown, NY 13601

NYS Police, 25873 NYS Rt 37, Watertown, NY 13601

Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, Sheriff John Burns, 753 Waterman Drive, Watertown, NY 13601

**A copy of this notice has been e-mailed to:**

Business Environmental Publications, Inc. at [enb@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:enb@gw.dec.state.ny.us) (Separate form used for that purpose)

**Town of LeRay  
RESOLUTION  
ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
DATED OCTOBER 16, 2008**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617 of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (hereinafter "SEQR"), the Town Board of the Town of LeRay (hereinafter "Town Board") has received and reviewed the Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan, (hereinafter "Comprehensive Plan"), dated October 16, 2008, and the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement, dated October 16, 2008 (hereinafter "DGEIS") prepared for the town by Behan Planning Associates, LLC;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.4, the adoption of the Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan (hereinafter the "Proposed Action") is a Type I Action;

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board has acted as Lead Agency for the SEQR review of the Comprehensive Plan;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to SEQR, a DGEIS was prepared to evaluate potential environmental impacts in connection with the Proposed Action;

**WHEREAS**, on November 6, 2008, the Town Board deemed the DGEIS complete, made the DGEIS and Comprehensive Plan available for public review, and circulated the same to all interested agencies;

**WHEREAS**, a Public Hearing was held by the Town Board on December 11, 2008 at 7:15 P.M. at the LeRay Town Office, in order to receive comments from the public regarding the Comprehensive Plan, and a written comment period was provided for an additional 10 days after the close of the Public Hearing;

**WHEREAS**, the town received one comment from the public at the public hearing;

**WHEREAS**, the town received two comment letters;

**WHEREAS**, the first comment letter, from the Jefferson County Department of Planning, dated December 1, 2008, indicated that the Jefferson County Planning Board adopted a "motion of approval" with respect to the Comprehensive Plan and offered several advisory comments for consideration of the Town Board;

**WHEREAS**, the second comment letter, from the United States Department of the Interior: Fish and Wildlife Service, dated December 22, 2008, offered a number of comments for consideration of the Town Board;

**WHEREAS**, in response to the aforesaid comments received by the town, Behan Planning Associates, LLC prepared a List of Comprehensive Plan

Comments/Responses, several of which involve minor changes to the Comprehensive Plan to provide additional clarification;

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board has considered all data and comments made upon the Comprehensive Plan, along with the aforesaid List of Comprehensive Plan Comments/Responses prepared by Behan Planning Associates, LLC;

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board finds that the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 have been met with regard to the SEQR review of the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board finds that the DGEIS contains the facts and range of possible impacts relied upon to support its decision and indicates the social, economic, environmental and other factors and range of alternatives to the Proposed Action which formed the basis of this decision;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board, based upon its review and analysis of the Comprehensive Plan, is prepared to adopt the Comprehensive Plan, dated October 16, 2008, pursuant to incorporation of amendments to the plan as set forth in the List of Comprehensive Plan Comments/Responses prepared by Behan Planning Associates, LLC; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Board as Lead Agency in this matter finds that based upon the DGEIS, dated October 16, 2008, and for reasons stated in this resolution including the analysis of the criteria stated in Part 617, the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will have no significant, adverse environmental impacts upon the environment, and will only result in positive and beneficial impacts on the environment and, therefore, the Town Board adopts a Negative Declaration thereby concluding SEQR;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of LeRay does hereby adopt the Comprehensive Plan, dated October 16, 2008.

**UPON A ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Supervisor Taylor voting yes

Councilman Gracey voting yes

Councilman Jesmore voting yes

Councilman Thompson voting yes

Councilman Vebber voting yes

**VOTE:** Resolution carried by a vote of 5 to 0.

STATE OF NEW YORK        )  
COUNTY OF JEFFERSON    )    SS:

I, Mary C. Smith, Town Clerk of the Town of LeRay, do hereby certify that the above is a true and exact copy of a Resolution adopted by the Town Board of the Town of LeRay at a meeting of said Board held January 8, 2009.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary C. Smith



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
-------------------	---

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION	1
--------------------------	---

TOWN OVERVIEW	4
---------------	---

PROJECT BACKGROUND	8
--------------------	---

CHAPTER II - INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS	13
-------------------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION	13
--------------	----

EARLY HISTORY OF LERAY	13
------------------------	----

NATURAL RESOURCES	16
-------------------	----

RECREATION AND PARKLAND	27
-------------------------	----

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS	34
---------------------------	----

LAND USE	54
----------	----

TRANSPORTATION	61
----------------	----

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE	71
------------------------	----

CHAPTER III - VISION STATEMENT	75
--------------------------------	----

DEFINING A VISION STATEMENT	75
-----------------------------	----

TOWN OF LERAY VISION STATEMENT	75
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV - TOWN CHARACTER AREAS	77
-----------------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION	77
--------------	----

FARM CORE	79
-----------	----

SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS	95
-------------------------	----

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS	115
----------------------	-----

HAMLETS & VILLAGES	129
--------------------	-----

KEY RIVERS	141
------------	-----

FORT DRUM	147
-----------	-----

TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

<b>CHAPTER V - GREEN PLANNING</b>	<b>155</b>
ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES	155
CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	157
IMPLEMENTING GREEN BUILDING AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION	159
<b>CHAPTER VI - TOWN-WIDE PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>163</b>
MAINTAIN LERAY’S UNIQUE SENSE OF PLACE	163
FOCUS DEVELOPMENT ON AREAS BEST SUITED FOR GROWTH AND CHANGE	163
UTILIZE A CONSERVATION DESIGN APPROACH FOR DEVELOPMENT	164
LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY GROWTH	164
PARTNER WITH FORT DRUM FOR MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL SOLUTIONS FOR LERAY AND THE REGION	165
<b>CHAPTER VII - STRATEGIC PLAN</b>	<b>167</b>
PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS	167
<b>CHAPTER VIII - CONCLUSION</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>CHAPTER IX - DGEIS</b>	<b>189</b>
INTRODUCTION	189
LAND USE AND DEMOGRAPHICS	190
PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE	192
COMMUNITY CHARACTER	192
ECONOMY	193
TRANSPORTATION	194
OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS	195
DGEIS ALTERNATIVES	197
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
TOWN OF LERAY COMMUNITY SURVEY	APPENDIX A
PUBLIC MEETING NOTES AND SUMMARY	APPENDIX B
ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION	APPENDIX C
ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES IN THE TOWN OF LERAY	APPENDIX D

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

#### **THE TOWN OF LERAY**

Ronald C. Taylor, Supervisor  
Michael J. Gracey, Councilman  
William R. Jesmore, Councilman  
Mark W. Thompson, Councilman  
Karl Vebber, Councilman \*

#### **TOWN PLANNING BOARD**

Frederick Tontarski, Chairman  
Samuel Biondolillo, Member  
Alan Cameron, Member  
Larry Covell, Member  
Jerry Hobbs, Member  
David Champagne, Member  
Clarke Oatman, Member

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Curt Conlin  
Lee Carpenter-Ex Officio  
Andy Nevin  
Ronald Taylor,-Ex Officio  
Kristine Czajkowski  
David Chamberlin  
Guy Javarone Sr.  
Diane Kistler  
Mark Thompson  
Troy Chismore  
Jerry Hobbs  
Karl Vebber  
Robert Boucher,-Ex Officio  
Ella Marie Fults

\* Became Town Councilman during course of project

### **Community Development Coordinator**

Jessica Jenack

### **SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

The residents of the Town of LeRay  
Carthage and Indian River Central Schools  
Evans Mills Fire District  
Villages of Black River and Evans Mills  
Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization  
Fort Drum  
Jefferson County Planning Department



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan will guide decision making in the town for years to come. The plan is the outcome of public input by town residents and stakeholders and represents a vision for how the town should grow and change in coming years. Proactively planning for change is an important theme of this plan, as expansion and activity on Fort Drum will likely continue to influence the town for years to come. In recent years, growth rates have picked up in the town as new housing and commercial uses have clustered along Route 11, near the main entrances to the fort. Leveraging growth today, to ensure that the Town of LeRay is a place to be proud of tomorrow, is a key element of this plan. Main plan recommendations and ideas are summarized as follows:

- Ensure that New Growth Yields High Quality Places to Live and Work

The plan acknowledges that development pressures on LeRay are likely to continue in the coming years. The plan views growth as an opportunity to create and enhance the quality of life in LeRay. Strategies range from revisions and review of the town's zoning and development regulations, to developing plans and policies for high growth areas - such as the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area, to ensure that incremental growth ultimately adds up to the kind of place in which town residents want to live and work. High quality living environments also pair well with community facilities and recreational amenities such as parks and trails. As such, the plan explores how such amenities could be provided in a phased manner, in conjunction with new growth in a cost effective and efficient manner.

- Maintain the Rural Character of LeRay's Landscape

Town residents have expressed a desire to see the town's rural character preserved. The plan sets forth strategies for preserving rural character by supporting farmers and helping them to continue farming in the town, and for arranging new development in the town in a manner that respects and preserves the town's cherished character. The plan also encourages development to concentrate in places where it is already taking place, thereby reducing pressures on less developed, agricultural areas of town.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Create Settings for Economic Activity and Growth

The world is an increasingly mobile one in which people can choose where to live and work based on a desire for a high quality-of-life. Creating settings for economic activity that will draw employers and investment is therefore a key goal of this plan. The plan sets forth strategies for maintaining and enhancing key economic corridors of the town. Anticipating change with respect to the planned Fort Drum Connector, the plan establishes a vision for development in this area that will yield long-term benefits for the town. The plan also looks at ways in which the town can provide services more efficiently, as well as cut energy costs and save money in the long run by adopting environmentally friendly practices. Lastly, the plan addresses the need for the town to position itself as a premier residential community by creating high quality neighborhoods that promote pedestrian access and provide for a wide variety of housing options to suit varied lifestyles, age cohorts, and incomes.

- Partnering with Fort Drum

The plan acknowledges the close and symbiotic relationship between Fort Drum and the Town of LeRay and sets forth strategies for how the two can partner together on shared goals and outcomes.

The concepts above are woven into the pages and ideas that follow.

# CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

## DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan is organized into eight chapters. The contents and purpose of each of these chapters are summarized below.

### **CHAPTER I: *INTRODUCTION***

The Introduction provides an overview of the comprehensive planning project and its purpose and need. Key steps in the planning process are also detailed, including an overview of the public outreach process. Lastly, the introduction provides guidance on how the comprehensive plan should be used.

### **CHAPTER II: *INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS***

The Inventory & Analysis describes existing conditions and trends in the Town of LeRay across a variety of subject areas. The information contained in the Inventory & Analysis helped to establish town priorities and also to serve as the foundation for plan recommendations.

### **CHAPTER III: *VISION STATEMENT***

The Town Vision Statement was derived from public input and from information gathered in the Inventory & Analysis phase of the project. The Vision Statement establishes a baseline and foundation for this plan and the recommendations it sets forth, as well a benchmark for future decision making.

### **CHAPTER IV: *TOWN CHARACTER AREAS***

The Town of LeRay consists of a diverse array of landscapes and settings. Midway through the planning process, these diverse areas of town coalesced into distinct "Character Areas" - areas of the town that share unique qualities and opportunities. For each Character Area, a vision statement, goals, strategies and land use recommendations have been developed. The Character Areas are meant to be used as a guide to future decision-making and actions in the

town. As such, they are not parcel specific, but indicate approximate areas within the town that possess common existing and future desired characteristics. The exact boundaries of the character areas are not as important as their general locations and extent relative to one another.

## **CHAPTER V: GREEN PLANNING**

In addition to land use and town policies associated with specific character areas, one topic area emerged in the planning process that cuts across character areas - Green Planning. The concept of Green Planning is being embraced by more and more communities at the local level as concerns about the environment and climate change mount. People around the world, including the residents of LeRay, increasingly realize that we are all connected as residents of one planet and that the impacts of local communities can have a direct impact on the collective quality-of-life and environment across political and cultural boundaries. Moreover, people are increasingly aware of the connection between Green Planning concepts and the fiscal health and quality of life of the community.

## **CHAPTER VI: TOWN-WIDE PRINCIPLES**

Certain goals and strategies cut across Character Areas and apply to the town as a whole. These Town-Wide principles, set forth in Chapter VI, should be used to guide future decisions and actions in every area of town.

## **CHAPTER VII: STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Strategic Action Plan distills the plan's recommendations into a set of priority actions. The priority actions set forth specific programs and procedures that would allow the town to achieve its goals and vision. In many cases, funding sources and grant programs are identified. The Strategic Action Plan should be viewed as a range of possible actions that town may wish to take in the future. To this end, the Strategic Action Plan has been written with this flexibility in mind. Each action item may be implemented in full, or in smaller steps. Moreover, "separate" action items may be recombined and undertaken together. In the end, flexibility and common sense should dictate the details of how and when such actions are implemented, provided that they remain true to the overarching goal of the action item and the themes of this plan.

**CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION**

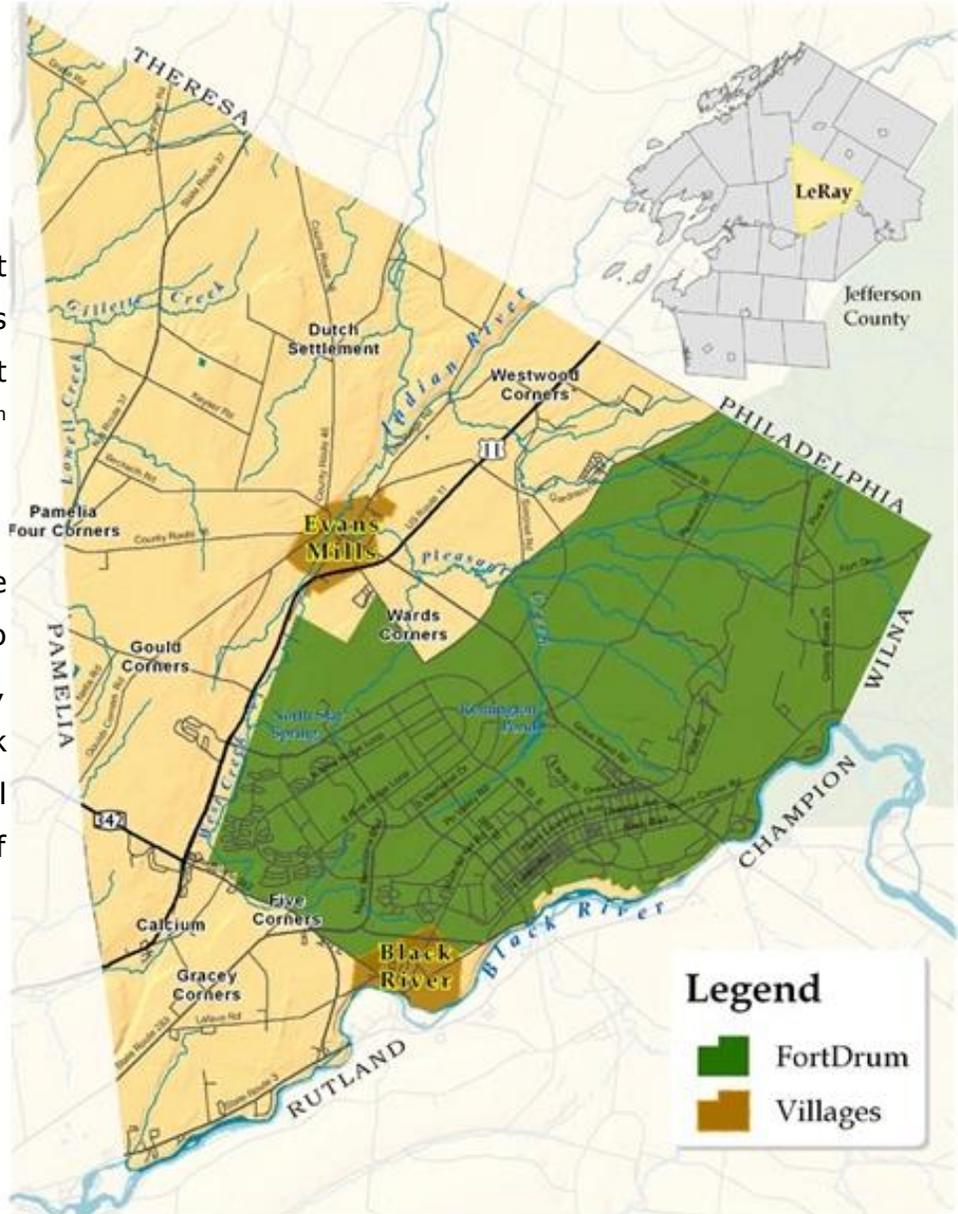
**CHAPTER IX: DGEIS**

The Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan was reviewed and adopted in conformance with New York State Town Law and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), including the preparation of a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS). According to The SEQR Handbook, which is published by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), "a generic EIS is a type of EIS that is more general than a site-specific EIS and typically is used to consider broad-based actions ...the generic EIS can examine the environmental effects of programs or plans that have wide application or restrict the range of future alternative policies such as agency regulations or permit programs, master plans, or resource management plans".

To this end, a single document combining both the analysis required by SEQRA and the Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan was created since a comprehensive plan, by its very nature, takes a comprehensive look at the environment and setting of a community and evaluates alternatives. Chapter VIII contains additional analysis, in addition to what is found in the plan itself, on specific topic areas required by SEQRA.

## TOWN OVERVIEW

Located near the center of Jefferson County, the Town of LeRay is uniquely situated between four significant regions of New York State: the Tug Hill Region to the south; the Adirondacks to the east; the St. Lawrence Region to the north; and the Great Lakes Region to the west. Another unique aspect of LeRay is that nearly 40% of the town's land is occupied by Fort Drum - home of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and approximately 17,000 military personnel. The Town of LeRay also contains two villages, Evans Mills and Black River, as well as several hamlets, the largest of which is Calcium.



The town's proximity to both the City of Watertown and a growing Fort Drum has led to significant commercial and residential growth in LeRay in recent years, particularly along US Route 11. This growth has provided new settings for residents in which to live and do business. Largely outside of these growth areas, with the exception of Calcium, are the town's villages and hamlets, which help to anchor the town with their historic and unique settings. With respect to the natural landscape, the Indian and Black Rivers are defining elements, enriching the town

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

with beauty, wildlife habitat, and a host of recreational opportunities. The town's high quality soils continue to make LeRay an attractive setting for farms, despite challenges posed by town growth. All of these qualities, and more, contribute to LeRay's high quality of life. High quality schools, a "small town atmosphere," and the scenic qualities of a rural landscape, in particular, are characteristics of life in LeRay that residents have said they cherish.

Over the last several decades, starting with the activation of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division in 1985 and continuing with the latest Fort Drum expansion associated with the Global War on Terrorism, the Town of LeRay has undergone a change from a largely rural, "small town" community, dominated by family farms, to a local commercial and residential hub centered on activities at Fort Drum. The most current and on-going fort expansion has brought many benefits to the town including new jobs and shopping choices, as well as even stronger ties between the fort and the Town of LeRay. For instance, Fort personnel and their families increasingly live and work in the town; their children attend local schools; and with the army's "force stabilization" policy, Fort personnel and their families will be assigned to Fort Drum for longer periods of time than in the past, better enabling them to put down roots in the community. Thus, while the growth of the Fort has posed a number of challenges for the town, as described below and elsewhere in this plan, the majority of people living in LeRay - both long-term residents and newer arrivals -- take pride in LeRay's role as a key support community to Fort Drum. As noted above, this growth has largely focused on the Route 11 corridor in LeRay, closest to Fort gates. Realizing the full benefits of this growth and ensuring that it makes a positive contribution to the town's quality of life for many years to come, is a major theme of this plan.

While some areas of the town have "boomed," the town's villages and hamlets (with the exception of the Hamlet of Calcium) have struggled. Despite some notable projects, such as public libraries in Evans Mills and Black River, and ongoing upgrades to housing stock and businesses undertaken by individuals, both villages have struggled to keep their downtowns active and filled in recent years. While the population of the Town of LeRay has grown substantially, village population has remained flat or declined. This plan seeks to address this imbalance and establish ways that the town and villages can partner to ensure that traditional village and hamlet centers play a relevant and vital role in the town's future.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Likewise, the town's agricultural areas have also increasingly struggled in recent years, due to a complex set of factors, including the evolving nature of the agriculture industry and local, state, and national public policy. Development pressures, however, are also clearly impacting the town's remaining farmers. In some cases, farm owners have sold portions of their properties in a piecemeal manner in order to either pay taxes or to slowly divest themselves from farming. For many farmers, conflicts between farming and other land uses, particularly residential, have made farming in the town increasingly difficult, to the point that few members of the next generation choose to continue farming. Town residents, however, want to see the town's rural landscape preserved and have expressed support for town policies that strengthen its agricultural base.

As the town has grown and matured, so too has its transportation network, as recently completed improvements to Route 11 will testify. As the town continues to grow, attention to other transportation modes - such as walking and bicycling -- will need to be considered as part of the town's "transportation portfolio." Public transit service will also become more feasible and useful as population, shopping, and employment bases concentrate in the town. Looking ahead, the town's comprehensive plan and its land use vision can provide a context for making decisions with respect to transportation improvements and investments.

With an increasing population, residents have recognized a need for more recreational facilities in the town, particularly those geared towards the town's children and teens. This plan sets forth recommendations for providing such facilities in close proximity to high growth areas in the town. Such facilities not only provide places to recreate, but can anchor the town's residential neighborhoods and create a sense of community. In addition to new facilities, residents want to build on existing, highly popular facilities, such as the DANC/Calcium Trail.

Lastly, the cost-of-living for LeRay residents has increased in recent years. Town residents have cited housing affordability as an area of particular concern. Housing costs, while subject to national market forces and trends, are also influenced at the local level by the wages and benefits paid by Fort Drum to both military and civilian employees, particularly the Basic Housing Allowance for soldiers and their dependants; as well as general market pressures

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

related to Fort growth and expansion. A recently completed housing study commissioned by the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO) concluded area rents have increased at significantly higher rates compared to other communities in Upstate New York.<sup>1</sup> This plan looks at ways in which the town can ensure that there are a wide range of housing options for all town residents moving forward.

**While town residents recognize that recent growth has posed challenges, they equally recognize that growth presents many exciting opportunities. The key goal of this project and this plan is to protect and build upon the special qualities of LeRay, while ensuring that the town realizes the positive benefits of growth and change. Ultimately, this plan is about laying a foundation today for a town of tomorrow of which all can be proud.**



---

<sup>1</sup> "Housing Analysis - Fort Drum & the Watertown Market: Watertown, Jefferson County, Spring 2008," prepared by GAR Associates, Inc., Page 50.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

### THE POWER OF A PLAN

A comprehensive plan functions at many levels. At its broadest level, it sets forth a shared vision for the future of the community. More specifically, the plan identifies qualities and aspects of the town that residents want to see protected and/or strengthened, while

#### *WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?*

- A “Visioning Document”
- Identifies Issues and Opportunities
- Overall Vision and Detailed Vision
- A Tool for Meeting Change Proactively

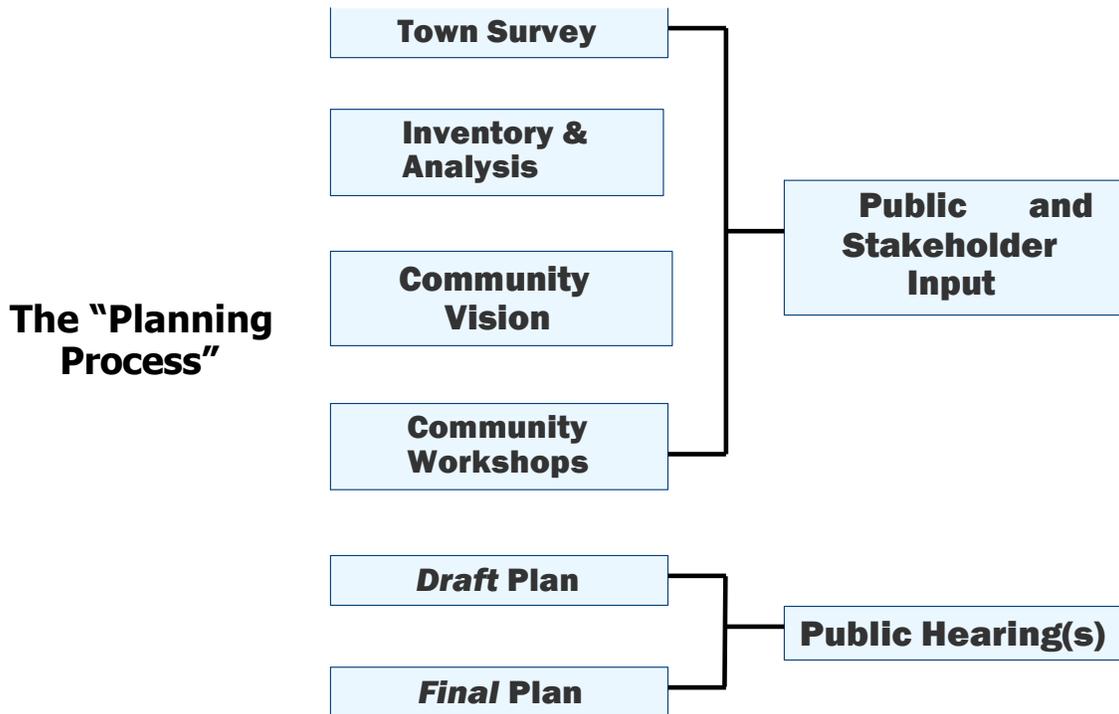
identifying new directions and opportunities, in order to meet change proactively. Overall, the primary purpose of the plan is to establish broad community consensus that will serve to guide future decision-making. Town staff, the public, and public and private entities will all benefit from a clear vision for the town’s future. Having a plan in place can also qualify the town for public dollars and support to implement town projects and goals.

As part of this planning project, the community has identified town “Character Areas” - areas of the town that possess unique qualities, challenges and opportunities that set them apart from other areas of town. For these areas, working within the framework of the overall vision for the town, the plan sets forth goals, strategies and guiding principals, as well as conceptual plans and projects that serve to illustrate them. The plan also contains town-wide goals and strategies that are relevant to all areas of town. The strength of the plan lies in its mixture of broad, overarching concepts and goals, as well as more detailed concepts that together can guide future decision making. Flexibility is also an important component of this plan, so that future decision makers and action takers can adapt to on-the-ground opportunities as they may arise and develop new and creative ideas to seize them, while staying true to the guiding principals of the plan.

In the end, the plan’s success will be reflected in tangible outcomes that town residents can see and experience. By establishing a clear vision with this plan, the Town of LeRay will be prepared to meet change and proactively shape the future of the town for years to come.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan is a collaborative effort of local residents and stakeholders; local and area government officials and staff; community business people; and civic groups and organizations. To this end, a Comprehensive Plan Committee representing a range of viewpoints and experiences was assembled early on in the process to guide the consultant during the development of the plan and to ensure that the project responded to the diverse needs of the community. Committee members included members of the local business community, an organic farmer, a Fort Drum spouse, and many others. Because the comprehensive plan is a community document, public input is a critical element of the planning process, as critical as the plan document itself. Ensuring public support and understanding of the plan’s ideas helps to ensure that they will be implemented after the plan is adopted. The relationship between the public outreach process and the development of plan ideas and concepts contained in the comprehensive plan is illustrated in the diagram below. Essentially, each phase of the planning process was informed by public input. Public input, in turn, helped to shape plan ideas and new ideas for public outreach. For instance, results from the town survey and the first public workshop demonstrated strong community support for maintaining the town’s rural landscape and helping the town’s farmers to keep farming and the need for an Agricultural Focus Group meeting. Other town priorities that emerged directly from the public



process include, but are not limited to, the need for more and expanded recreational facilities in town, the desire that growth and development in the town be attractive and of a high quality nature; and concerns about the rising cost of living, particularly with respect to housing. The individual components of the public outreach/input process for the Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan are described in more detail below.

## **TOWN SURVEY**

In May of 2007, 1,407 surveys were mailed to single-family and two-family residences in the Town of LeRay and the Villages of Evans Mills and Black River, to solicit opinions on a variety of town issues in anticipation of embarking on the comprehensive planning process. By July of 2007, approximately 515 surveys were returned for a response rate of 37%. Respondents to the survey indicated that the three issues of greatest concern to the town's residents are the property tax burden in LeRay, local jobs and economic opportunities, and the preservation of open space in the town. The results of the survey were an important first step in identifying what issues are most important to the residents of LeRay. These results are included in Appendix A of this plan.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

In the summer of 2007, the town sought the assistance of Behan Planning and Design, a planning consulting firm, and Erdman Anthony, an engineering firm with expertise in transportation planning, to work with the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the community to create a comprehensive plan for LeRay. The committee and consultants met on an almost monthly basis during the course of the project to advance plan ideas and to develop the plan. Throughout this process, the Comprehensive Plan Committee served as an interface between the consultant and the town at large, to ensure that plan ideas and concepts responded to the town's unique characteristics, needs, and ambitions.

**PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The centerpiece of the public outreach effort consisted of three workshops, each of which included one or more of the following elements: interactive activities; short break-out discussions by topic area; and a final summary and presentation by participants. A variety of methods were used to advertise the meetings and encourage public involvement, including posters, mailings, radio spots, press releases and word of mouth. A project website linked to through the municipal website of the Town of LeRay was maintained throughout the course of the project to keep the public informed of the project’s progress. Each public meeting served to communicate ideas, solicit input and advance plan concepts. The results of each meeting informed the next step of the planning project. A summary of the public workshops is included in Appendix B. This process is illustrated conceptually below:

**Top 3 Town Strengths Identified at Public Workshop #1**



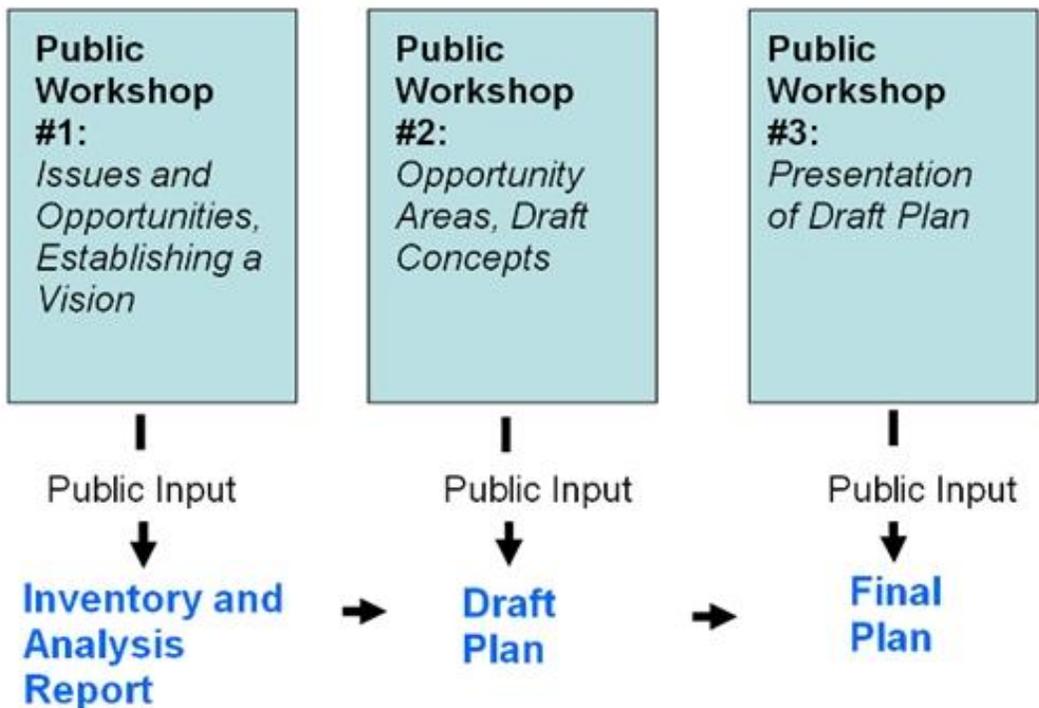
- Proximity to Fort Drum
- Small Town Atmosphere
- Relatively Low Taxes

---

**Top 3 Town Weaknesses Identified at Public Workshop #1**



- High Housing Costs
- Lack of Town Recreational Amenities
- Relatively High Taxes



## **AGRICULTURAL FOCUS GROUP MEETING**

Midway through the planning process, as the rural character of LeRay and the desire of town residents to support agriculture emerged as major issues; an Agricultural Focus Group meeting was conducted at the town hall to get farmers and agricultural property owners in the town around a table talking about their own perspectives and experiences. Agricultural stakeholders



A “breakout” group discusses plan concepts at the April 2008 public workshop.

and farmers present at the meeting voiced concerns about the future of agriculture in the town as development pressures and land use conflicts between farming and residential uses make farming increasingly difficult. Stakeholders felt that a goal for any plan involving agriculture in LeRay should protect the northern portions of LeRay for agricultural uses. Increased traffic on town

roads and excessive travel speeds on many roadways were cited as especially troublesome, due to the conflict between slower speed farm traffic and highway traffic. Farm owners also expressed interest in exploring a Purchase of Development Rights program for LeRay based and cited examples of successful efforts in other areas of the country. Overall, agricultural stakeholders and farmers felt that the town’s future should continue to include agriculture, and that residents should be aware of LeRay’s status as a “Right to Farm” community.

## CHAPTER II - INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter represents the inventory and analysis portion of the Town of LeRay comprehensive plan. The inventory and analysis process has identified what resources exist in the town, and the opportunities that exist to successfully build upon these resources.

### EARLY HISTORY OF LERAY

#### TOWN ORIGINS<sup>2</sup>

Prior to European settlement, the town of LeRay was home to Native Americans of the St Lawrence Iroquoian tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy. With the abundance of water resources, the tribes used the area for hunting, gathering and fishing. For nearly 200 years, the area was occasionally visited by French trappers, who traded with the native tribesmen. After the American Revolution and the establishment of Jefferson



Historic schoolhouse in LeRay.

County in 1805, LeRay was established in February 1806, and was named for James LeRay de Chaumont, a French businessman who had owned land in Pennsylvania and had traded it for land in New York State. James LeRay de Chaumont spent his time in France and America and was an earlier investor and supporter of the Erie Canal. de Chaumont had plans for LeRay that were thwarted by the success of the Erie Canal. Despite this, certain industries became popular in LeRay, including farming, blacksmithing, gristmills, and sawmills. The first sawmill in the town was erected in 1802 by Benjamin Brown. The first town meeting in LeRay was held on March 3, 1807 and the first Town Supervisor was James Shurliff. By 1822, industry in LeRay had grown to include a fulling (wool) mill, a clothiery, tannery, potashery, distillery, and a

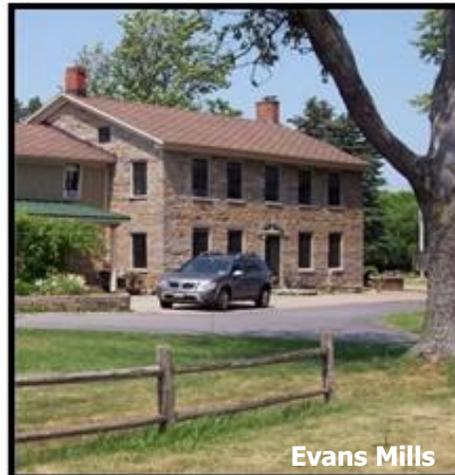
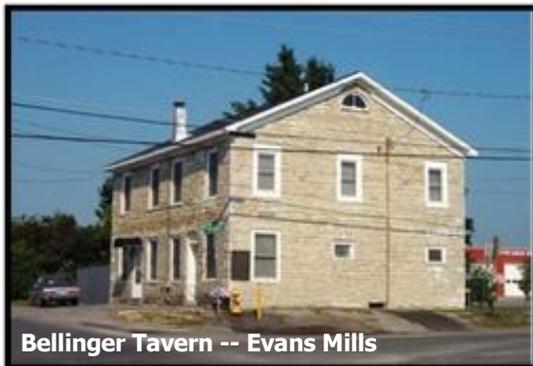
---

<sup>2</sup> Town history compiled with the assistance of the LeRay Museum in Evans Mills.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

spinning wheel manufacturer. A wagon shop, general store, two taverns, and a doctor's office were also operating in LeRay around this time.

To enhance and display his prominence in the area, de Chaumont built a mansion that was largely considered the most ornate and grand structure in the area at the time. The mansion was used to host special events and served as a bastion of wealth for the LeRay family. The LeRay Mansion is registered on the National Register of Historic Places and is located within the bounds of Fort Drum. The LeRay Mansion is now used for formal events at the base and as a bed and breakfast for visiting high-level military personnel. In addition to the LeRay Mansion, other state and nationally registered historic sites in LeRay include the Bellinger Tavern in Evans Mills and the LeRaysville Archeological District located within Fort Drum.



The Town of LeRay is notable for its many stone buildings.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF FORT DRUM

While there has been a military presence in the North Country since the War of 1812, in the Town of LeRay, the United States Army has occupied the land that is now Fort Drum since 1908. At that time, the U.S. Army Pine Plains Training Area was established. The base was used primarily for training of National Guard and Reserve soldiers during the summer months, with the largest of these training exercises coming in 1935 when 36,500 soldiers trained in what was then the largest peacetime training maneuver to have taken place to that time. At the onset of



Fort Drum has undergone many transformations over the years, as this vintage postcard from the Pine Camp days illustrates.

World War II, the military drastically increased their holdings of land in the area, now referred to as Pine Camp via the acquisition of more than 75,000 additional acres, encompassing numerous hamlets and over 500 farms. One of the neighborhoods purchased was the Hamlet of LeRaysville in the Town of LeRay. Within a year, over 800 buildings were built on the post, as the training area known as Pine Camp was used for training soldiers for deployment in World War II. After the war, the post reverted to its pre-existing training mission for National Guard and Reserve units. In 1951 the post's name changed from Pine Camp to Camp Drum in honor of Lieutenant General Hugh A. Drum, a First Army commander in World War II and New York native. In 1974 the land was officially renamed Fort Drum with the assignment of a permanent military presence to the base. In 1985 the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division (Light Infantry) was activated at Fort Drum.

Today, Fort Drum's mission is to provide base operations support for forces training, mobilizing and deploying; to manage quality of life programs and provide a safe and secure environment to its soldiers and family members residing and working on-post; and to shape a first class installation capable of supporting mobilization<sup>3</sup>. Fort Drum has had training as its mission ever

<sup>3</sup> US Army, *Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Fort Drum*, 2000

since its inception, currently almost 80,000 troops train annually on the installation's 107,000 acres including a permanent garrison of over 17,000 active duty personnel and over 44,000 personnel from the US Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Marine Corps Reserve, and Naval Reserve, and the US Air Force who train at the base throughout the year.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY**

The Town of LeRay is located just north of the Tug Hill region of northern New York, east of the shores of Lake Ontario and sits on the northern banks of the Black River. LeRay's topography is relatively level with rolling hills and steep slopes located primarily along the many river banks. Elevations in the town range from a low of approximately 340 feet above mean sea level (amsl) where Gillette Creek exits the town on the western boundary up to 705 feet amsl in the southeast corner of town within Fort Drum.



The landscape of LeRay is dominated by farm fields and streams corridors, such as the area along the Indian River near Halls Corners and Elm Ridge Roads.

Agriculture is a predominant land use in LeRay due, in large part, to the quality of soils in LeRay. Prime farmland and soils of statewide importance can be found throughout the town and are concentrated north of Evans Mills and in and around the hamlets of Calcium and Graceys Corners. Throughout the town there are tributaries to the Black and Indian Rivers. Only 3 percent of the town's lands are designated as wetlands. Also, limited amounts of extensively forested lands within LeRay are located outside of Fort Drum.

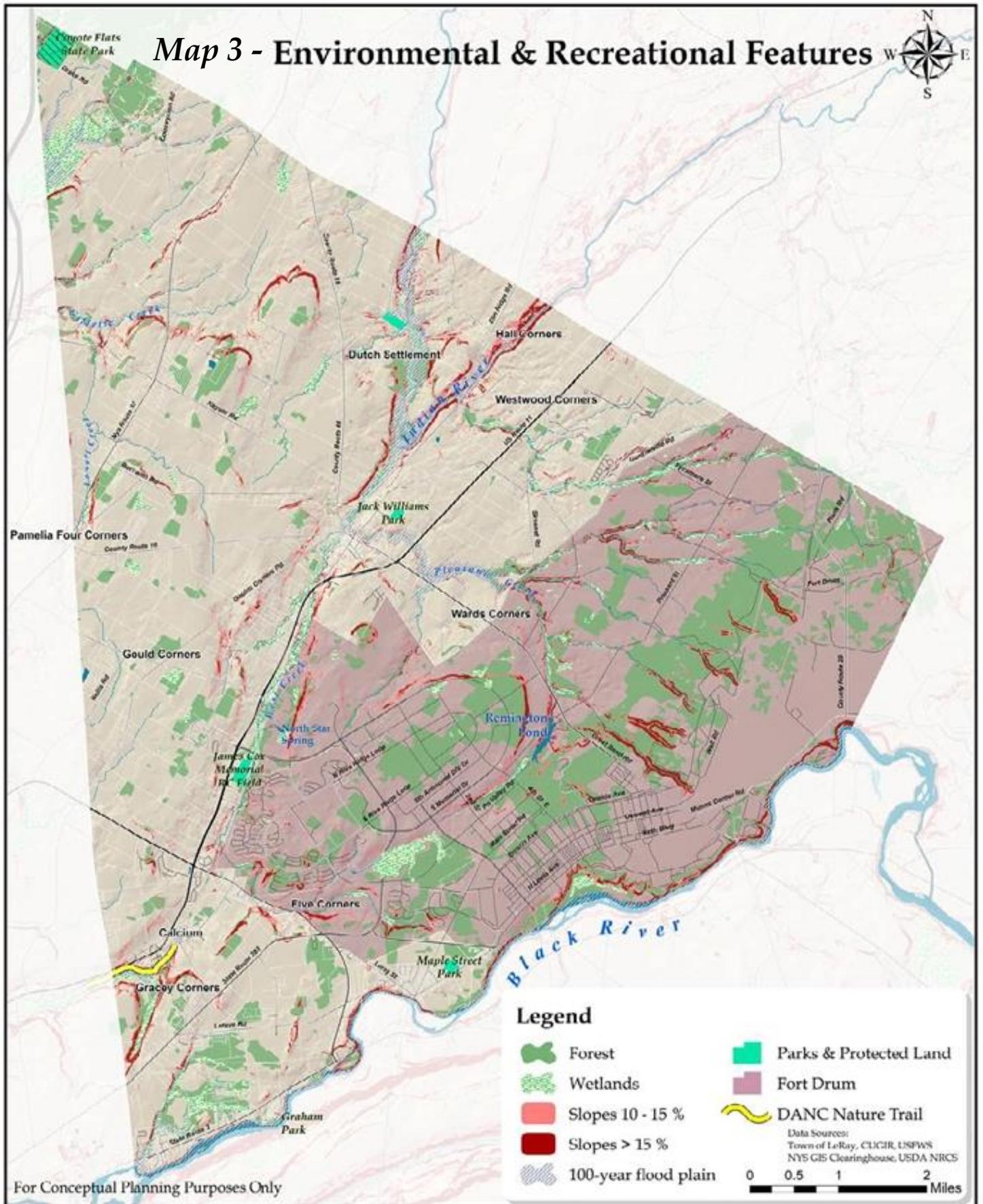
The following three maps provide an overview of the town's topography and environmental and physical features.

Map 1 - USGS Topography



Map 2 - 2006 Orthoimagery





## **GEOLOGY**

There are only two significant bedrock types in the town of LeRay - limestone and dolostone. Most of the town is underlain by limestone of the Black River Group. These rocks formed from sediments deposited during the Middle Ordovician Period, approximately 475 million years ago. The dolostone, found in the eastern part of LeRay, was deposited in the Late Cambrian Period, approximately 505 million years ago. Both of these types of rocks are considered sedimentary carbonate rocks,



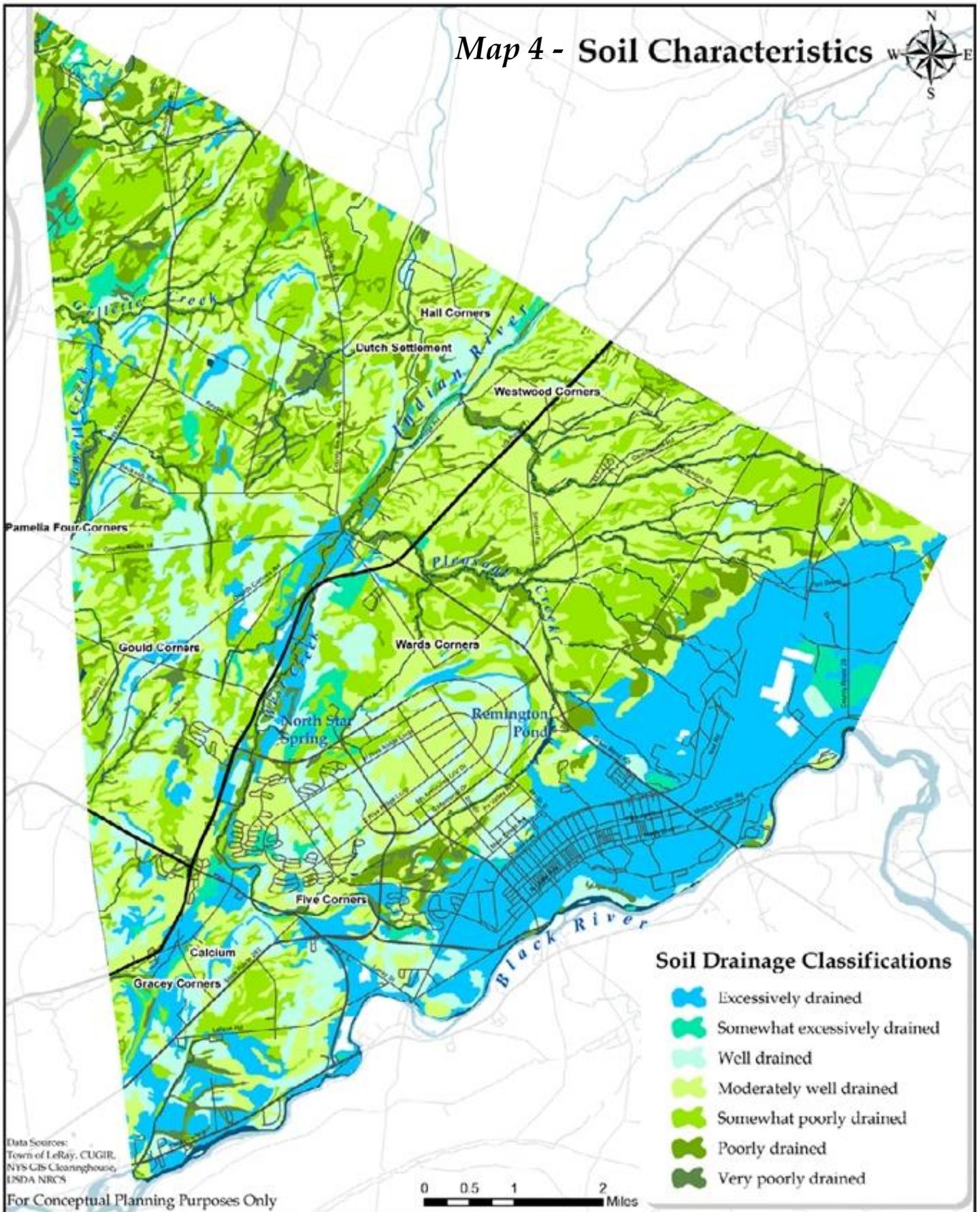
This Evans Mills home dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century; but the limestone from which it is built was formed approximately 475 million years ago in the Middle Ordovician Period.

and were formed by sediments deposition in a shallow sea. There is a gap in the geologic record between these two sets of rocks, referred to as an “unconformity,” when the area was above sea level and rather than sediments being deposited, they were being eroded.

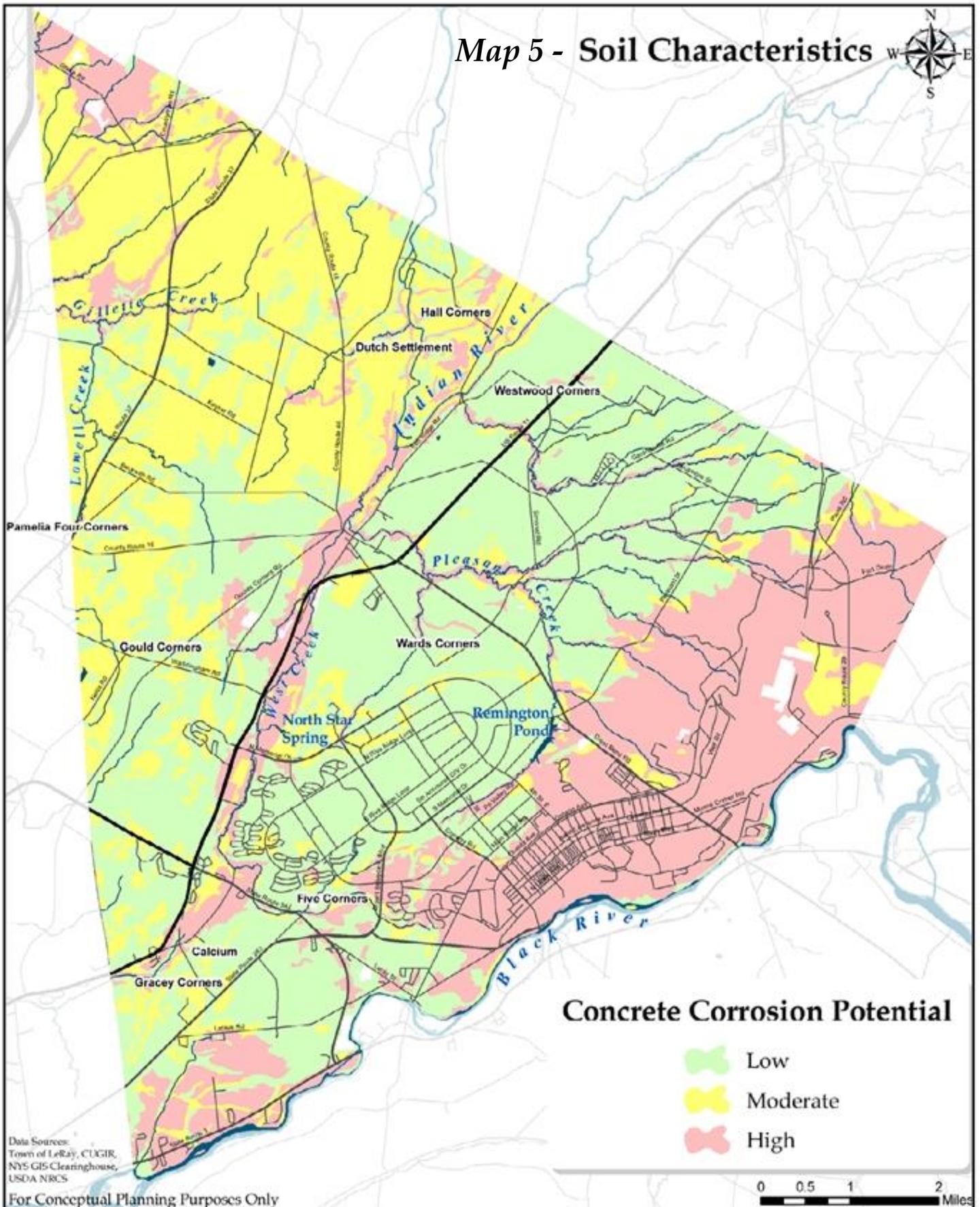
## **SOILS**

The soils in LeRay are predominantly glacially derived - either directly or indirectly. Approximately 2/3 of the soils in LeRay are lake plain and/or delta deposits. These soils would have been deposited at the end of the last glacial period when a large glacial lake existed in the area. Soils in the town are mostly well to excessively drained. However, there are poorly drained soils in several parts of LeRay, including the area at the northern tip of the town and the southwest corner of LeRay, as shown in Map 4 and 5 “Soil Characteristics” on the following pages. These areas are generally considered poor areas for building. These same areas also tend to have a high concrete corrosivity which is problematic for basements. In addition, the areas along West Creek, and the southern portion of Fort Drum have high concrete corrosivity, as illustrated on Map 5 “Soil Characteristics.” These same areas tend to have low steel corrosivity, thus favoring driven beam type construction.

Map 4 - Soil Characteristics



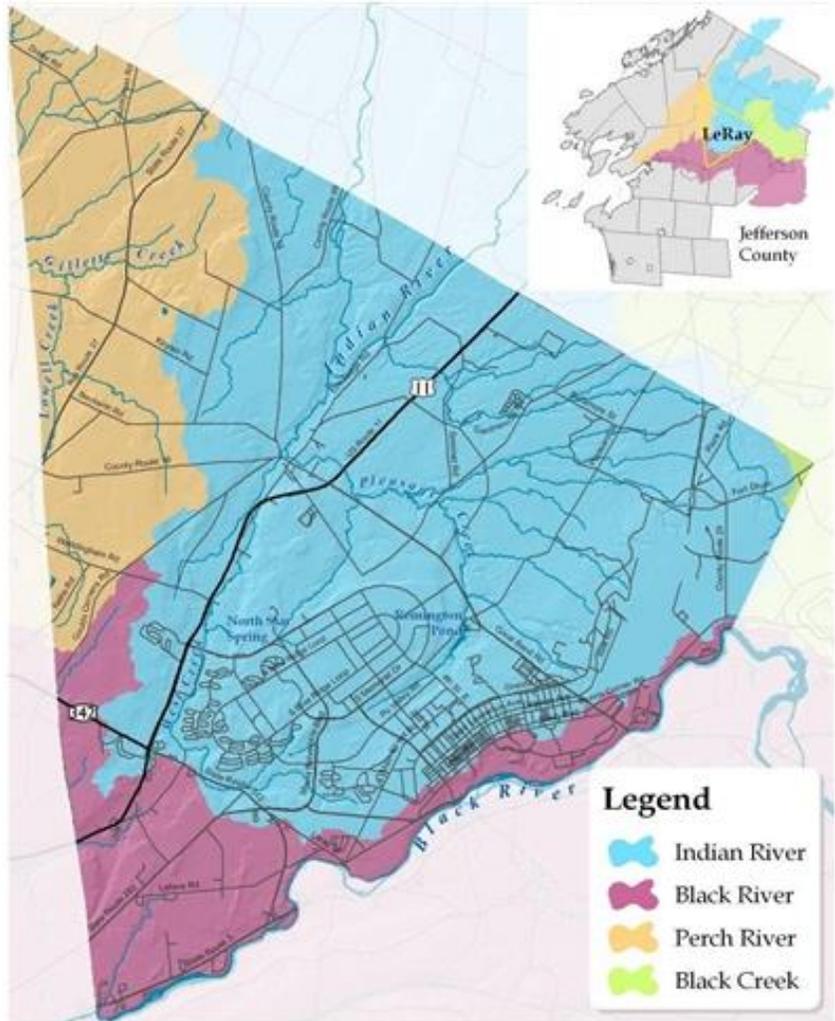
Map 5 - Soil Characteristics



## Water Resources

There are four major watersheds in the town, the Indian River watershed; the Black River watershed, the Perch River watershed, and the Black Creek watershed, as indicated to the right. The Black and Indian Rivers represent the largest water resources in LeRay and contribute to the hydrology of the town with numerous tributaries, creeks and streams.

The Black River defines the southern boundary of the Town of LeRay. The river originates deep in the Adirondack Park, flowing west through several towns and counties. The Black River flows east to west along the southern edge of LeRay, down through the



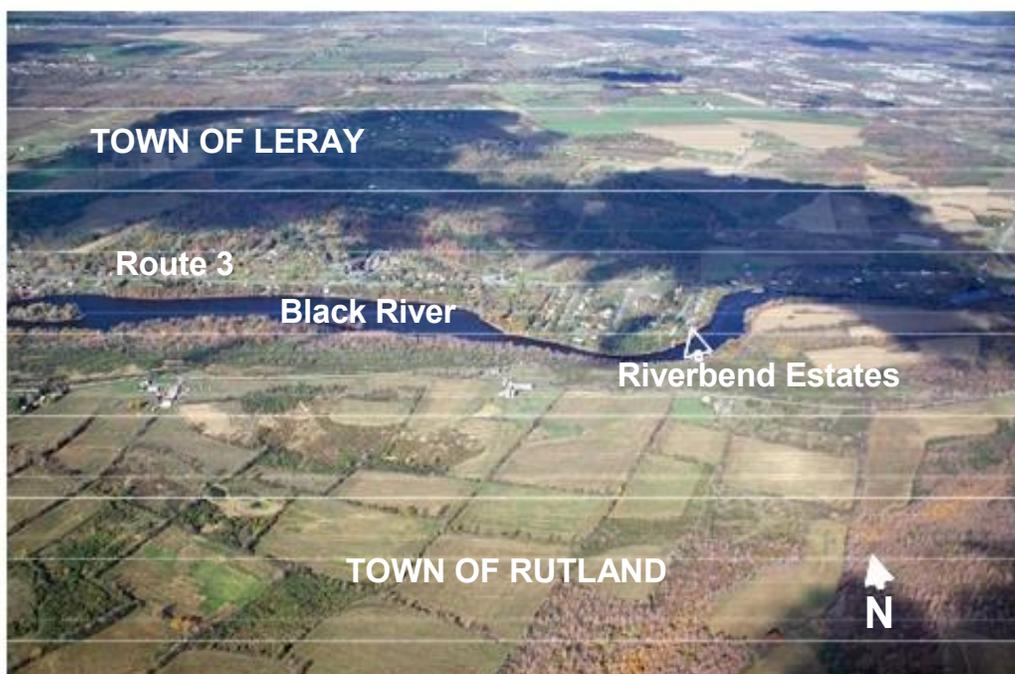
There are four major watersheds in the town.

City of Watertown, eventually discharging to Lake Ontario. The Black River is listed as a Class C river by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). A Class C designation denotes waters that are best used to support fisheries. Class C waterbodies are also suited for primary and secondary contact recreation, notwithstanding other factors that may in some cases limit recreational uses. As a result, fishing and kayaking are among the most popular water-based activities on these waters.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The majority of tributary creeks and streams within the Town of LeRay flow to the Indian River, which originates approximately four miles east of the hamlet of Indian River, in the Town of Croghan, Lewis County. The Indian River flows west into the northern reaches of Fort Drum. The river meanders through the wooded northern portion of Fort Drum, emerging at the Village of Antwerp, Jefferson County. The Indian River then flows southwest, through the Town and Village of Philadelphia, entering LeRay northeast of the hamlet of Hall Corners. Approximately one mile northeast of the Village of Evans Mills, the river turns to the north and continues to the town boundary, eventually discharging to Black Lake in St. Lawrence County. The Indian River is also designated a Class C river and supports similar recreational opportunities as the Black River.

Smaller streams in LeRay include West Creek and Pleasant Creek near the south-central area of the town, which are both tributaries to the Indian River. Further north are Lowell Creek, which flows into Gillette Creek, which in turn is a tributary of the Perch River. The Perch River, like the



The Black River is a defining feature of the Town of LeRay.

Black River, discharges to Lake Ontario. In addition to the named watercourses, there are several unnamed streams and ponds throughout the town.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Despite the numerous existing tributaries and creeks, a relatively low percentage of lands within LeRay are designated as wetlands. The largest wetland areas exist on the grounds of Fort Drum, near the Village of Black River, and in the northwest corner of town near the Pamela border. In addition to these areas, wetlands exist in the southern portion of the town near Calcium and in areas adjacent to West Creek and near Evans Mills. In total, there are approximately 1,380



acres of mapped wetlands within LeRay comprising roughly 3% of the total area of the town. Of these wetlands, approximately 400 acres are regulated by the NYSDEC, the majority of which are listed as Class II by the DEC, with some Class III wetlands located in the southern portion of town (wetland classes are on a scale of I to IV with I being the most important). The remaining approximately 1,000 acres of wetlands are under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

## **THREATENED HABITATS**

LeRay is home to a wealth of indigenous species that are listed as threatened, endangered, and/or rare according to the NYSDEC Natural Heritage Program. The majority of the threatened or endangered species in LeRay thrive in fields, tall grasses, and wetlands. According to the Federal Endangered Species Act, an endangered or threatened species is one with "...the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the species' habitat or range; over-utilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; disease or predation; the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; and other natural or manmade factors affecting the species' continued existence." The primary species of importance in the region is the Indiana bat. According to the New York State Natural Heritage Program, "...Indiana bats hibernate in caves and mines during the winter. Predominately female Indiana bats radio-tracked from hibernacula [winter resting places] in Jefferson, Essex, and Ulster Counties were found to move between approximately 12 and 40 miles to roost location on their foraging grounds. The roosts consisted of living, dying, and dead trees in both rural and suburban landscapes." According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Draft Indiana Bat Recovery Plan (2007), the Indiana bat is considered an endangered species by both the United States Department of the Interior and the State of New York. According to the DEC, the most critical aspect of maintaining the Indiana bat in New York is ensuring its winter home, or hibernacula, is kept intact and accessible for the bats. In the Town of LeRay, the Indiana bat can be found just west of US Route 11 between Calcium and Gould Corners and on the grounds of Fort Drum. Other endangered or threatened species that have been observed in LeRay since 2000 include the Henslow's Sparrow, which prefers damp, grassy fields as its primary habitat area; the Sedge Wren, which prefer corn and hay fields as breeding areas; and the Black Tern, which prefer marsh areas. In addition, numerous threatened or endangered species have been observed on areas of Fort Drum within LeRay's borders. A table created by the NYS Natural Heritage Program that provides a brief description of endangered and threatened species found in LeRay, both on and off Fort Drum, is attached as Appendix D. Please note that all references to specific locations in the town have been redacted in accordance with the wishes of the Natural Heritage Program.

### **Indiana Bat Update**



Recently, bat populations throughout the northeastern US have been infected with white-nose syndrome (WNS), including the Indiana bat. WNS, first detected in late 2006 in eastern New York, and named for the white fungus that forms on some infected bats, has been detected in other areas of the northeastern US. WNS has killed up to 90% of bat populations in some caves. It is unknown at this time what is the cause of white-nose syndrome and how it is spread through the bat population. This issue emphasizes the need for the town to preserve Indiana Bat habitats and support the recovery of this unique creature. For the most up to date information on white nose syndrome, please go to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's White Nose Syndrome webpage at [http://www.fws.gov.white\\_nose.html](http://www.fws.gov.white_nose.html).

## **RECREATION AND PARKLAND**

### **INVENTORY**

There are a number of parks and recreational areas in use within the Town of LeRay. There are approximately 160 acres of parkland available for the general public, with an additional 90 acres of conserved land with limited public access. Much of this park acreage, however, is on the grounds of Fort Drum.

Based on the results of the 2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey (Appendix A), there is significant support for an increase in trails, recreational areas, and open space within the town. Based on discussions with community members, the existing parks and recreational areas are well used, but enhancing and creating additional recreation and trail amenities in LeRay is a long-term goal that will benefit the town greatly. Many community members also cited a desire

for more opportunities for organized sports leagues in the town. Existing parks are described as follows:

Jack Williams Park

The Jack Williams Community Park is a 10-acre recreation area located in the Village of Evans Mills. The park features a playground, open pavilion, tennis courts, two ball fields and a basketball court.

Maple Street Park

The 15-acre Maple Street Park is located in the Village of Black River. Amenities include tennis courts, three ball fields, a municipal recreation building and playgrounds. The village also runs a summer recreational program for children out of the park.



A radio controlled airplane enthusiast at the James Cox Memorial RC Field.

James Cox Memorial RC Field

The James Cox Memorial RC Field is a popular spot for radio controlled airplane enthusiasts to gather and fly their planes. The RC field, situated on a nearly 29 acre site, is located on a former landfill adjacent to US Route 11 between Calcium and Evans Mills.

Development Authority of the North Country Calcium Trail

The Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) collaborated with Fort Drum to create a two-mile multi-use trail that extends between the Towns of Pamela and LeRay. The trail runs parallel to US Route 11. There are picnic areas along the path and parking facilities at both ends of the trail. The DANC Calcium Trail is a highly used recreation facility within the town and could reasonably be extended in the coming years.

Coyote Flats State Forest

A portion (approximately 70 acres) of the approximately 553-acre Coyote Flats State Forest is located in the northeastern tip of town. In addition to coyote, the forest is home to beaver, white-tailed deer, muskrat, mink and several birds. There is limited pedestrian access to the forest due to the forest floor consisting mainly of wet bottomland. The wet ground conditions also limit timber harvesting in the forest.

Remington Park

Fort Drum provides a myriad of recreation and fitness opportunities within the bounds of the post; however many of these facilities are restricted to base personnel. The most notable recreational facility at the fort is Remington Park, which is the only on-post recreation amenity that is routinely available for use by the general public. Located on the shores of Remington Pond, the park features five large pavilions, several medium-sized pavilions and picnic tables for smaller groups. Volleyball courts, horseshoes, playgrounds, fishing docks (catch and release only), a beach area (with kayak and paddle boat rentals and swimming), a fitness trail, and food concessions are also available. Civilians have full use of these recreation areas with the exception of the pavilions which require a military ID for rental.

Additional Recreation Opportunities

In addition to the aforementioned parks and trails, there are several other recreation areas within the town. Overlook Park is located off of Route 3 in the Village of Black River and is approximately one-half acre in size. The park serves as a picnic area with views of and access to the Black River; however, there are no put-ins or access points for kayaks or canoes. There are also numerous small parks and recreation areas associated with subdivisions and apartment complexes within LeRay. These recreation

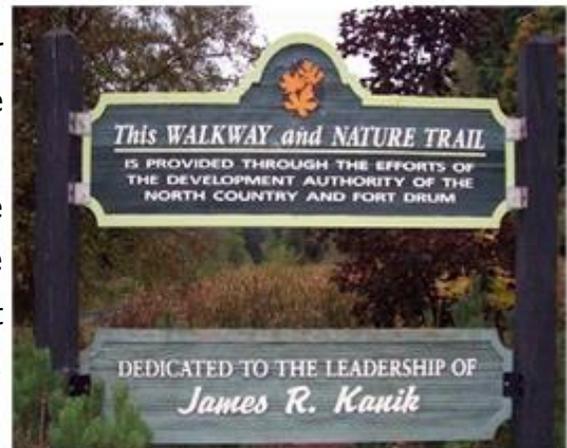


Overlook Park in the Village of Black River.

areas tend to be viewed as for use by residents of the given development and, based on observation of satellite photography, typically consist of a playground, several basketball courts (typically half-court), and an occasional tennis court. Ideally these parks could be linked together with trails to form a more public park system. Town-owned Graham Park, located along Route 3 near Riverbend Estates (see Map 3 on page 19) is currently undeveloped for active recreational uses. This site, located along the Black River, could potentially be developed for more active park uses, especially those uses benefiting from proximity and access to water. Potential uses might include a canoe or kayak access area, or a fishing access site with a small dock and parking.

Currently the only existing formal trails outside of the two villages are the DANC Calcium Trail and trails on Fort Drum, only some of which are accessible to the public. There are two additional trails that are frequently used by LeRay residents, the Black River Trail and the Poor's Island Trail. Originating in the Town of Rutland,

the Black River Trail runs adjacent to the river and connects to the Village of Black River. While the Black River Trail is not in the Town of LeRay, it is a trail of regional significance and links the town to other locations. Poor's Island Trail in the Village of Black River is a two mile long gravel/dirt trail along the Black River on Poor's Island, maintained by Brookfield Power. The landscape and climate in LeRay make LeRay's fields and forests popular for all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and



A gateway to the popular DANC Calcium Nature Trail.

snowmobiling. From Black River, ATV trails are available to the Tug Hill Plateau or Harrisville; from Evans Mills, trails exist to either Clayton or Redwood. There exists, however, conflict between landowners and snowmobilers/ATV riders over the use of property for these uses. It is important that any recommendations address ways to alleviate these conflicts via creation of dedicated trails or provision for trail easements.

## **PROJECTING NEEDS**

Without a detailed recreation needs study, estimating town-wide needs for recreational facilities and parkland can be challenging. In the Town of LeRay, this is made even more difficult due to the large proportion of town residents that are Fort Drum personnel, many of whom live on post. Moreover, this population is more transient due to deployments and the constant cycling in and out of new and retiring personnel. Lastly, many recreation needs of fort personnel are met on post. However, residents of the town, including those affiliated with Fort Drum, have identified a need for parkland outside of the boundaries of Fort Drum that would serve as a community gathering space and venue for recreational activities such as youth sports leagues.

In addition to recreational facilities on Fort Drum, village and school recreational facilities are utilized by town residents to varying degrees. Any comprehensive recreation plan in the town should look at these existing facilities and explore how they might serve the needs of the town and the general public. The town may wish to partner with Evans Mills and Black River on improvements and expansions to the existing facilities in these villages. In fact, improving and/or expanding park facilities in the villages is consistent with the town goal of strengthening the villages and reinforcing them as important centers of community life for village and town residents alike.

Notwithstanding the above, it is likely that additional park facilities and parkland will be needed to meet the needs of town residents at some point in the near future. Public input and analysis of town development and population trends indicate that the most suitable location for such amenities is in the Route 342 & 11 Focus Area (see page 105). Placing parkland and amenities in close proximity to residential areas makes sense. The challenge, as the town grows and develops, is to ensure that the decisions of today do not preclude the best possible outcomes for tomorrow. Providing parkland and recreational amenities in high growth residential areas of town is discussed in more detail on pages 105 - 111 (Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area), with particular emphasis on how such amenities can be provided in phases.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Open space can be a venue for both “active” recreation, such as organized sports activities (left), and “passive” recreation activities such as walking trails (right).

The following table represents a preliminary estimate of the recreational needs of the town using nationally accepted standards from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The conclusion of this analysis should be looked at a departure point for further discussions on town recreation needs. Two different population “baselines” were utilized to arrive at park needs: 1) Town population excluding the Villages (Black River and Evans Mills) and Fort Drum, and 2) Town population including the Villages and Fort Drum. The true town need for recreational facilities likely lies somewhere between these two points. Lastly, the town’s population has continued to grow since the 2000 Census. Results from the 2010 Census will likely result in higher population numbers and by extension, recreational facilities needs estimates.

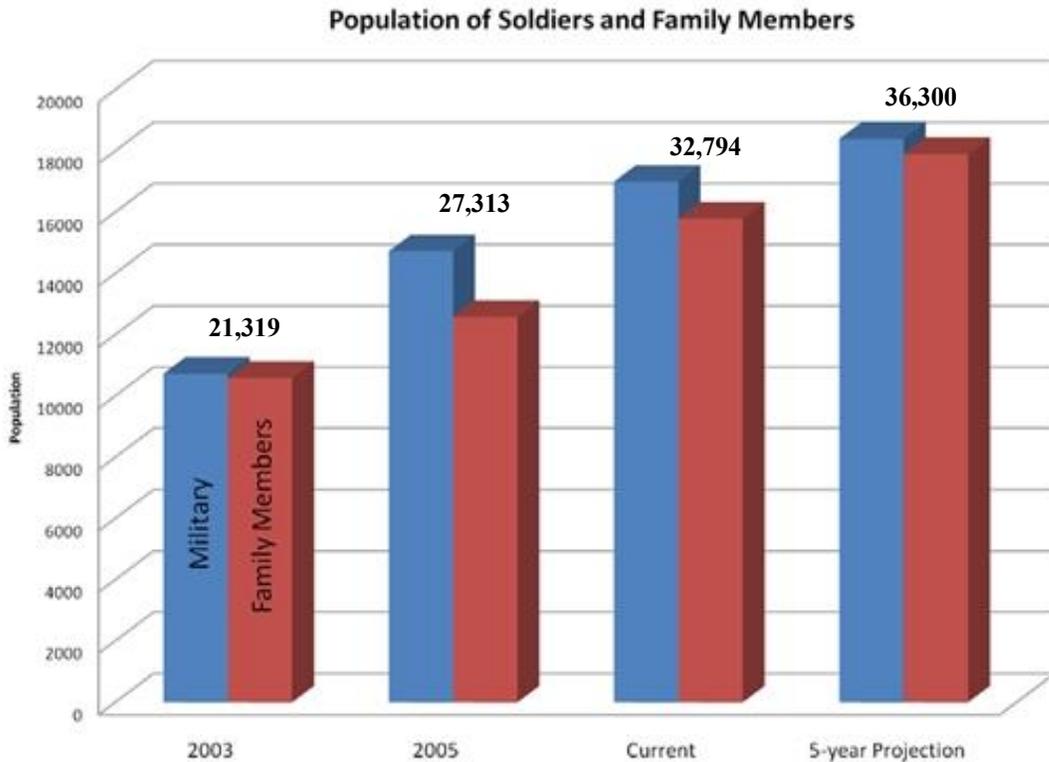
## Estimate of Town Recreational Needs

<b>Type of Recreational Facility</b>	<b>National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Standard (per Unit of Population)</b>	<b>Recreational Facility Need Based on Town Population (2000 Census)</b>	
		Town Population Excluding Villages and Fort Drum	Town Population Including Villages and Fort Drum
		6,347	19,836
Baseball Field, Little	1 / 5,000	1	4
Baseball Field, Standard	1 / 30,000	0	1
Softball Field	1 / 5,000	1	4
Soccer Field	1 / 10,000	1	2
Football Field	1 / 20,000	0	1
Track - ¼ Mile	1 / 20,000	0	1
Basketball Court, Outdoor	1 / 5,000	1	4
Tennis Court	1 / 2,000	3	10
Volleyball / Badminton	1 / 5,000	1	4
Recreation Center	1 / 25,000	0	1
Swimming Pool	1 / 20,000	0	1
Trails - Miles	½ / 1,000	3	10
Playground	1 / 2,000	3	10
Picnic Pavilion	1 / 2,000	3	10

## COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

### POPULATION

According to the 2000 Census, the population of the Town of LeRay was 19,836 persons; this number includes the residents of the Village of Evans Mills; all residents of the Village of Black River north of the Black River, as well as all Fort Drum residents. This number is slightly more than a 10 percent increase from the 1990 population which was 17,973. The estimated population in 2007, according to the US Census Bureau, was 21,281 persons — a further increase of over 7% in just 7 years. The majority of this growth can likely be attributed to the growing population of Fort Drum. The following chart illustrates how the Fort has grown in recent years and is expected to continue to grow. Almost half of Fort Drum related population in the region, including family members of soldiers, live off-post. This population is spread throughout the region, and does not exclusively live in LeRay. However, LeRay does provide a significant amount of housing for soldiers and their dependants, with several hundred existing rental units and hundreds more planned and/or under construction, most of which are located along and adjacent to US Route 11 near the entrance to Fort Drum.



*Source: Jefferson County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2006  
& Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization, 2008*

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The table below illustrates that growth in LeRay between 1990 and 2000 has been primarily occurring outside of the villages and Fort Drum with nearly half of the growth occurring in the Calcium area. Furthermore, growth in LeRay is outpacing many of the surrounding communities. The villages within LeRay, however, have seen limited or negative growth from 1990 to 2000, reflecting regional trends.

### **Population Changes in the Town of LeRay and surrounding areas, 1990 to 2000**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change 00-07</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>Town of LeRay</b>	17,973	19,836	1,863	10%	21,281	1,445	7%
<b>Black River (V)*</b>	750	761	11	1%	N/A		
<b>Evans Mills (V)</b>	661	605	-56	-8%	N/A		
<b>Fort Drum**</b>	11,578	12,123	545	5%	N/A		
<b>Remainder of LeRay</b>	4,984	6,347	1,363	27%	N/A		
Theresa (T)	2,281	2,414	133	6%	2,642	228	9%
Pamelia (T)	2,811	2,897	86	3%	3,128	231	8%
Philadelphia (T)	2,136	2,140	4	<1%	2,347	207	10%
Watertown (C)	29,429	26,705	-2,724	-9%	27,443	738	3%
Watertown (T)	4,341	4,482	141	3%	4,464	-18	0%
Champion (T)	4,574	4,361	-213	-5%	4,587	226	5%

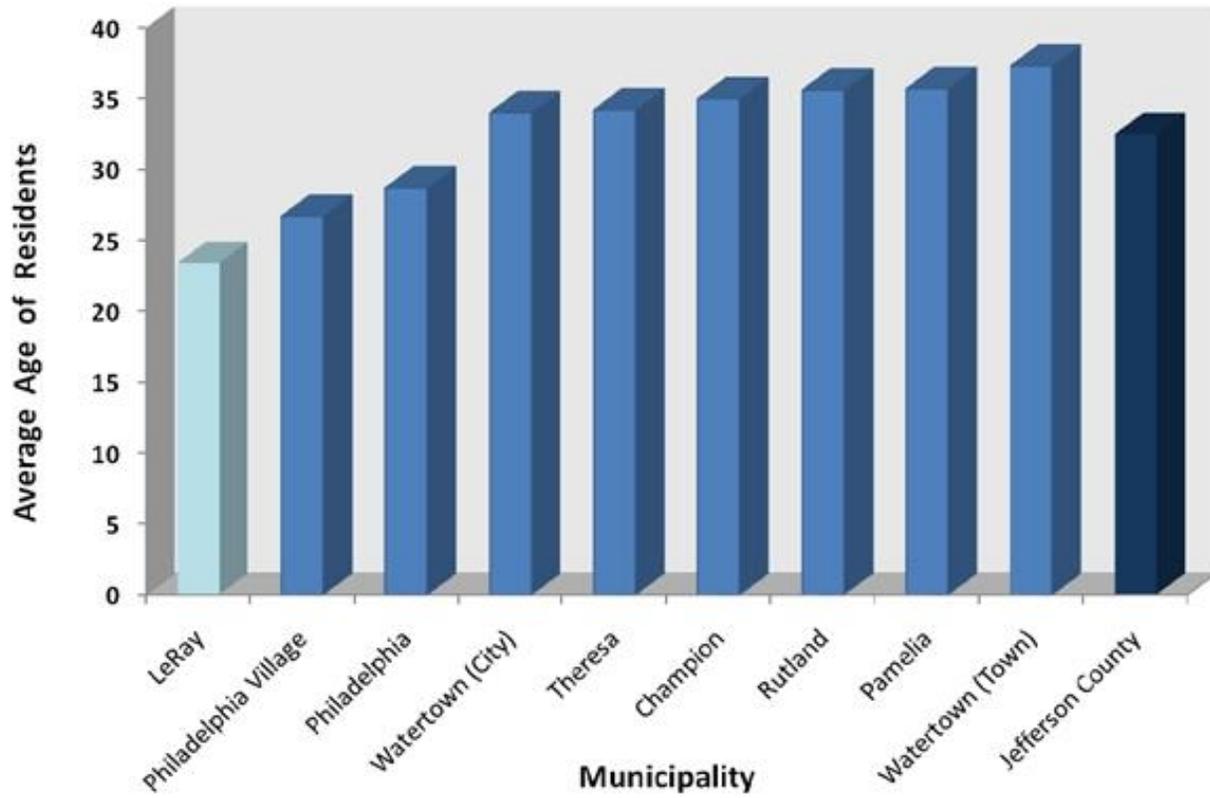
\*LeRay portion of village only

\*\*Entire reported population of Fort Drum is in LeRay

Source: U.S. Census Data, 1990 & 2000, Jefferson County Planning 2007 data

Based on the 2000 census data, the average age of LeRay residents is 23.4 years old. In comparison to the median age in New York State of 36, Jefferson County (32.5 years), and in the Villages of Evans Mills and Black River (36.8 and 37.4 years, respectively) LeRay residents living outside of the villages are relatively young. This is due, in large part, to the military population of the town, since most soldiers are between the ages of 18 and 24. The median age of the non-Fort Drum portion of LeRay is slightly over 26 years old, while the median age of the on-base population is approximately 22.5 years. Another difference between LeRay and the region is that due to the presence of Fort Drum in LeRay, a higher than average proportion of the residents of LeRay are male than in surrounding areas. In 2000, more than 59% of the town's nearly 20,000 residents in 2000 were male. This is especially true on Fort Drum.

**Average Age of Residents in the Town of LeRay and Surrounding Communities (Census 2000)**



## HOUSING

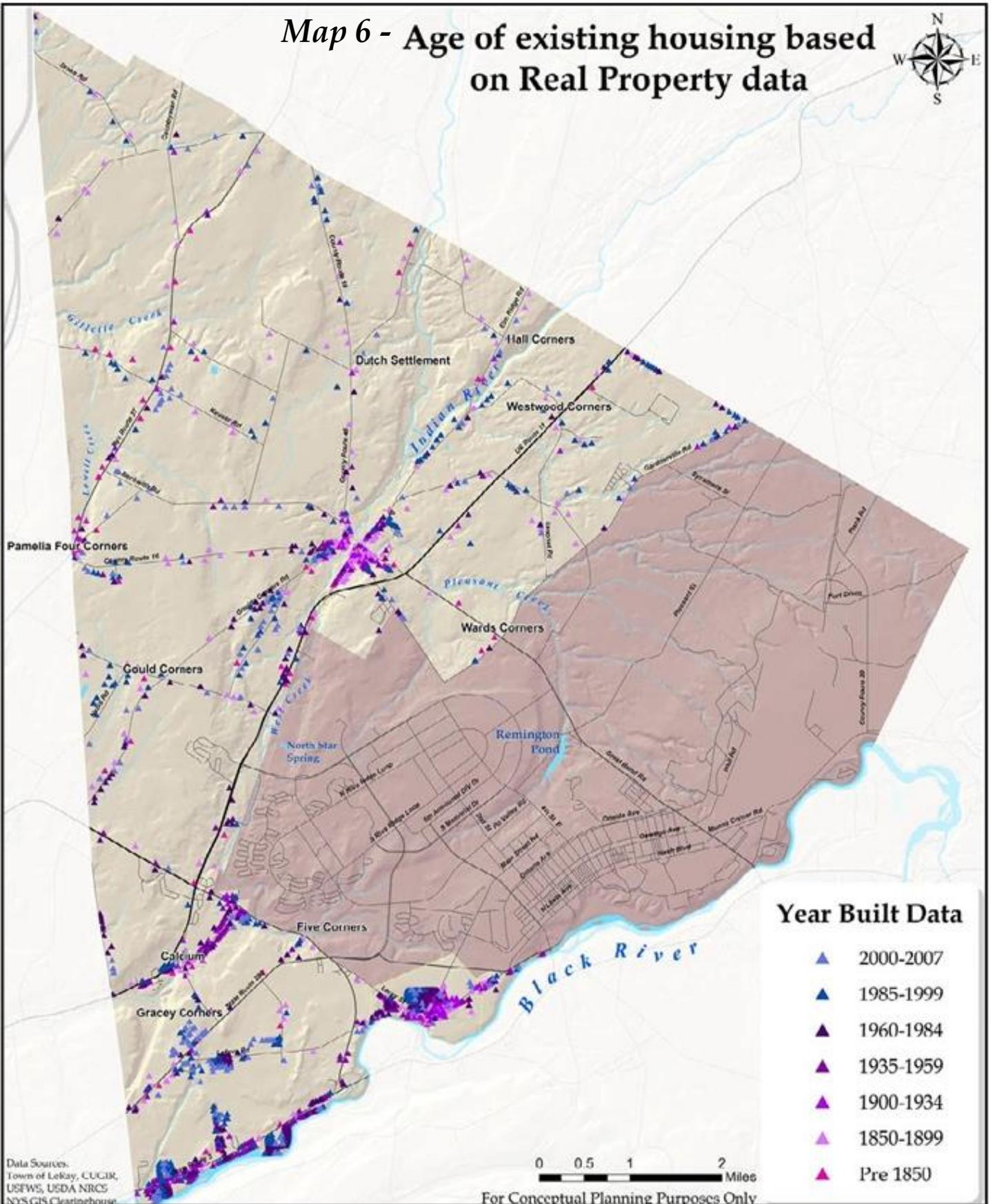
The evolution of development in the Town of LeRay began primarily in the Villages of Black River and Evans Mills and the hamlets of LeRaysville (now part of Fort Drum) and Sanford Corners (modern day Calcium). Based on the year-built data for existing structures in LeRay, there was a significant increase in density between 1850 and 1899 in the two villages. This trend continued into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1910's, development also began to extend south along the Black River and into the Calcium area. By the 1920's and 1930's, as more residents acquired automobiles, residential



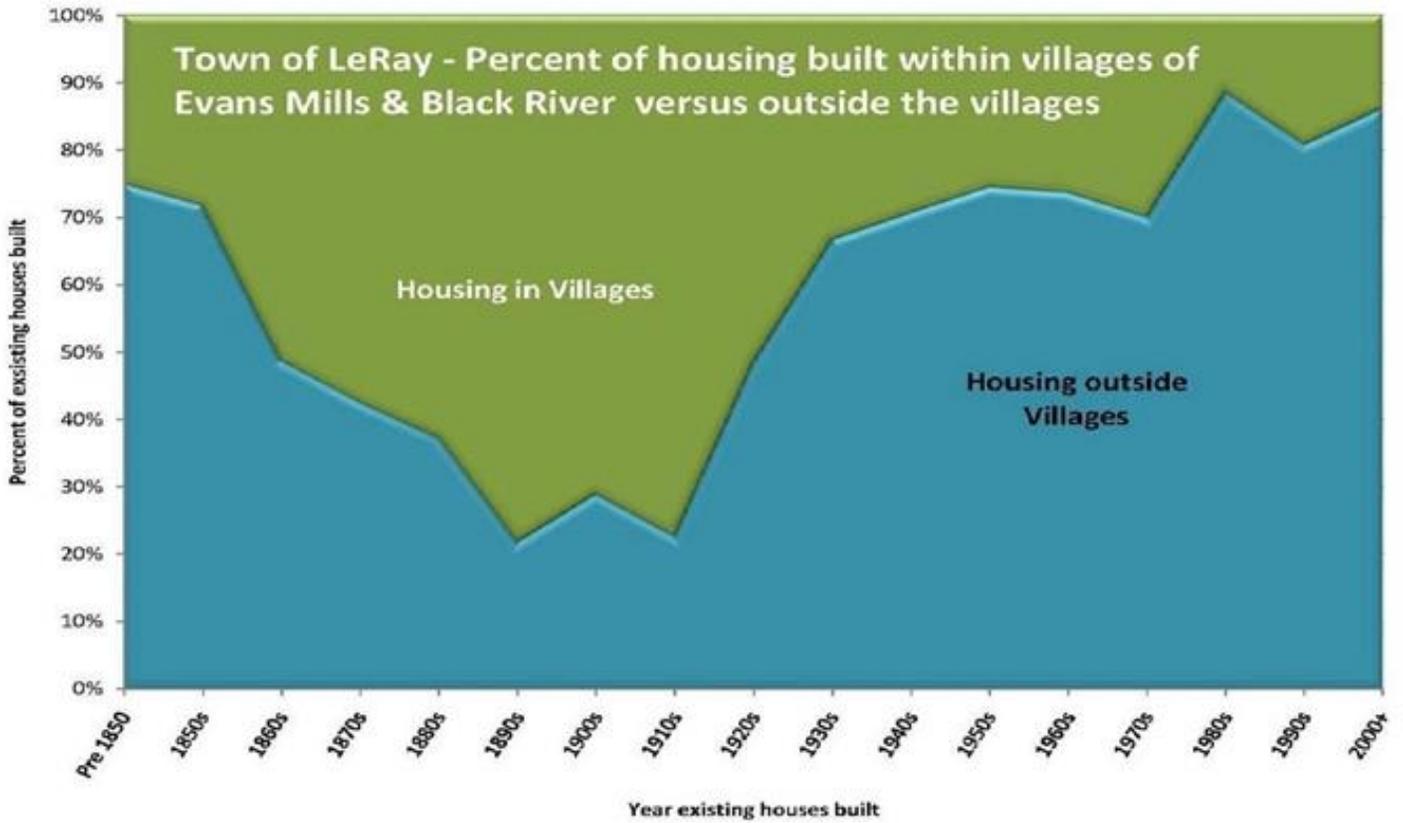
Historic housing stock in Evans Mills.

development in LeRay spread outside the village areas, with more than half of the homes built in this period constructed outside of the village boundaries. This trend was intensified after World War II when the town saw an increase in growth, particularly in the 1950s as potential homeowners sought land within easy commuting distance of Watertown, similar to development in other suburban areas throughout the US. There was a lull in development in the 1960s, with the 1970s and 1980s giving way to steady growth in town. Significant residential growth in LeRay occurred towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in parallel with the expansion of Fort Drum, and continues today, with over 80% of the new development in LeRay occurring outside of the villages. Map 6 on the following page depicts these trends, as does the chart on page 39, which shows the percentage of homes built in the Villages of Evans Mills and Black River as compared to unincorporated areas of LeRay. This chart reflects local, regional, and national trends during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century toward home construction in unincorporated areas, rather than development in existing cities and villages.

Map 6 - Age of existing housing based on Real Property data

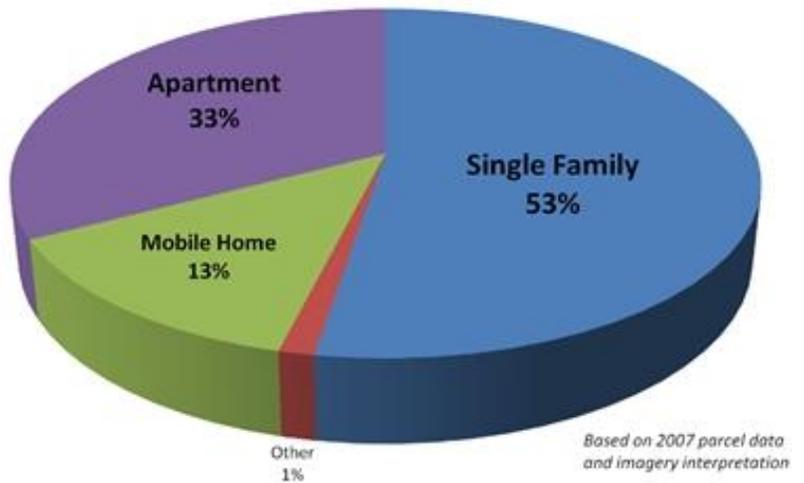


TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



As with any town containing an active military base, the supply and demand for housing is a constant variable in LeRay. In particular, the town is subject to the ebb and flow of military personnel and their families stationed at Fort Drum. In addition, the type of housing in the Town of LeRay also hinges largely on the housing demands of the Army. With a large number of soldiers and their families residing both on and adjacent to Fort Drum, there is a strong demand for rental housing. Rental housing comprises over 73 percent of total residences in LeRay inclusive of Fort Drum. Excluding the Fort, approximately one-third of the housing stock in the town is apartments, a large percentage of which are located in the Calcium area.

**Housing Stock in LeRay**

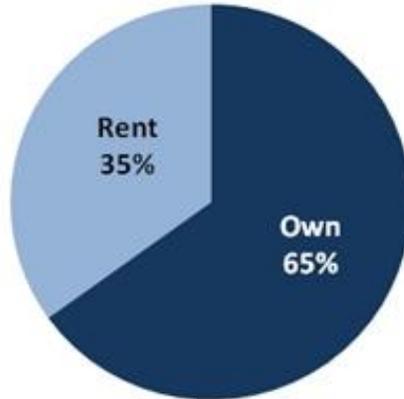


**Home Ownership in the Town of LeRay by US  
Census Location (Census 2000)**

**Calcium CDP**



**Black River**



**Evans Mills**



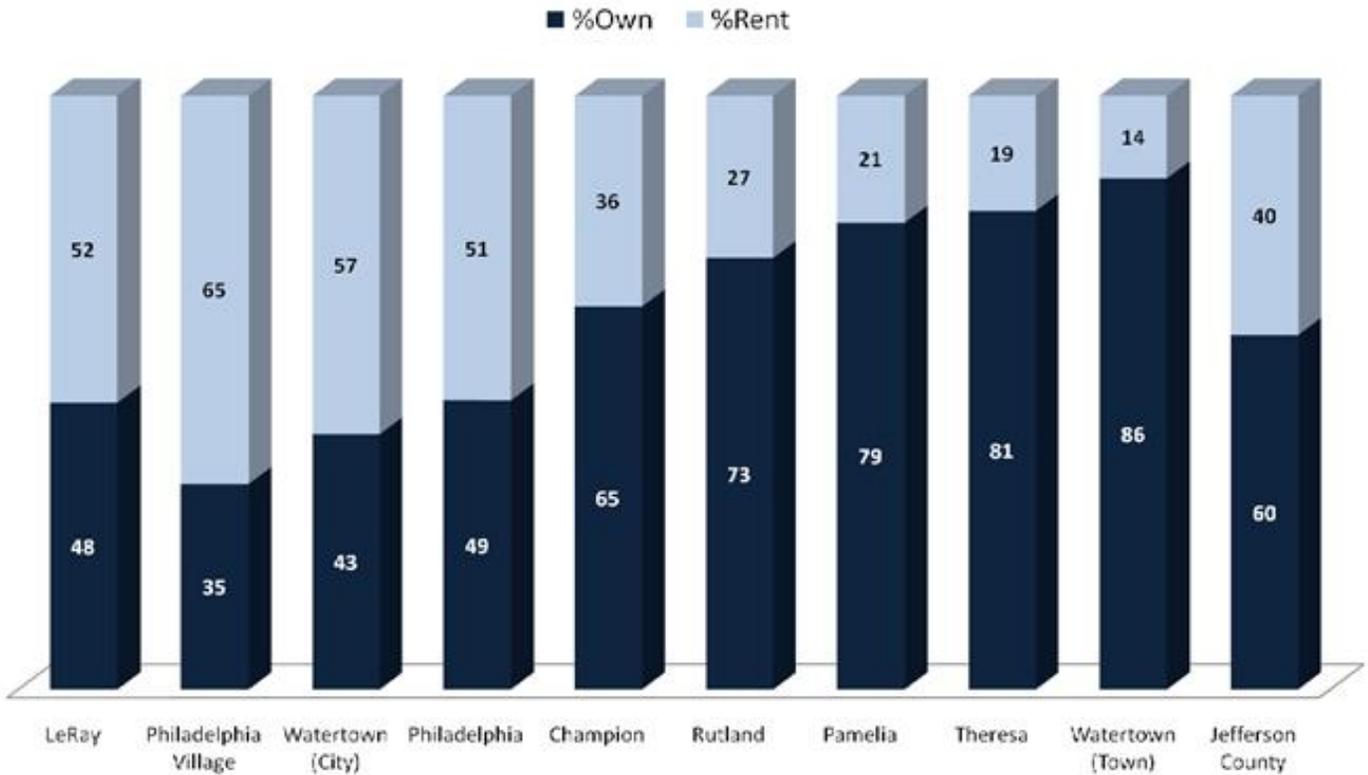
**Remainder of LeRay**



Not surprisingly, the percentage of rental units in LeRay is much greater than in most other areas of Jefferson County, as shown on the chart on the next page.

TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Home Ownership in LeRay and Surrounding Towns and Village (Census 2000)**



**SECTION 801 HOUSING IN LERAY**

Throughout the country, the United States Army works with communities to ensure that enough adequate housing exists for soldiers and their families. While housing can be provided on-post, in most cases there is a need to construct homes in adjoining communities. Fort Drum is no exception. In an effort to offset the high cost of providing housing in military communities, the Army entered into leases with private developers in the mid-1980s under Section 801 of the Military Construction Authority Act of 1984 (PL98-115 §801). Section 801 provided for the creation of 2,000 housing units for soldiers and their families in ten North Country communities. These communities have recently begun to transition from Army leases to the private sector. Of the thirteen housing complexes created under Section 801, three are located in the Town of LeRay with two (Woodcliff East and West) having transferred to private ownership in 2008, and the third (LeRay Heights) set to transfer to private hands in 2010.

## ECONOMICS

Between 1984 and 1990 Jefferson County was the fastest growing county in New York State. The county's population grew from 88,151 to 110,943, an increase of nearly 26%. Much of this growth has been attributed to the expansion of Fort Drum. While growth in the county slowed considerably in the 1990's, from 2000 to 2006 the county gained 5,424 additional residents. In addition, Fort Drum has grown to be the largest employer in Jefferson County and the region and has caused enormous growth in the Town of LeRay.

The expansion and growth of commercial uses in LeRay is perhaps no more evident in the town than along US Route 11, between NYS Route 342 and Operation Iraqi Freedom Drive. The images on the following page illustrate the approximate scale of commercial development along Route 11 at two time points: 1984 and 2007<sup>4</sup>. As shown in the figures, commercial floor area increased dramatically in this corridor, from approximately 3,400 square feet in 1984 to approximately 350,000 square feet in 2007.



Views like this are typical along Route 11 in LeRay, as the region grows so too does the demand for commercial infrastructure.

---

<sup>4</sup> A photo simulation was performed to depict an approximate portrait of development in 1984 and 2007. A 2006 orthophotograph of the town was used as a base map for both images and the photo simulation was performed based on Jefferson County Real Property data.

**Photosimulation of commercial growth occurring along Route 11 after  
assignment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division to Fort Drum**



Commercial development along Route 11 has increased dramatically since 1984, particularly in recent years. In 1984 there were just a few businesses along Route 11 with a combined floor area of approximately 3,400 square feet. By 2007 the amount of commercial floor area along Route 11 had increased approximately 100 fold, to 350,000 square feet.

## Fort Drum Brings Jobs to the Region

**TOTAL JOBS:**  
29,477

*Fort accounts for 1-in-4 jobs in 3-County Region (Jefferson, St. Lawrence, Lewis), directly or indirectly.*

**Non-Military**  
12,039\*



**17,438**  
**Military**

Source: Jefferson County, Fort Drum Economic Impact Study FY'06

\* Includes 3,712 Civilian Personnel Directly Employed by the Fort

### HOUSEHOLD INCOMES IN LERAY

According to the 2000 US Census, in 1999, the median household income in the Town of LeRay was \$33,359, nearly two percent less than the county-wide median income of \$34,006. The highest median income in the town was in the Village of Black River (\$53,472) and the lowest was in the Calcium area (\$28,977). However, it must be noted that reported incomes for Fort Drum soldiers do not include benefits such as

LeRay 1999 Household Income



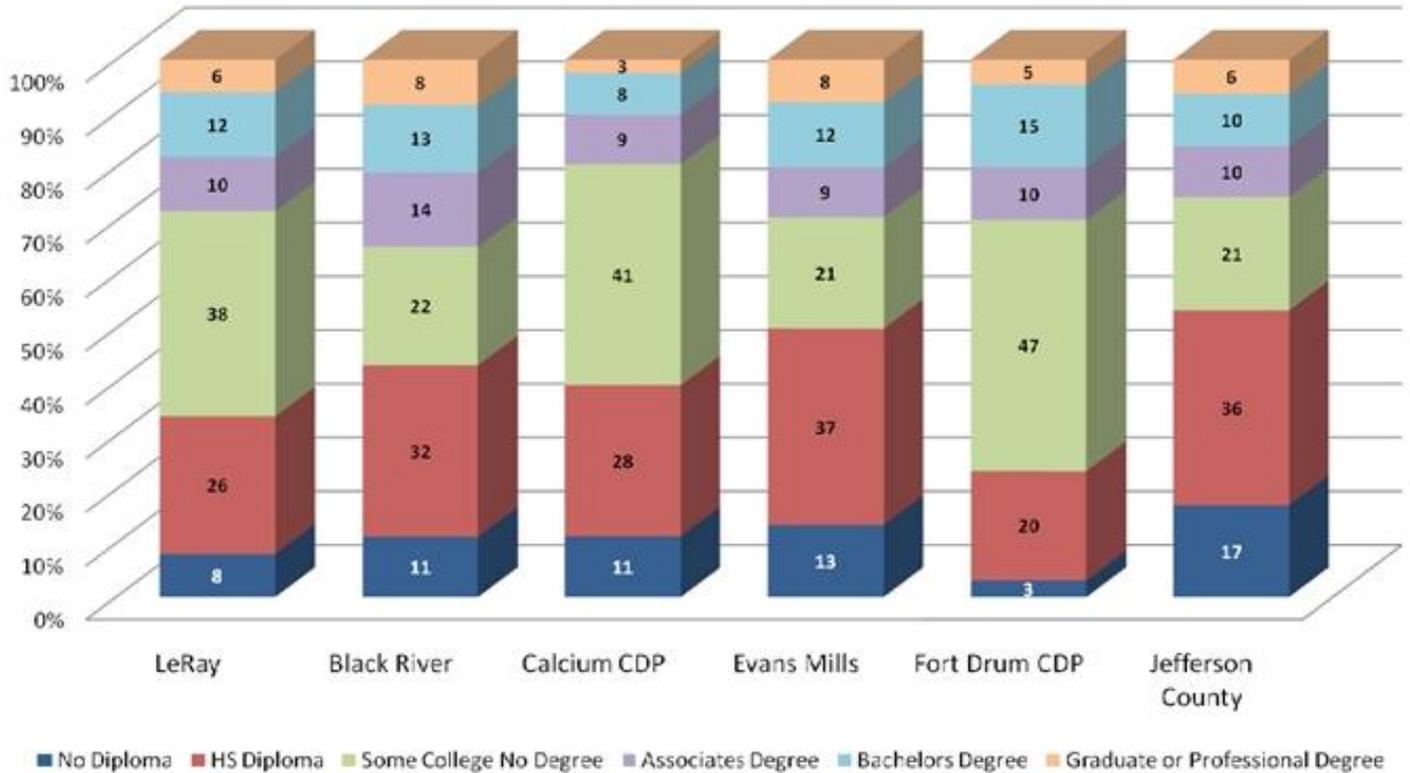
Source: 2000 U.S. Census

housing and food allowances that would raise total compensation, particularly in areas largely populated with military families. A graph depicting 1999 reported household incomes in LeRay is included on the previous page.

**EDUCATION**

Due, in large part, to the presence of Fort Drum in LeRay, there is a higher level of overall educational attainment in the town than in Jefferson County as a whole. Nearly two-thirds of LeRay residents have taken at least one college course, in comparison to less than 47 percent of county residents. More importantly, slightly more LeRay residents than the county average have bachelors or advanced degrees (18.1% vs. 16.1% in 2000). The graph below shows educational attainment in the LeRay area and in each of the villages, in the Calcium area, and on Fort Drum.

**Highest Level of Educational Attainment of LeRay Residents by Census Area (2000)**



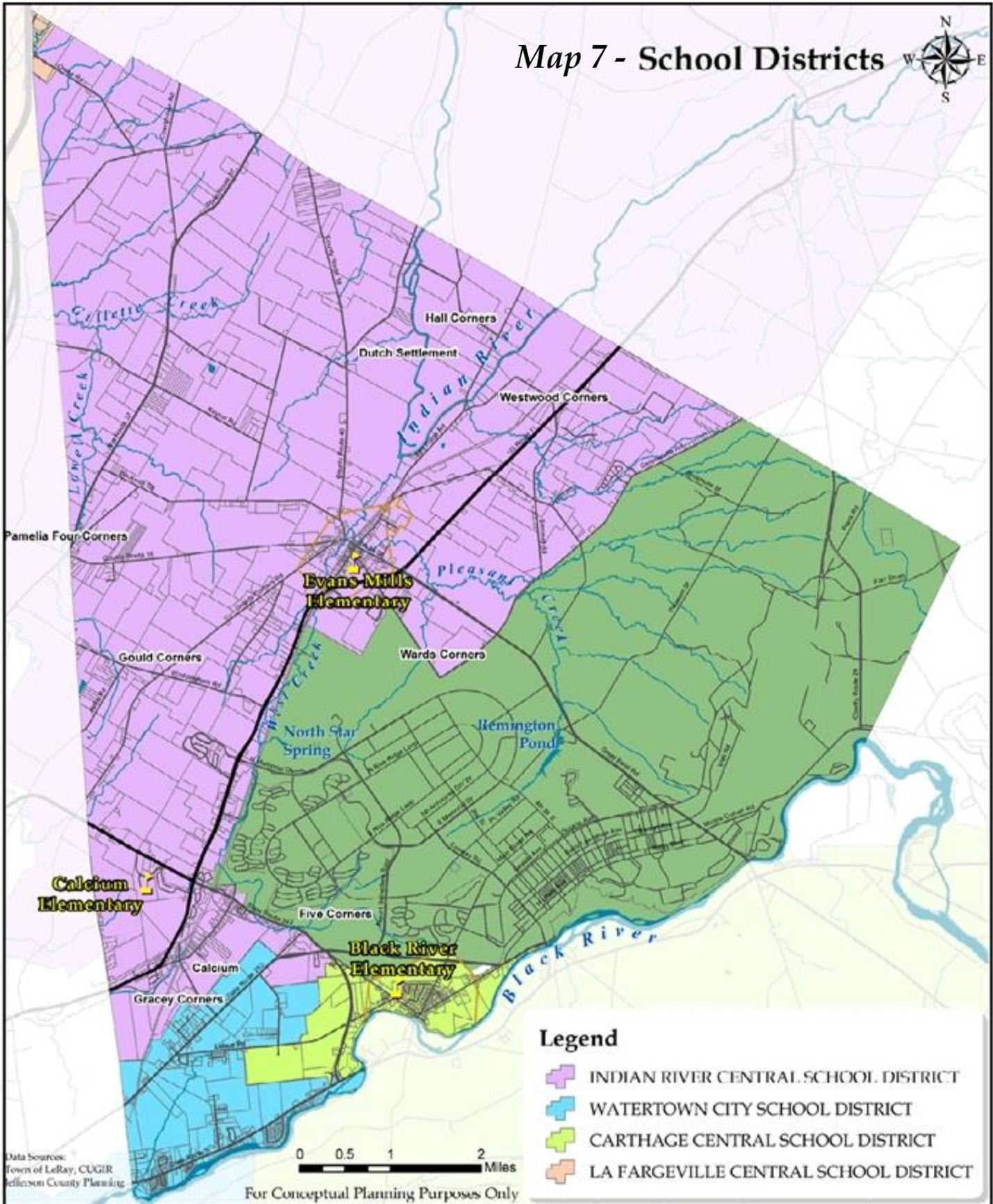
## **SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

The Town of LeRay is served by four school districts. The majority of the town lies within the Indian River School District, including the housing within the North Post area of Fort Drum. A section of Fort Drum housing within the South Post area and all of the Village of Black River is in the Carthage Central School District. The southwestern section of LeRay, along NYS Route 3, is within the Watertown School District. A very small section of the town, at the northern tip, is in the LaFargeville School District. School facilities located within the Town of LeRay are the Evans Mills Primary School in the Village of Evans Mills, the Calcium Primary School in the Hamlet of Calcium, and the Black River Elementary School, located within the Village of Black River. There are no middle or high schools located within LeRay. Also, there are no private schools located in LeRay. However, there are several private schools in the area, both in Watertown and in Carthage that are attended by LeRay residents. Map 7 on the following page illustrates the school districts within the Town of LeRay.



Evans Mills Primary School, one of three public schools located within the Town of LeRay.

Map 7 - School Districts

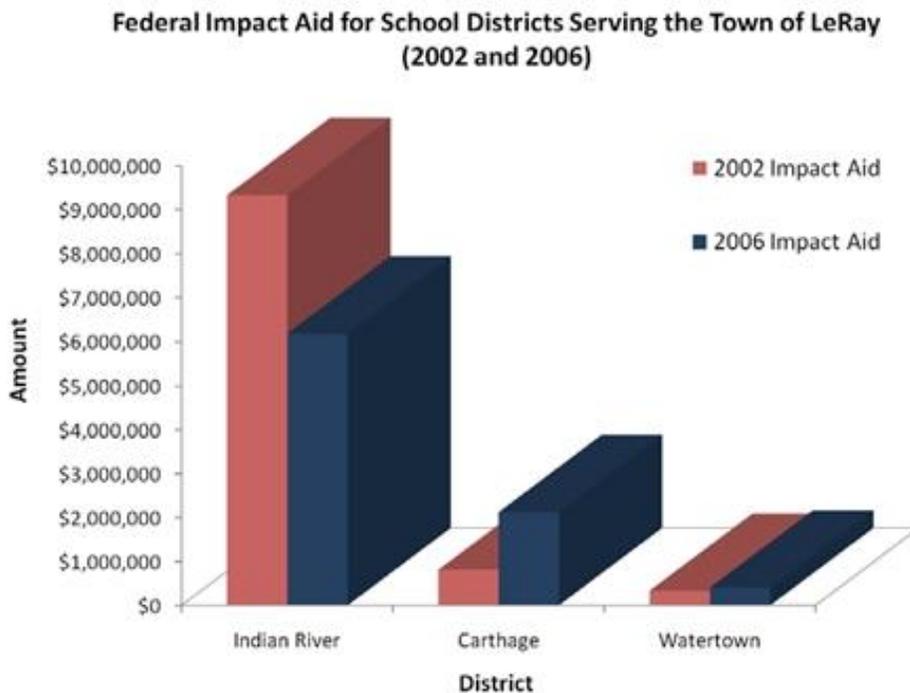


**Legend**

-  INDIAN RIVER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
-  WATERTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
-  CARTHAGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
-  LA FARGEVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The federal government contributes money to school districts that include the bounds of military installations. This federal funding began in 1950 under President Harry Truman and is known as Federal Impact Aid. Federal Impact Aid is meant to offset the taxes lost on account of a federal presence or activity. Fort Drum does not pay property taxes, nor do the majority of soldiers and dependants that live on post or in Section 801 housing. The distribution of funds provided by this source has shifted substantially over the last several years, with Federal Aid funding in the Indian River School District cut by a third between 2002 and 2006 (from approximately \$9 million to \$6 million) while funding for the Carthage district has increased 162% (from roughly \$800,000 to slightly more than \$2 million), as indicated in the chart below. A concern, however, is that while the children of active military soldiers make up nearly half of the total students in the school districts served by LeRay, the federal portion of the district



budgets is much less than this percentage. In the Indian River Central School District, this dollar amount equals 14 percent of the total district budget, while nearly 60 percent of the district's students are the children of soldiers stationed at Fort Drum.

Within the three primary school districts that enroll LeRay students (Watertown, Carthage, and Indian River), there has been an overall increase in total K-12 student enrollment since the addition of a brigade combat team (BCT) to Fort Drum took place in 2004. The entirety of this increase is related to the addition of the BCT and their families in the Fort Drum region, since the school age populations not affiliated with Fort Drum enrolled in the three school districts has dropped significantly in this period. While the overall enrollment in the three school districts increased by 6.4% between 2003 and 2006, according to data obtained by the Fort Drum

Regional Liaison Organization, the number of students in the three school districts that were not children of soldiers or civilians working on the base decreased by 4.3%. This drop off is most striking in Indian River, where the number of non-Fort Drum affiliated students dropped by 8% between 2003 and 2006, even as the total number of students in the district increased by 5.3%. At the same time, the district that encountered the largest percentage increase in military children was in the Watertown school district, where the number of students whose families were directly affiliated with Fort Drum, either as the children of soldiers or civilian employees increased by a third.

One possible explanation of this reduction is that some of the non-Fort Drum related student population might have enrolled in private schools in Jefferson County, the majority of which are affiliated with the Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg. However, this movement is unlikely, given the graying of the region's population and the decrease in the number of students enrolled in Catholic schools both locally and nationally. This has led to the closing of two Catholic elementary schools in Watertown in 2004, and a nearly halving of the total number of students attending schools in the Ogdensburg Diocese, which encompasses the entire North Country extending from the Watertown area to Plattsburgh, between 1998 and 2008. In Watertown, parochial school attendance has stabilized since the school closings in 2004, according to Diocese officials cited in a May, 2008 Watertown Daily Times article, due to the increase in Fort Drum related students in the area. Also, according to the Indian River Central School District, the percentage of students residing within the district attending private schools has remained steady over the last several years at roughly 5 percent of the district's student age population.

### **Indian River Schools**

According to the Indian River School District web site, "the character of the district began to change in the mid-1980s with the announcement that the 10th Mountain Division would be stationed at neighboring Fort Drum. Beginning in 1988 and continuing into 2002, the district has spent in excess of ninety-five million dollars to expand and improve all of its facilities." While the Indian River School District receives funding from the federal government, this amount has been reduced significantly over the last five years. Conversely, state aid for the district has increased significantly in the same period to help mitigate this shortfall. Some town residents, however, are concerned that the growth of the district created by Fort Drum is

placing a significant burden on long-time residents of the town. This is evidenced by the results of the 2007 Town of LeRay survey, in which 69% of residents surveyed stated that the property tax burden was the most pressing issue affecting them.

In the Indian River School District, residents agreed to fund a bond issue in October of 2007 that will lead to the construction of 38 classrooms by September, 2010, including 18 additional



Most students in LeRay attend the Indian River Central Intermediate School, Middle School and High School in Philadelphia.

classrooms and a new gymnasium at the Calcium Primary School. This additional classroom space will accommodate students living in newly-built housing at Fort Drum and in LeRay.

Despite this construction, a number of students from Fort Drum bused to the outlying schools in the Indian River School

District in order to fill classroom space. An example of this is the transportation of an estimated 70 students, ranging from Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, from Fort Drum housing to the Antwerp Elementary School, some 17 miles, or a 45 minute bus ride from the base. Additional classroom space will also be provided at the Indian River Intermediate School and at Indian River High School. These additions are slated to be completed in the 2010-2011 school year.

### **Construction of New Facilities in Other Districts**

Between 2007 and 2012, based on data obtained by FDRLO from the Watertown, Indian River, and Carthage school districts, the projected number of students that are expected to enroll in schools in the three school districts is expected to increase by 22%. Nearly half of this projected increase is expected to take place in the Indian River Central School District. Approximately 54% of the projected growth is expected to be as the direct result of Fort Drum related activity, with the majority of new students expected to come from Fort Drum in all districts.

In order to meet the projected increase in enrollment, in addition to the improvements and expansions indicated above in Indian River, each of the other two area school districts also have proposed or currently have under construction additional classroom space. In the Carthage School District, a new wing is under construction at the Carthage Middle School. When completed, the new wing will house the district's 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. This will create additional classroom space in the district's three elementary schools for over 300 additional students that are expected in the coming years. In addition, a future 400 seat expansion of elementary school capacity is proposed in the Carthage district between now and 2012. Finally, 150 additional seats are proposed to be added at Carthage High School by September of 2010. This timetable could change depending on future bonding and budgets for the school district.

In the Watertown School District, the increase in the number of students resulting from increased manpower at Fort Drum has led to the reopening of the Starbuck Elementary School in the city. It is anticipated that additional capacity for 230 elementary students, 165 middle school students, and 200 high school students will be made available in the district by 2012.

#### **SCHOOLS AS A PART OF THE COMMUNITY**

In each of the school districts within LeRay, school facilities serve not just as educational centers for young minds, but as meeting places and social settings for a variety of community uses, both for individual neighborhoods and for the community as a whole. For example, community groups in the region are able to use the Indian River Theater in Philadelphia, a 1,400 seat facility attached to Indian River High School, for a variety of uses. Also, community members have access to athletic, meeting, and classroom facilities at the various district schools after hours, including the district's Olympic sized swimming pool in Philadelphia and gymnasiums at each of the schools in the community. At the Evans Mills Primary School, the Indian River School Board opted to place the playground at the front of the school property in order to make the playground available for community use and to enhance the school's ties to Evans Mills. By recognizing the role of schools as meeting places for the community, residents will continue to feel connected to the schools in the area, even after their children have graduated from school.

A concern, both in LeRay and nationally, is the lack of integration of new school facilities to neighborhood areas. Due to state and national standards, such as minimum acreage requirements for schools, coupled with a concern for overall student safety, it has become increasingly difficult to construct schools in or immediately adjacent to neighborhood areas. However, due to the great number of benefits that a school can provide for a neighborhood, it is important for communities to recognize, as new school facilities are proposed in the region, that consideration should be given to locating new schools in proximity to existing and proposed neighborhood and subdivision areas. Better integrating the schools and neighborhoods together, and avoiding subjecting students to extra early mornings and long bus rides allows students to more fully participate in the school experience. In short, school proximity to residential areas helps to improve student performance, cement ties between the school and the surrounding neighborhoods and encourage parental participation.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

There are limited existing municipal services in LeRay. While the Village of Black River has a small police force, policing for the remainder of LeRay outside of the Village of Black River is provided by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department and the New York State Police. The Village of Evans Mills contracts with the State Police sub-station in Philadelphia. There are two ambulance squads serving the off-post areas of LeRay, the Black River Ambulance Squad Inc. and the Evans Mills Volunteer Ambulance Squad. The nearest hospitals include the Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown and Carthage Area Hospital in Carthage. There are also four volunteer fire stations that serve the town, the Black River, Evans Mills, Calcium, and Pamela Volunteer Fire Stations, respectively.

As the population of LeRay continues to grow, the provision of adequate services will become an increasingly important issue. Having a long-range plan in place will allow the town to phase in services in an efficient and considered matter. Cutting costs should be on the top of the agenda. Rising fuel prices and falling rates of volunteerism are just a few of the challenges the town faces with respect to the provision of services. The town should explore options for sharing of services with other municipalities and may also wish to address factors that may reduce the pool of available volunteers, such as the supply of affordable housing in the town.

As the population of LeRay continues to grow, the provision of adequate services will become an increasingly important issue. Having a long range plan in place will allow the town to phase in services in an efficient and considered matter. Cutting costs should be on the top of the agenda.

**Emergency Medical Services**

The Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO) is currently studying ways to improve Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Jefferson County. One area of focus is how to take a more regional and cooperative approach to providing EMS to Jefferson County residents. Such services are currently provided via 42 separate response agencies across Jefferson County. The Town of LeRay should consider partnering with FDRHPO and fellow Jefferson County communities to find ways to more efficiently and effectively provide EMS services both in the town and in the county.

## LAND USE

### AGRICULTURE

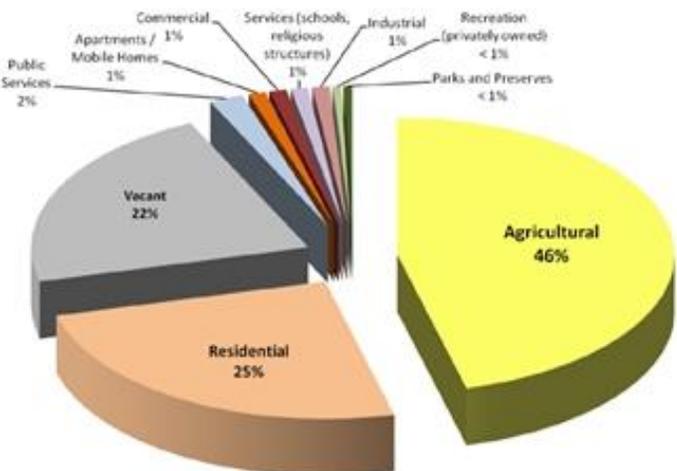
Agriculture plays a major role in LeRay, both as one of the major land uses and as a large role in the economic vitality of the town. Agricultural land accounts for 28%, or approximately

12,960 acres, of LeRay's 46,286 acres of land as indicated, or 46.3% of the non Fort Drum land in LeRay, as indicated on the chart below and in the Real Property Land Use Classifications Map included on the next page. As of the 2002 USDA Census of Agriculture, 41% of the total land in Jefferson County was in agricultural production. Dairy and cattle are the leading agriculture products in the county.



Active agriculture in LeRay.

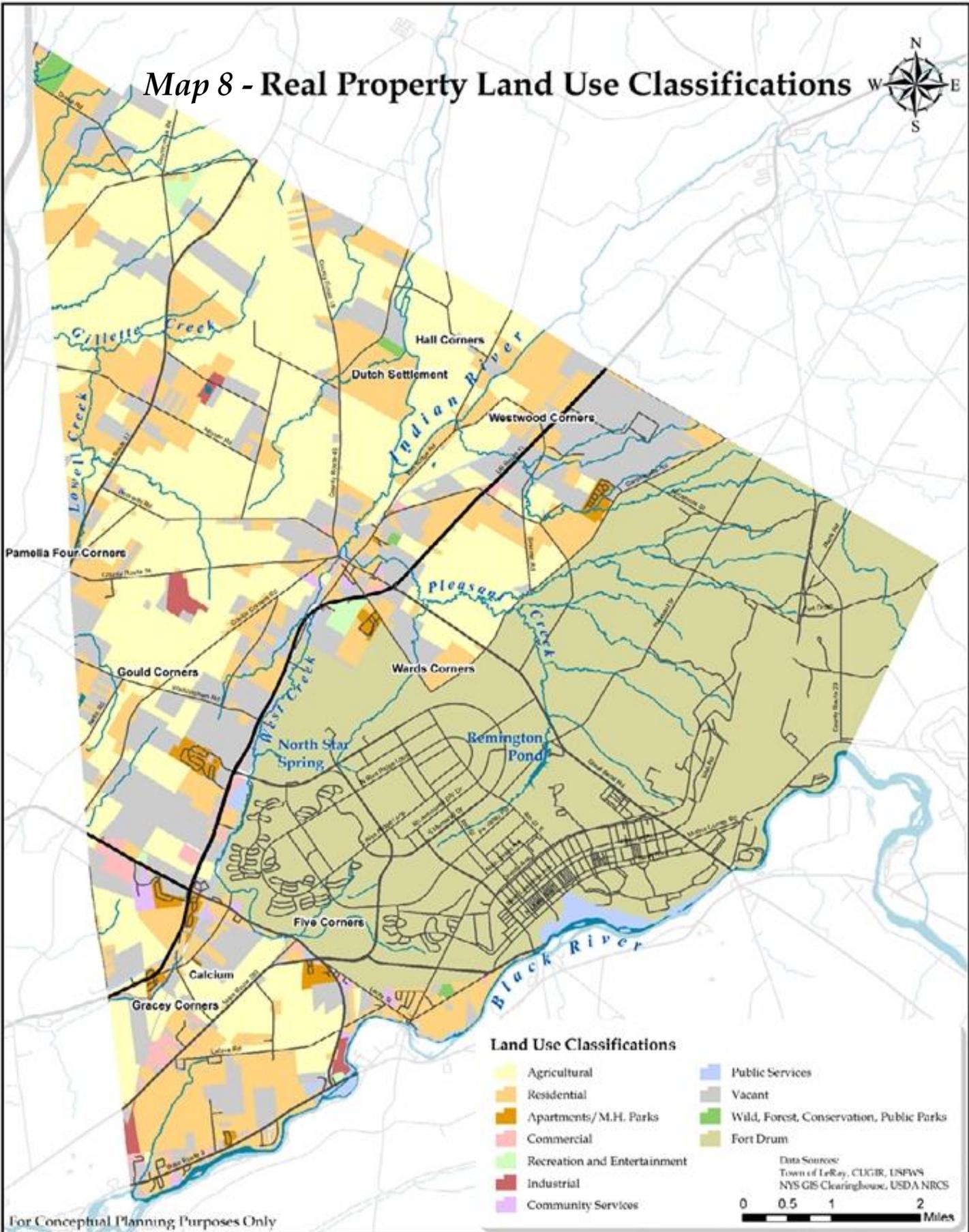
LeRay's percentage of farmland is similar to the county proportion, excluding Fort Drum, with 46% of land within the town used for agriculture. Based on town assessment data, there are 119 agricultural parcels in the Town of LeRay with dairy and field crops as the dominant types of farms. Approximately 17 farms in LeRay receive a tax exemption related to recently constructed improvements to farmlands. The total



Source: Based on GIS parcel data.

exempt value of these farms is \$665,861, or 6% of the \$11,443,543 total assessed value of all agricultural properties in LeRay. The majority of active farming parcels are located north and east of Evans Mills, in the central and northern portions of town. In addition, there are several agricultural parcels located in southwest LeRay near Calcium and on the outskirts of the Village of Black River. Map 9 on page 57 depicts active agricultural parcels in LeRay.

Map 8 - Real Property Land Use Classifications



## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

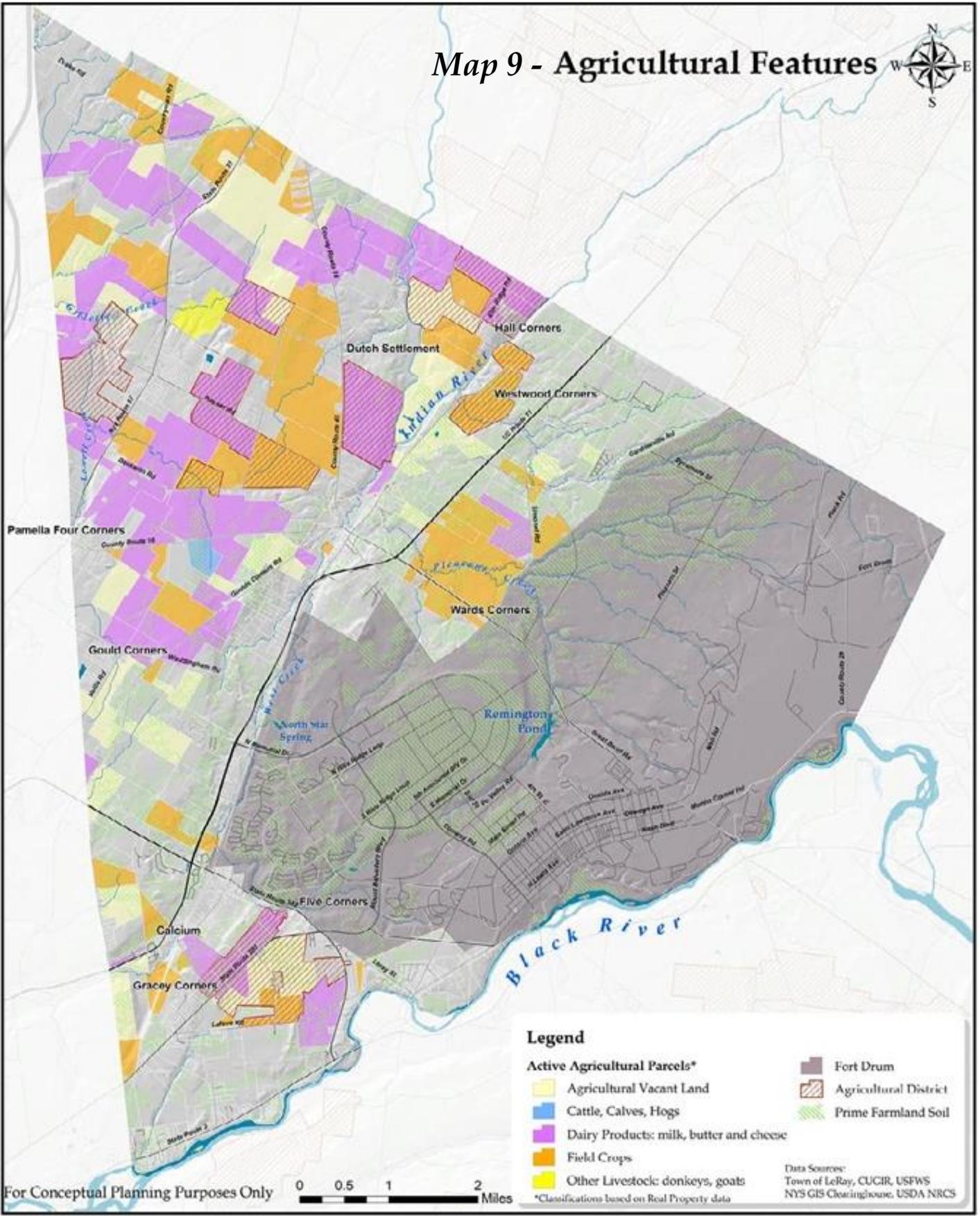
According to the Town Assessor of LeRay, only one agricultural parcel has been lost to production within the last five years. However, in that instance, the parcel had not been actively farmed for some time. Despite relative stability in the amount of actively farmed land in recent years, longtime town residents and farmers have noted that the number of working farms and amount of actively farmed land has greatly declined in recent decades. Some have noted that this decline accelerated in the 1980s, after Fort Drum became the home of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and growth pressures began to make themselves felt in LeRay. Thus, in spite of its long agricultural history, many residents and farmers are concerned that agriculture uses are losing their foothold in LeRay. Several areas of LeRay, especially adjacent to the US Route 11 corridor, have experienced development pressures for both residential and commercial uses which are encroaching on farm land.

Lastly, in spite of the abundance of farmland in the central and northern portions of town, only 40% of LeRay's existing farmland is within the county's agricultural district, as shown on Map 9.



New commercial development in the Route 11 corridor and an abandoned farm illustrate changing land use patterns in the town over the past several decades.

Map 9 - Agricultural Features



## COMMERCIAL

The primary commercial corridors in LeRay are Routes 11 and 342. Both of these thoroughfares have seen significant commercial development in the form of strip-malls and big box stores coinciding with the growth of Fort Drum over the last 20 plus years. At the end of 2007, there was approximately 545,000 square feet of commercial development (excluding apartments) in LeRay.



Commercial development along US Route 11 in LeRay.

Commercial uses in the town range from small convenience stores and gas stations, to an approximately 200,000 square foot Wal-Mart Supercenter located on US Route 11 which opened in 2006. More unique forms of commercial development are also in LeRay, including a go-kart and miniature golf complex on NYS Route 342 and Thunder Alley Speedpark in Evans Mills, which hosts both modified and stock car racing. A growing commercial use in the town is

the increasing number of self-storage facilities. This is due, in large part, to the active deployment schedule at Fort Drum. While troops are deployed overseas, military personnel need a place to store their belongings. These facilities provide an inexpensive alternative to maintaining an apartment or shipping possessions elsewhere.

Commercial retail development accounts for approximately 13.5 percent of LeRay's overall tax base. Apartment complexes and mobile home parks, which are considered commercial in nature, account for an additional 17 percent of the town's tax base.

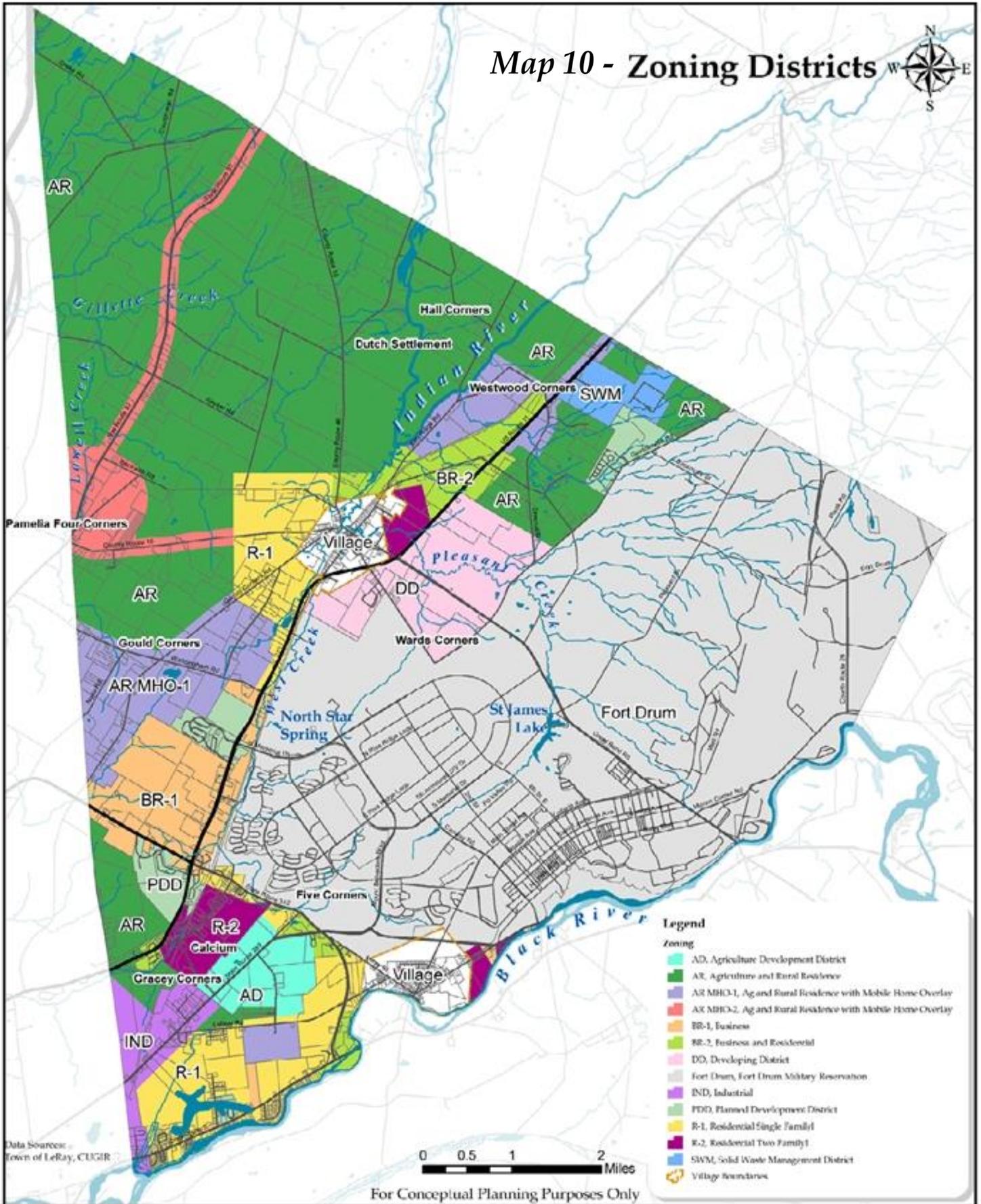
## ZONING

There are 12 zoning districts in the Town of LeRay, plus Fort Drum. The northwestern portion of town is zoned almost exclusively AR (Agriculture and Rural Residential) with a Mobile Home Overlay district (AR MHO-2) along NYS Route 37, County Route 16, and within the hamlet of Pamela. The central portion of LeRay is a much more diversified mix of zoning. US Route 11 has nine different zoning classifications adjacent to the approximately 10 miles of the highway located in LeRay. The zoning for US Route 11 from the Village of Evans Mills north to the town line includes: AR; AR MHO-1 (Agriculture and Rural Residential with Mobile Home Overlay); SWM (Solid Waste Management); BR-2 (Business and Residential); R-2 (Residential Two Family); and DD (Developing District). South of the Village of Evans Mills, zoning districts along US Route 11 include: R-1(Residential Single Family); BR-1 (Business and Residential); and a PDD (Planned Development District). It should be noted that single-family residential is permitted in every zoning district in the town, on 20,000 square foot lots (less than ½ acre) or 15,000 square foot lots where public utilities are present. A map depicting the town’s existing zoning is included on the next page.



Two examples of residential encroachment in southwestern LeRay -  
Left:: a residential subdivision on the west side of Porter Road fragmenting agricultural land;  
Right:: agricultural land is being surrounded by development along County Road 138 and NYS Route 342.

Map 10 - Zoning Districts



## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### **Town Zoning Districts, Special Districts and & Jurisdictions (villages, Fort Drum), by Acres**

Zone	Description	Acres
AD	Agriculture Development District	616
AR	Agriculture and Rural Residence	14,717
AR MHO-1	Ag and Rural Residence with Mobile Home Overlay	2,325
AR MHO-2	Ag and Rural Residence with Mobile Home Overlay	1,254
BR-1	Business	1,418
BR-2	Business and Residential	958
DD	Developing District	1,486
Fort Drum	Fort Drum Military Reservation	18,249
IND	Industrial	622
PDD	Planned Development District	828
R-1	Residential Single Family	2,701
R-2	Residential Two Family	715
SWM	Solid Waste Management District	379
Village	Village of Black River	513
Village	Village of Evans Mills	522

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The Town of LeRay is transected by a network of State, County and Town maintained roadways and a CSX Transportation Railroad line. There are five main organizations that retain ownership of roads and/or planning interests in the Town of LeRay. These include the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Jefferson County, the Town of LeRay, the Village of Evans Mills, and the Village of Black River.

## **ROADWAY SYSTEM**

LeRay has approximately 270 miles of roadways including a U.S. highway, eight state highways and seven county roads. There are also nine identified critical intersections in the Town of LeRay. The major thoroughfares within the town are US Route 11 and NYS Route 342. US Route 11 is home to the majority of commercial development in town. With the Main Gate

entrance to Fort Drum off of US Route 11 at Operation Iraqi Freedom Drive, the US Route 11 corridor has been identified as a regional growth area, as well as an area with a high volume of traffic. With that said, improving access management and ensuring the safety of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists in the town is paramount to the community.

## **OWNERSHIP AND MAINTENANCE JURISDICTION**

NYS Route 342, US Route 11, NYS Route 37, NYS Route 283, NYS Route 26, NYS Route 3 and NYS Route 971Q, NYS Route 971V are owned by New York State and maintenance of the above roads is under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Transportation.

County Road (CR) 16, CR 17, CR 18, CR 46, CR 50, CR 129, and CR 138 are owned and maintained by Jefferson County.

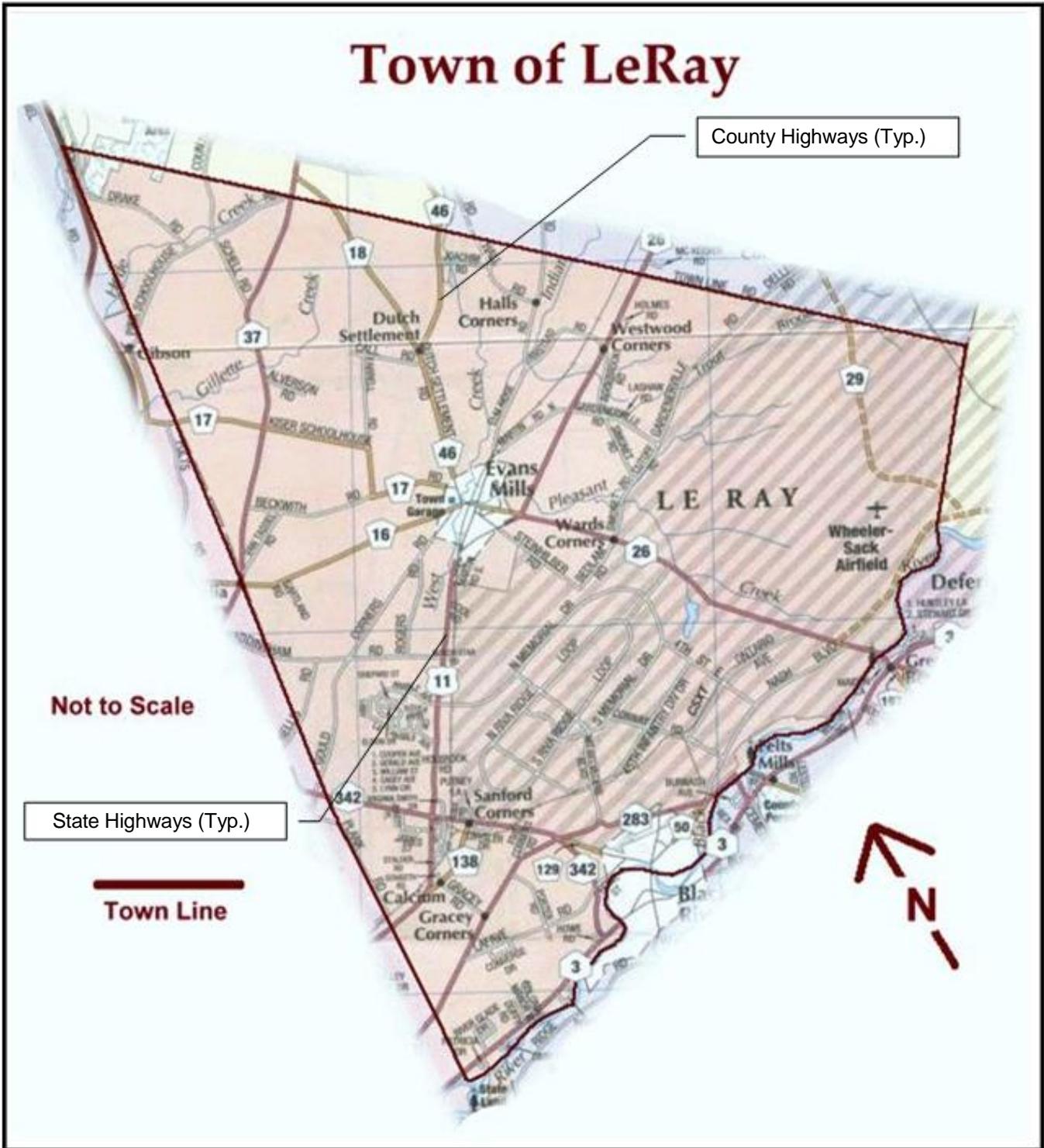
Several local roadways are owned and maintained by the Town of LeRay, Village of Evans Mills, and Village of Black River and include a mix of primary and secondary subdivision roads.

## **NYSDOT ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS**

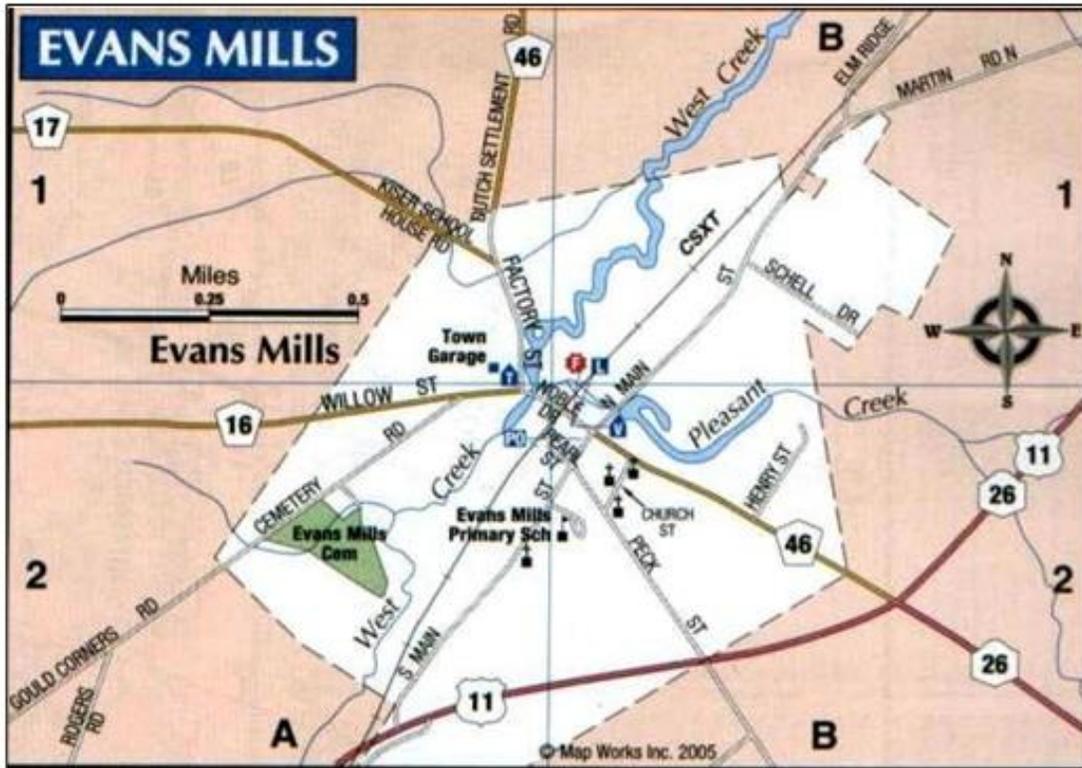
Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Basic to this process is the recognition that individual roads and streets do not serve travel independently in any major way. Rather, most travel involves movement through a network of roads. It becomes necessary then to determine how this travel can be channeled within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a highway network.

Urban and rural areas have fundamentally different characteristics as to density and types of land use, density of street and highway networks, and nature of travel patterns. Moreover, urban and rural areas are further defined by the way in which all of these elements are related to highway function. Definitions of these roadway classifications are listed in Appendix C, "Additional Transportation Information." Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) for state and county highways in LeRay are also provided in Appendix C.

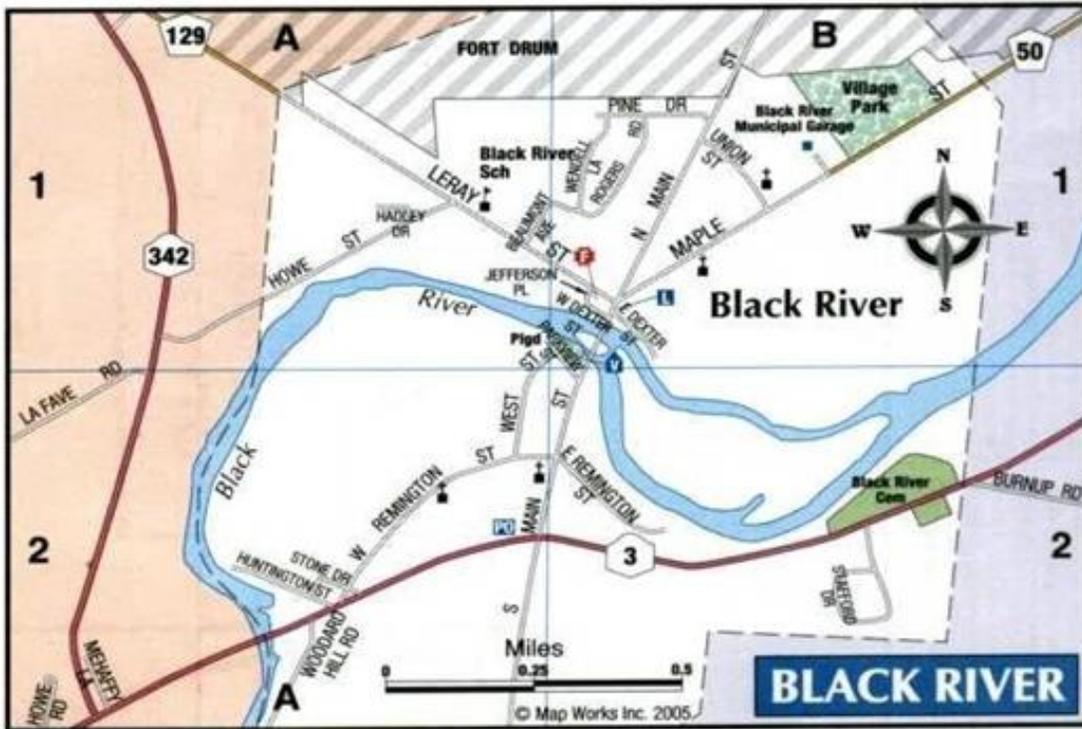
Map 11 - Roads in the Town of LeRay



Map 12 - Roads in the Village of Evans Mills



Map 13 - Roads in the Village of Black River



## **BRIDGES**

There are several bridges within the town that are owned by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Jefferson County, the Town of LeRay, or the Village of Evans Mills. An inventory and map illustrating the locations of the bridges within the town is provided in Appendix C.

One bridge in the Village of Evans Mills - North Main Street over Pleasant Creek, is considered structurally deficient. Jefferson County has applied for Federal funds to implement needed repairs for this bridge.

## **PUBLIC TRANSIT**

There is no public transit within the Town of LeRay outside of Fort Drum. On the Fort a limited daytime shuttle service was recently inaugurated. The new system serves areas on-post with half-hour service during work hours (9 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday) with priority seating for active-duty soldiers and government employed civilian employees. There are no plans at this time to extend this service to off-post areas. The lack of public transit in the town forces those without automobiles to rely on the region's limited taxi service, or to manage as best they can by walking or cycling along town roads not well suited to non-auto uses. As LeRay has grown as regional employment opportunities have become centered on Fort Drum, Watertown, and along US 11; and as the price of fuel continues to rise nationally, the lack of non-automotive options for residents will increasingly become an issue for LeRay's residents.

## **RAIL SERVICE**

The CSX Montreal Secondary Railroad Line, which is part of CSXT's St. Lawrence Subdivision, traverses through the Town of LeRay. The rail line runs from Syracuse to Massena. A spur at mile post QM 78.5 provides connection to the Fort Drum line that leads into the military facility.

## **RAILROAD CROSSINGS**

There are several locations within the town where the CSX railroad crosses roadways with an at-grade road crossing. The locations of these crossings are as follows:

- County Road 138 (Sanford Corners Road) - just south of NYS Route 342
- NYS Route 342 - just east of CR 138
- County Road 46 (Noble Drive) - Village of Evans Mills
- Elm Ridge Road - just outside Village of Evans Mills

## **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES**

Given the predominantly rural character of the town, LeRay has a limited sidewalk system. The sidewalks that are available are primarily located in areas with higher density, such as the Villages of Evans Mills and Black River. It is also worth noting that there are sidewalks within the residential subdivision along Anable Avenue near Route 11.

There is a two-mile nature trail (the DANC Calcium Trail) located between County Road 138 (Sanford Road) and US Route 11. The trail is provided through the efforts of the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) and Fort Drum. On the Fort Drum base, there are numerous trails available. However, due to national security concerns, none of the trails are connected to off-post areas.

In most areas of LeRay, bicyclists and pedestrians are accommodated on the shoulders of the roadways. US Route 11 is also a New York designated regional bike route. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), a roadway that is also a designated bicycle route with an average highway speed of 50 miles per hour should have a minimum shoulder width of 6 feet. In most sections of US Route 11 in LeRay, the shoulder width exceeds this standard. However, due to the high auto speeds in this corridor and the condition of many shoulder areas, local bicycle traffic is minimal.

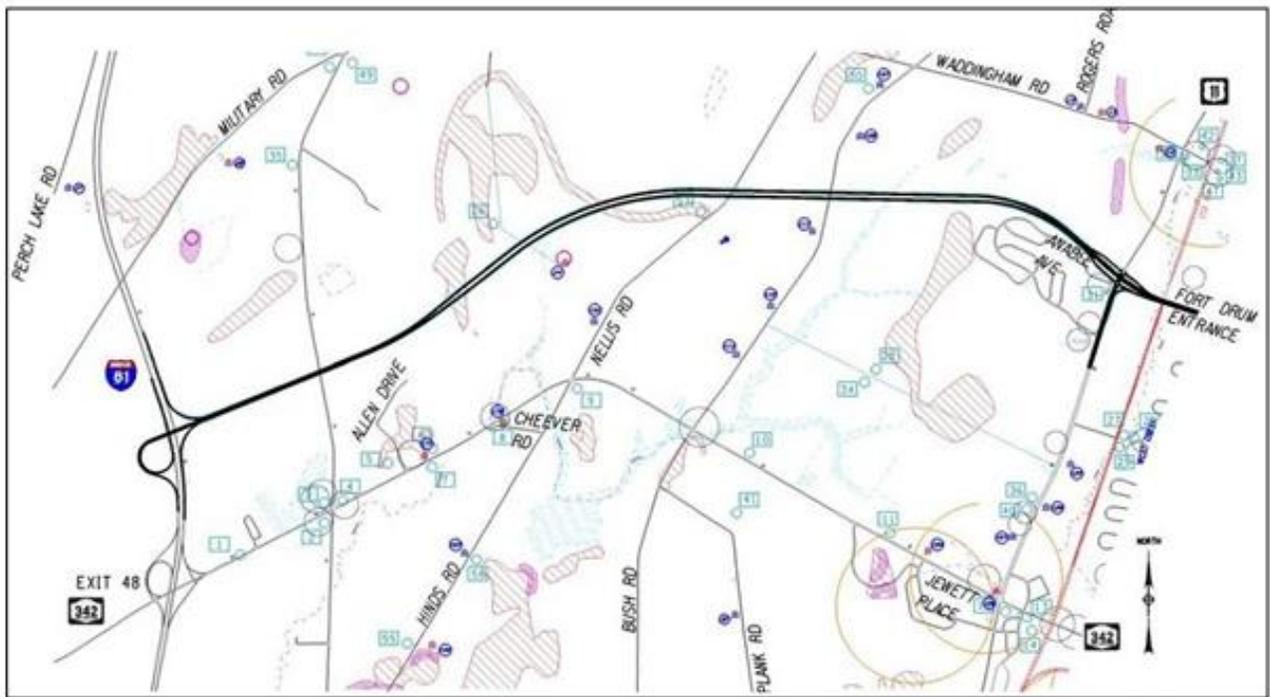
## **FORT DRUM CONNECTOR ROUTE**

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has submitted a Final Design Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (FR/DEIS) to address the planned link between Interstate 81 and US Route 11 at the Fort Drum North Gate. The improvement involves the construction of a new connector route within the Towns of Pamela and LeRay, connecting to Fort Drum and Interstate 81.

The main purpose of the project is to provide a four-lane connection from Interstate 81 (I-81) to Fort Drum in order to enhance the strategic viability of the army base. The new roadway is being proposed as an interstate (fully controlled access) facility and has been proposed to be designated as NYS Route 781. The project termini are I-81 on the west and the intersection of US Route 11 with Fort Drum's North Gate entrance at Operation Iraqi Freedom Drive on the east. The existing "connection" between these termini follows NYS Route 342 and US Route 11.

The project has gone through extensive analysis and engineering to determine which of several alternative routes would have the greatest benefit with the least environmental, social, and economic impacts. Three alternative alignments were studied for the project. Map 14, on the following page, illustrates the path of the chosen "Northern Alternative." As shown on the map, the Northern Alternative extends from Interstate 81, just north of the current Exit 48 to the Fort Drum Main Gate. A single exit in LeRay is planned at the intersection of the proposed Connector and US 11. It is anticipated that construction of the preferred alternative will take place between 2009 and 2011.

**Map 14 - Fort Drum Connector - “Northern Alternative”**



Source: Draft Design Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, USDOT, May 2007

## **EXISTING TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND PROGRAMS**

### **NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

The New York State Department of Transportation has recently completed or is currently undertaking the following improvement projects within the town:

#### **REHABILITATION OF US ROUTE 11 AND NYS ROUTE 342**

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has recently completed the rehabilitation of US Route 11 and NYS Route 342 within the Town of LeRay. The overall goal of the project was to reduce accidents along the stretch of US Route 11 between NYS Route 342 and NYS Route 971Q (Operation Iraqi Freedom Drive). The project included pavement resurfacing, shoulder widening and construction, installation of a box beam median barrier in the center of US Route 11, installation of two new traffic signals on US Route 11 (at Holbrook Road and Anable Avenue), and provisions for left turn lanes to permit left and U-turns. This project was completed in late 2007.

#### **US ROUTE 11 & NYS ROUTE 342 CORRIDOR STUDY**

The primary purpose of the US 11 and NY 342 Corridor Study is to identify land use and access management actions that can enhance the US 11 and NY 342 business districts as a commercial center and reduce the potential for commercial and retail sprawl. In addition, the project takes into consideration the effects of the Fort Drum Connector project to determine what impacts this will have on the Town of LeRay and specifically the study corridors. This study was completed in the summer of 2007.

### **JEFFERSON COUNTY**

The Jefferson County Highway Department and the Town of LeRay are currently reconstructing Simonet Road, Cutoff Road, and Gardnerville Road with a possible transfer of the roadway from the town system to the county system. This improved roadway would provide connection of County Road 29 / County Road 30 to NYS Route 26 west of the Fort Drum military facility. Ownership of portions of County Road 29 and County Road 37 that traverse the Fort Drum military facility was recently conveyed from the county to Fort Drum.

Jefferson County has applied for federal funds to support the reconstruction of the North Main Street bridge over Pleasant Creek (BIN 2259310) in the Village of Evans Mills. The bridge is currently listed as Structurally Deficient. The County has submitted required applications to the New York State Department of Transportation and is awaiting response.

#### **DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE NORTH COUNTRY**

In 2000, the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) initiated a broad study of the regional transportation needs to develop a plan for improvements that would increase accessibility and support economic development. Conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates, the North Country Transportation Study (NCTS) was completed in 2002. This study examined the full range of transportation options for improving access to, from, and within the region, including air, highway, rail, bus, and other modes. The study area encompassed the five northern counties of the New York State, matching the same boundaries as NYSDOT Region 7. The NCTS considered both the technical and economic feasibility of various alternative improvements and made recommendations for a multi-modal regional transportation plan. Included in the recommendations were a Northern Tier Expressway and a Fort Drum Connector to Interstate 81. The Northern Tier Expressway (NTE), (a.k.a. the Roof-Top Highway) would generally follow the corridor of US Route 11 from the Watertown area to the Plattsburgh area. The Fort Drum Connector was recognized as a key element in advancing and protecting Fort Drum, as well as contributing to traffic needs.

In 2005, the Northern Tier Expressway Corridor Study (NTECS) was initiated by DANC to evaluate the feasibility of the NTE. Under the direction of the NYSDOT, the planning and consulting firm of Wilbur Smith Associates focused on the improvements needed along US Route 11 between the City of Watertown and the Village of Champlain (north of Plattsburgh). In 2006, a series of public meetings were held throughout the region to seek input from the public concerning the NTE. In August of 2007, a draft Technical Memorandum was released, detailing several improvements needed for US Route 11 within the town to improve the roadway to expressway standards.

## UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of LeRay's public infrastructure includes water and sewer systems, as depicted on Map 15 on page 74. Descriptions of these systems are as follows:

### MUNICIPAL WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

The Town of LeRay provides water and sewer service within four respective water districts and sewer districts within the town. DANC operates both water and sewer systems for unincorporated areas of LeRay.

The following provides a brief general description of the districts within the town:

Water District #1 / Sewer District # 3, includes NYS Route 3 from the Town of Pamela line to the bridge crossing the Black River near the Village of Black River. These districts also include the following

intersecting roads: Admiral's Walk, Patricia Drive, Riverglade Drive, Twin Oaks Drive, Duffy Road, Riverbend Drive East and West and Cullen Drive.

Water District # 2 / Sewer District # 1, includes the area around the intersection of US Route 11 and NYS Route 342. It includes NYS Route 342 west to the Town of Pamela line and US Route 11 north to Waddingham Road, including Johnson Road and Holbrook Road. These districts also encompass US Route 11 south to the railroad underpass and NYS Route 342 east to the railroad overpass and the streets in the Woodcliff and Woodcreek housing developments and the LeRay Heights and Ledges housing developments.

Water District # 3 / Sewer District # 2, includes the area along Steinhilber Road including Pleasant Creek Meadows housing development.

Water District # 4, is adjacent to District #1 and includes the area east of US Route 11 and south of NYS Route 342. The areas served by this district include properties along NYS Route



283, LaFave Road, Porter Road, Gracey Road, Sanford Corners Road (CR 138), Victory Lane and Converse Road.

## **WATER**

LeRay's water system is comprised of three main sub-systems: well field intake, storage and distribution.

The primary source of the town's water supply comes from four (4) town owned and maintained well fields. The water storage facilities within the Town of LeRay consist of one (1) elevated storage tank with a normal capacity of 500,000 gallons. The tank is located on NYS Route 342 in the town. A second 500,000 gallon storage tank is proposed with the formation of the town's fourth water district.

The town purchases some water service from DANC as a wholesale provider. DANC developed, owns, and operates the Watertown-to-Fort Drum Waterline, which serves Fort Drum and eight town water districts serving the three Towns of Champion, LeRay, and Pamela. The town also purchases some water from the Village of Evans Mills. The City of Watertown is the main backup for the town.

## **SEWER**

The town's primary sanitary sewer system is comprised of one main sub-system: the collection system.

This sanitary sewer collection system consists of gravity mains, force mains and pumping stations. Pipe sizes in town range in size from 8" to 21" in diameter. About 10-15% of the system utilizes force mains, with the remaining portion is served by gravity feed. The town also owns and operates 10 pump stations in the collection system.

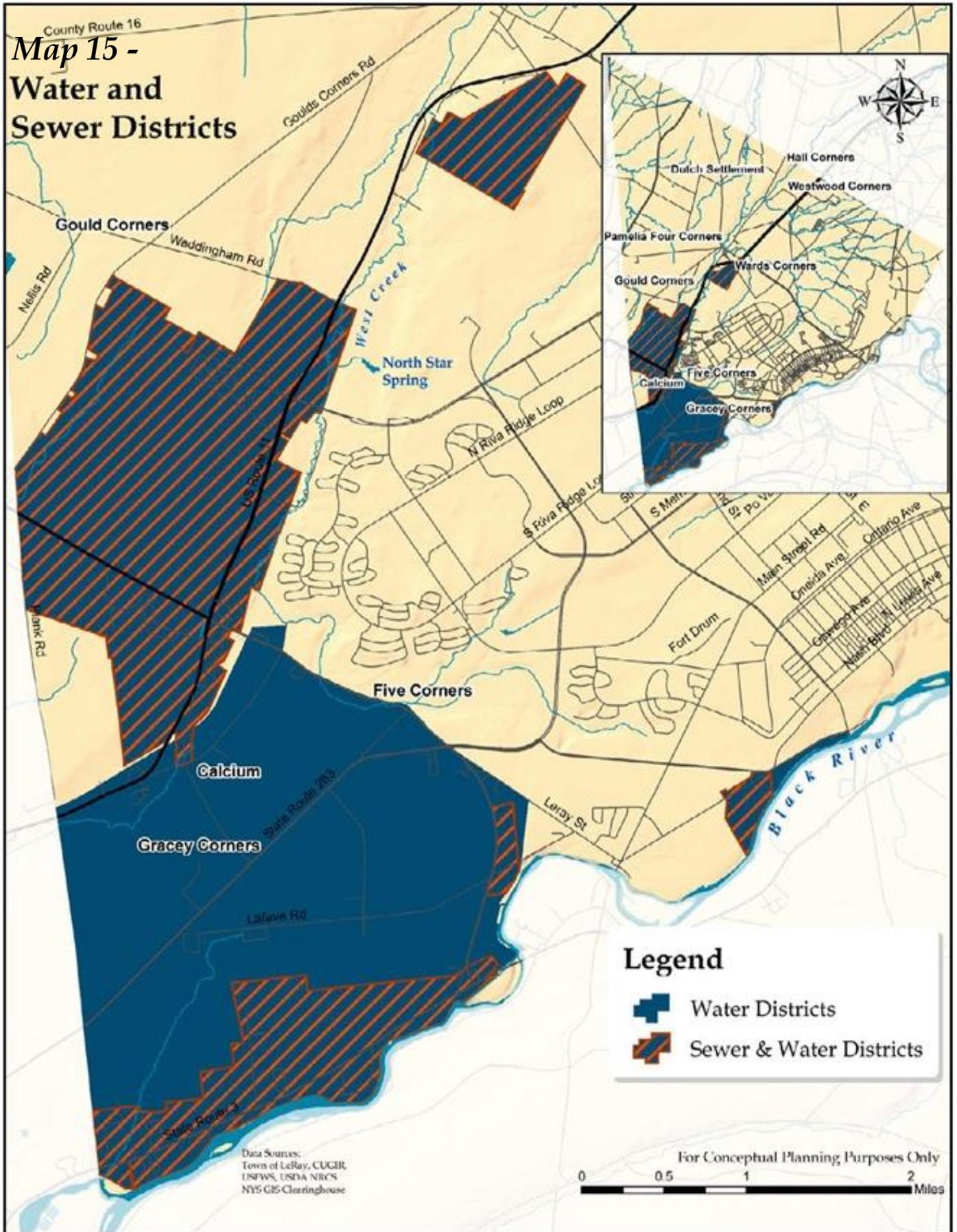
The collection system terminates at the DANC transmission lines. This sewage is treated at the City of Watertown's waste treatment plant. DANC developed, owns, and operates the Watertown to Fort Drum Sewer Line, which serves Fort Drum and four town sewer districts serving the three towns of Champion, LeRay, and Pamela.

It is worth noting that a small area of the town adjacent to the Village of Evans Mills utilizes the village's sanitary sewer system. A map of existing sewer and water districts in LeRay is included on the next page.

#### **FUTURE CAPACITY**

DANC and the City of Watertown have completed an assessment of the water and waste water facilities that serve residents of the City of Watertown, Fort Drum, and the surrounding towns. The analysis looked at ongoing and proposed developments in the area, and examined the capacity of the facilities to accommodate growth over the next twenty years. The report concluded that: the city water treatment plant has sufficient long term capacity with only minor capital or operational improvements; the Authority's water transmission system can accommodate near term growth, and with pump improvements the projected long term growth; the city's waste water treatment plant operates well, and will have improved capacity as storm and sanitary sewer separations continue; and the Authority's Warneck pumping station will have sufficient long term capacity upon installation of a second high capacity pump.

**Map 15 -  
Water and  
Sewer Districts**



## CHAPTER III - VISION STATEMENT

### DEFINING A VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement is a consensus-building tool used to describe a community's desired future. The statement can also be used to guide the development of specific planning strategies and recommendations as well as to measure implementation and overall program effectiveness. The vision statement below was derived from public input and from information gathered in the inventory and analysis phase of the project.

### *Town of LeRay Vision Statement*

The Town of LeRay is proud of its rural heritage -- scenic vistas, working farms and wildlife habitat complemented by historic villages and hamlets. Great schools and a “small town atmosphere” make LeRay an attractive place to call home. Finally, LeRay is proud to be a key support community for Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division.

Growth has resulted in new opportunities and amenities, as well as challenges. The town's vision is to embrace its rural heritage, support its villages and hamlets, and sensitively leverage growth to enhance the town's quality of life and fiscal health for years to come.



The town's Vision Statement establishes a baseline and foundation for this plan and the recommendations it sets forth, as well a benchmark for future decision making.

**PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK**

## CHAPTER IV - TOWN CHARACTER AREAS

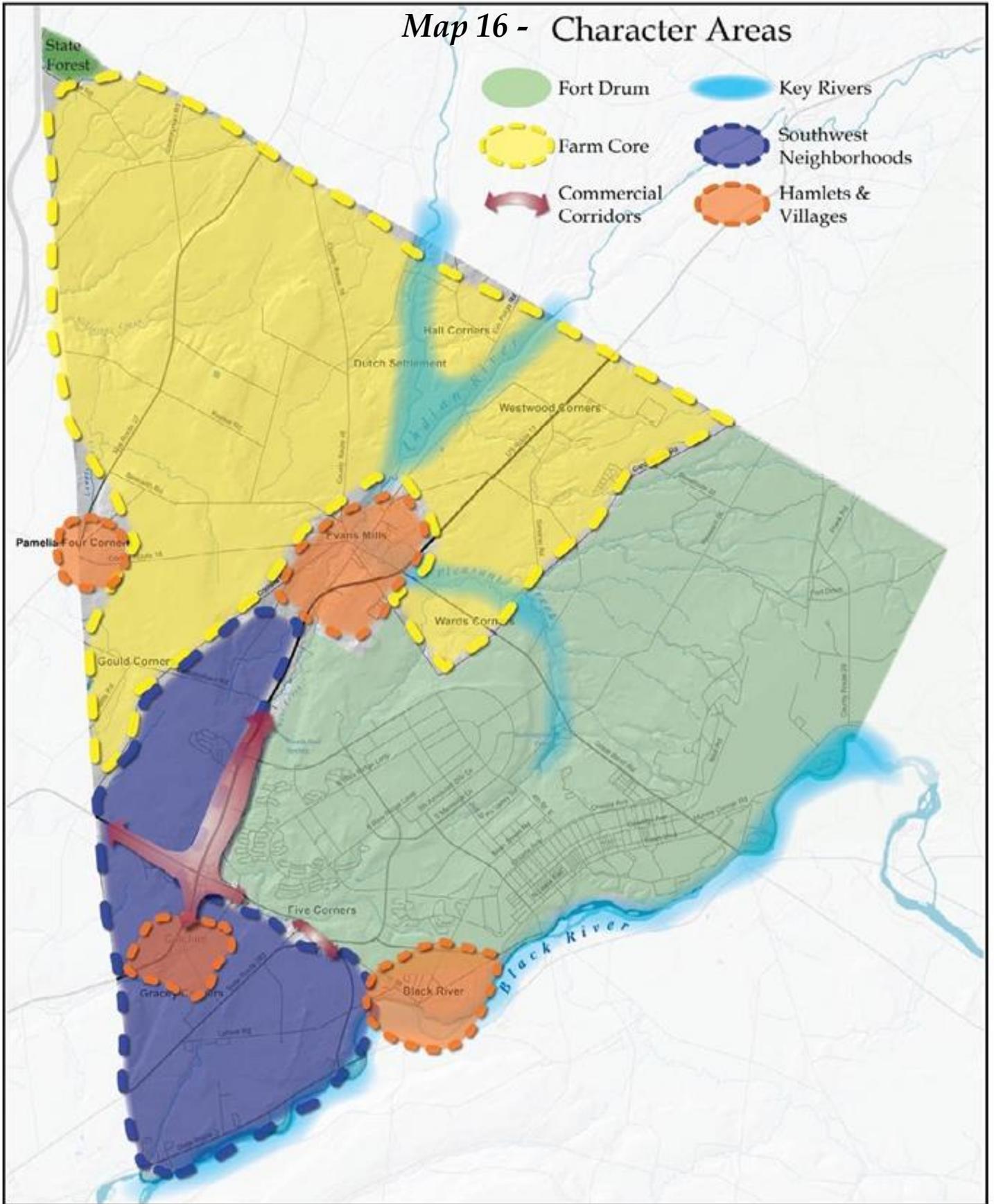
### INTRODUCTION

The landscape of the Town of LeRay consists of several distinct “character areas,” areas of town that possess unique qualities and opportunities that set them apart from other areas of town. Such areas range from the natural beauty of the Indian and Black Rivers and the splendor of the many working farms in the northeast corner of the town; to the rapidly developing US Route 11 corridor and the vast Fort Drum military facility. Thus, after devising a town-wide vision statement, the following character areas - also depicted graphically on Map 16 - were developed to help think and talk about the town in smaller geographic units:

1. Farm Core;
2. Southwest Neighborhoods;
3. Hamlets & Villages;
4. Commercial Corridors;
5. Key Rivers; and
6. Fort Drum.

For each of the above character areas, a vision statement was developed. From the vision statement, goals and associated strategies were developed. Lastly, general land use recommendations for each character area are provided. The character areas are meant to be used as a guide to future decision making and actions. As such, they are not parcel specific, but indicate approximate areas within the town that possess common existing or future desired characteristics. The exact boundaries of the character areas are not as important as their general locations and extent relative to one another within the town. Additional analysis and public discussion will be necessary in connection with any future decisions involving specific parcels, such as site plan review or potential zoning amendments that may formalize recommendations associated with the character areas. Lastly, some ideas and concepts introduced in connection with one Character Area may be applicable to another area of town/Character Area. For instance, ideas and recommendations for conservation subdivision and development techniques, while introduced in connection with the Farm Core character area, may be utilized anywhere in town where the goal is to protect resources and preserve community character.

Map 16 - Character Areas



## TOWN CHARACTER AREAS: THE FARM CORE



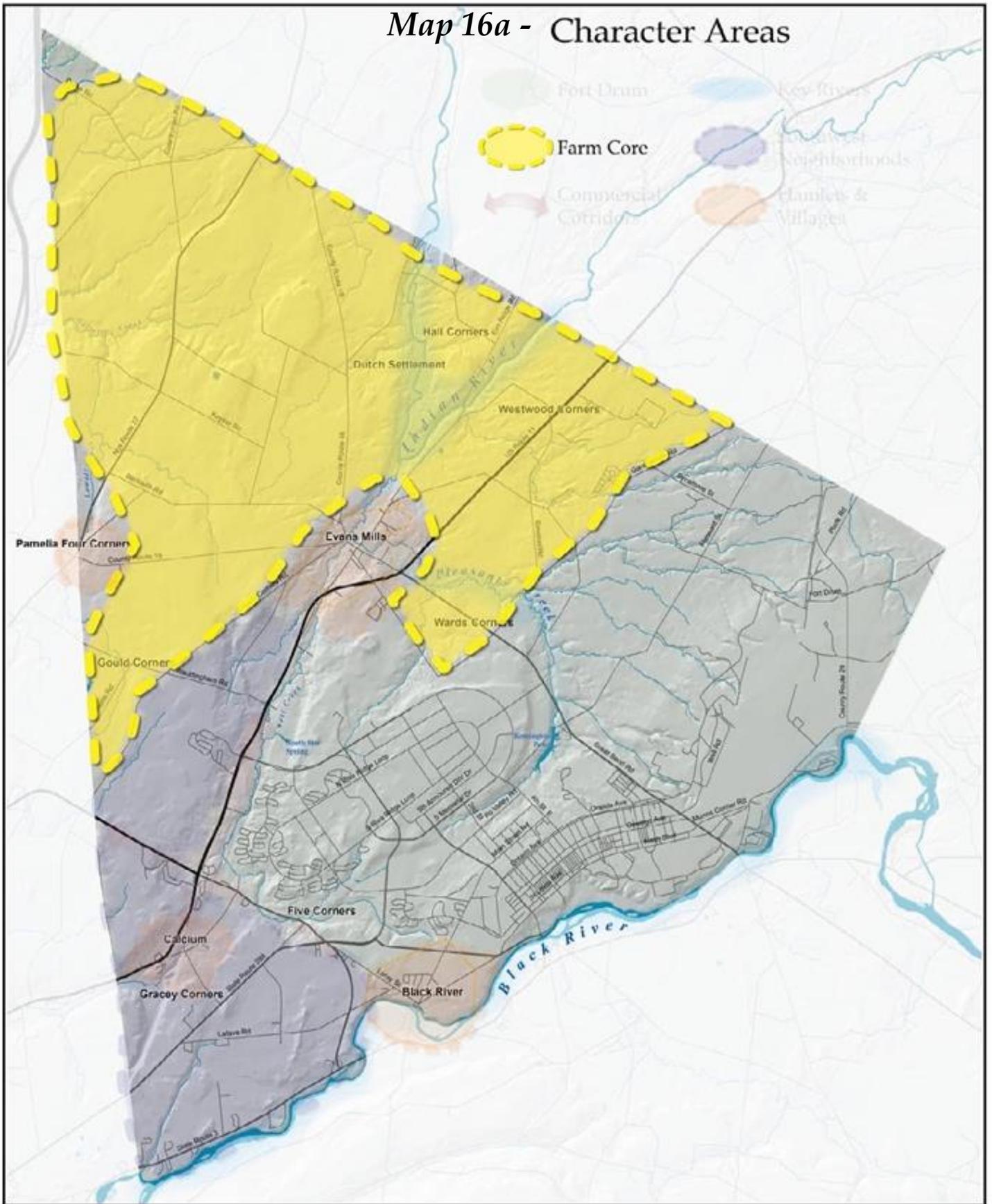
A dairy farm in LeRay.

### FARM CORE OVERVIEW

Much of the existing character within LeRay lies within its agricultural roots. Dairy farms and other agricultural uses of LeRay - the "Farm Core" -- are concentrated primarily in the northwest portion of LeRay, as shown in Map 16a, on the following page. The town's Farm Core provides income to the town and its residents, helps to enhance rural viewsheds along LeRay's roadways, and assists in providing

a buffer between activities on Fort Drum and more developed areas of town. Over the last several decades, changes in the agricultural sector of the economy - many of which operate at a national and international level, have made it harder for smaller, traditional farms to stay in business. At the local level, increased development pressure and rising property values have led to agricultural land within the town being sold and converted into other uses. In some cases, the local farmer has managed to retain the majority of their property, but the subdivision of their property or adjoining properties has often occurred in such a way that it precludes continued agricultural uses. Also, in isolated cases, the conversion of farm buildings to other uses in the vicinity of Fort Drum could serve to cause encroachment concerns in relation to training on the post. The goal is to provide methods to preserve the existing farmland in this area of town, while allowing the existing farm owners options regarding the future use of their lands. The Farm Core character area represents a special link to the farming history, natural resources, and unique characteristics of LeRay. As such, future development should occur at a low density and special efforts should be made to mitigate environmental impacts and protect the area's rural character (woodlands, farmlands, historic settlements, etc). Moreover, town residents, be they farmers or not, have said that they value the town's agricultural character. Keeping farms healthy and in business is the smartest way to retain this character.

Map 16a - Character Areas



## **FARM CORE VISION STATEMENT**

Much like the Town Wide Vision Statement above, the Farm Core Vision Statement expresses the town's vision for the future of this area of town, as well as an acknowledgment of the qualities that make it special and unique. The vision statement operates at a broad level, serving as the foundation for more specific goals and strategies, as well as a guide for future decision making in the town.

### **FARM CORE CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

The farmland of LeRay is both a scenic backdrop for the town as well as a working landscape that contributes to the town's economy and maintains the town's agricultural heritage. Town residents have cited this rural character as a key component of quality-of-life in the town. This scenic, rural character can best be preserved by supporting those that work and farm the land. The town's goal is to provide a supportive environment for agriculture that preserves a core block of farmland, while giving farmers flexibility and options for the use of their land.

## **FARM CORE GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

Using the Farm Core Vision Statement as a departure point, a series of recommendations were developed. Recommendations were then further refined by setting forth strategies to achieve them. The recommendations and strategies should not be viewed as an exclusive list - but rather, a range of possibilities. Because the plan cannot foresee all possible scenarios or opportunities that the future may present, there may be additional strategies that may be better suited to future conditions. As always, when in doubt, the vision statements - both Town Wide and Character Area -- should be the benchmark against which future decisions are made, whether or not they are specifically mentioned in the plan. The plan's success will rely on adherence to the overriding principals set forth in the vision statements, while allowing for flexibility in the dynamic environment of the real world.

The following goals for the Farm Core character area, and their associated strategies, were compiled based on public input, including a farmers Focus Group meeting, as well as the results of the town Inventory & Analysis.

## **GOALS & STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL 1. SUPPORT THE TOWN'S ACTIVE FARMERS**

The protection and enhancement of agriculture is a key component to maintaining the quality of life

and special character of the agricultural and rural areas of LeRay. Promoting the maintenance and success of active farming preserves rural character and open space, limits impacts on infrastructure, and provides for economic activity for town residents. Farmland is especially susceptible to conversion to residential uses because prime farm soils are generally the most

“buildable” soils for residential development. LeRay’s farms create an enriching and beautiful landscape for residents and visitors. They contribute to the break from the growing urbanism to the west, the greenbelt of open space around Fort Drum and the overall character of LeRay. The following strategies are designed to protect and celebrate active farms and farmland in LeRay’s farm core while focusing on landowner flexibility and equity.

## **FARM CORE CHARACTER AREA**

### **GOALS**

1. Support LeRay’s Active Farmers.
2. Ensure that Development in the Farm Core is Compatible with Agricultural Uses.
3. Promote Awareness of Farms.
4. Investigate Opportunities for Farmland Protection Programs.

## **FARM CORE: Strategies**

### **Farm-Friendly Town Policies, Laws and Zoning**



**Strategy I.A. Encourage agricultural entrepreneurship**

Farming is an economic activity - the sale of local products contributes to the area economy and perhaps most importantly, since the town's farms are locally-owned, profits are more likely to stay in the community (compared with national retail operations for example). In addition to protecting farmland, farm operations should be cultivated through grants, loans, and other programs to help entrepreneurs be successful. For example, the town could foster creative entrepreneurship activities such as "agri-tourism", including efforts such as the existing Thousand Islands/ Seaway Wine Trail; value added initiatives, or diversification of product (Indian Ladder Farms, is a perfect example of a farm bringing people to the region to increase and diversify sales). The majority of this assistance is provided through Cornell Cooperative Extension and the County's agricultural coordinator. However, the town and county could assist in providing grant writing services and help connect farmers to available local, state, and federal resources.

**Strategy I.B. Review the Town's Land Use Policies**

Another way the town can help enhance the economic viability of local farms is to ensure that the town's zoning code in agricultural areas is not overly restrictive and allows for innovation (e.g., recreation uses, small-scale commercial that is in keeping with the character of the area, retail uses associated with farming, such as roadside stands, pick your own farms such as apple orchards, pumpkin farms, and strawberry fields; wineries, honey shops). In some areas, more robust value-added processing uses and farm support uses may be appropriate such as agricultural processing facilities and feed and tack stores, as well as expanded home-based businesses.

**Strategy I.C. Ensure that interested landowners with qualifying agricultural lands are able to enroll in the agricultural district**

Lands included in the County's agricultural district are potentially entitled to be taxed at a lower "agricultural" rate based on the agricultural value of the land, if a completed application for agricultural exemption is submitted to the state each year. With this rate, there is less pressure on farmers to "peel off" parcels to pay taxes, or to convert the entire property to another use, such as commercial or residential uses. The town should

work with farmers and owners of agricultural lands, as well as with Jefferson County, to ensure that all eligible and willing landowners have the opportunity to apply to town assessors for lower agricultural tax rates.

**Strategy I.D. Reach out to the Amish farming community**

Within LeRay, there are a variety of farmers and farm types in the community. Traditional family farms are intermixed with smaller scale organic farms, who sell their wares in differing networks. There is also an increasing contingent of Amish farmers drawn to the region by the low costs of land in relation to other regions. There are a number of instances where Amish farmers have reinvested in formerly abandoned farm fields and properties. Amish farmers, via their farming techniques, also serve as a seed bank for heritage forms of corn, wheat, and other farm crops. Strategies and plans for enhancing and supporting the future of agriculture in the town should therefore attempt to incorporate the Amish community and both their unique perspectives, as well as the shared perspectives they have with other farmers in the town.

**Strategy I.E. Address excessive speeds in farm core**

Many farmers have indicated that excessive speeds along the town's rural roads and highways make farming difficult if not downright dangerous, for both farmer and nonfarmer alike. Impatient motorists have been known to pass tractors unsafely, or use other driving techniques to pressure tractors off the road. Excessive speeds also raise the likelihood of accidents between livestock and drivers. The town should work with agricultural stakeholders to determine where the biggest problem areas are, and partner with appropriate state and federal agencies to explore solutions.

**Strategy I.F. Address conflicts between recreational vehicles (ATVs, snowmobiles) and farmers**

Recreational vehicles play a key role in the region's quality of life. In particular, the region's plentiful snow makes it ideal for snowmobiling. The town's farming community helps to create a good environment for recreational vehicles by limiting development of the town's open areas and associated traffic. However, snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles (ATVs) can cause damage to farm fields and properties, such as broken fences,

damage to livestock, and erosion of soils. The town should work with snowmobile and ATV enthusiasts, and farmers, to find solutions to these issues. Some of the solutions could include the obtaining of public easement across key trail connections, a legal understanding that vehicle users are liable for any accidents that may occur, and adherence to NYSDEC standards regarding ATV trails. By working together, the town, recreational vehicle enthusiasts and farmers can arrive at win-win solutions.

**GOAL 2. ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT IN THE FARM CORE IS COMPATIBLE WITH AGRICULTURAL USES**

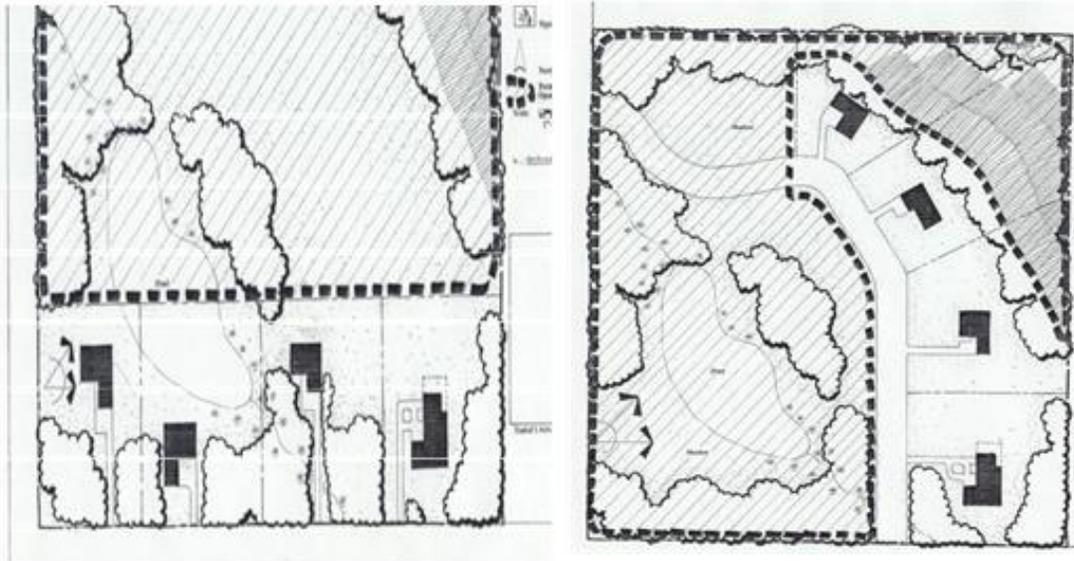
**Strategy 2.A. Implement conservation subdivision techniques**

As shown below, lot size and development density can be two very different things. Two properties developed at the same density (number of lots per acre) can have a very different outcome, depending on the size of the lots. Smaller lots clustered together can preserve larger, unfragmented pieces of farmland and other natural features. Even relatively large lot development, perpetuated across the landscape, can lead to farm fragmentation and land use conflicts.



The images above represent two options for the design of a new subdivision. In the first example (center), the entire parent parcel (left) is subdivided as residential properties and the existing hedgerows are removed, while in the other example (right), much of the existing farm property is preserved and a greater effort has been made to preserve the tree line of the existing forest.

At the present time, subdivision of properties in the Town of LeRay is occurring in a manner that is not advantageous to the continuation of agricultural uses on properties. In many cases, due to prioritizing access to road frontages, landowners are removing key access points to their field areas during subdivision, making it difficult to continue to farm their properties. In other areas, landowners have removed sections of their property with better than average soils or important environmental features from agricultural use, limiting the future success of the farm. By utilizing conservation subdivision techniques that work to concentrate growth on smaller lots while preserving the majority of lands for continued agricultural uses or as preserved open space, agricultural uses in LeRay will be able to continue to be a viable source of income for LeRay residents. Because it only takes a one or two lot subdivision to create conflicts, and because much of the development in LeRay's Farm Core takes the form of one- or two-lot "peel offs", conservation subdivisions and development review techniques will need to be crafted that address this smaller scale, piecemeal type of development.



Residential development in LeRay does not always take the form of large subdivisions or multifamily projects, particularly in the Farm Core, which is without public water and sewer. Rather, development happens incrementally, one or two lots at a time, and takes the path of least resistance - utilizing the frontage of town roads (top left). Continuous frontage development along town roads creates safety concerns with multiple driveways, impacts rural character and makes it difficult for town farmers to access agricultural property. Removing cost barriers to frontage development, such as allowing shared driveways and/or reduced road standards, can help to encourage a better development pattern (top right). The town's development and zoning regulations can also be modified to encourage development off of town roads.



Desirable: This home is sited at the edge of the woodland and blends into the site. As a result, views to and from the site are not harmed and rural character is maintained.



Undesirable: While this subdivision uses a shared curb cut to the main roadway, these homes are sited in the middle of an open field, destroying rural character and rendering the land unusable for farming. The remaining open space does not contribute to the rural quality of the area.

*Image © Alex S. MacLean/Landslides, used with permission*

### **Strategy 2.B. Review overall density and development practices**

In addition to implementing conservation subdivision techniques, the town should review zoning boundaries and regulations within the farm core, including density regulations and subdivision review procedures, to ensure that they support the agricultural community.

### **Strategy 2.C. Ensure that agricultural uses are “primary”**

Precedence should be given to agricultural uses in the zoning. Techniques, such as requiring buffers between new residential development and existing farmlands can help to avoid some of the land use conflicts that can occur when agricultural and residential land uses rub shoulders. The town could also potentially create an agriculture review board that reviews and comments on certain actions in the Farm Core area, such as subdivisions, to ensure that best practices are followed for avoiding unnecessary fragmentation of farmland.

**Strategy 2.D. Ensure that the town’s utility policy is farm sensitive**

Farmers can benefit from public water and sewer in many of the same ways that small-lot, residential home- owners do. Public water can also benefit farm operations that are the most drought sensitive. However, extending utilities into farm areas can also stimulate more residential and commercial development, which in turn can come into conflict with agricultural uses. For instance, new residents may complain of the scent of freshly spread manure, or noise from tractors; and land with utilities can be subject to higher taxes. Town policy with respect to extending utilities should therefore be carefully considered and in close consultation with the farming community. In some cases, with the proper zoning and land use development tools in place, public water and sewer can allow for more creative development, such as conservation subdivisions that preserve large tracts of farmland that would not otherwise be feasible.

**GOAL 3. PROMOTE AWARENESS OF FARMS**

Community support for farmers and the farming profession is an essential component for a successful local agricultural economy. Residents who are familiar with the importance of farming and standard practices are less likely to complain about inconveniences related to agricultural operations (e.g., tractors on roads, farm odors) and more likely to support farmland protection efforts. To increase local awareness, the town should formulate links between farmers, consumers, and the community as a whole to help raise reciprocal awareness on the importance of preserving working farmlands.

- Promote farmers’ markets, farm tours, pick-your-own operations, and other agribusinesses in LeRay in conjunction with efforts at the county level.
- Identify opportunities to connect locally-grown products with schools both through farm to school programs, or via the Agriculture in the Classroom program overseen by Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Ensure that new residents receive information regarding conflicts between farms and residential uses, particularly in agricultural districts where notification is required (NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets Law, Article 25AA Sec. 310: Disclosure)

- Prominently post signs to alert people that they are entering a farm friendly town.

**Strategy 3.A. Promote awareness of farm issues in the town and on Fort Drum**

Educating residents of the town, both on and off base, about what farmers do and what their needs are, is a first step to avoiding conflicts between farms and other forms of development and non-farming activity. Some towns publish newsletters or press releases several times a year, indicating what farm activities to be on the look out for, be it time for harvesting or sowing. Engaging Fort Drum to help in this promotion and education is a mutually beneficial proposition. This is because the fort has an interest in preserving a buffer area around its training areas, particularly in the northern portions of LeRay and extending northward into areas adjacent to Fort Drum training areas. Cows are known to become habituated to training related noises and are less apt to complain than people!



LeRay "farm country."

**Strategy 3.B. Investigate the feasibility of a farmer’s market in LeRay**

The concept for a farmer’s market is listed as a farm promotion strategy because of the power of such markets to foster a relationship between the farming and non-farming communities. At the present time, there is not an existing farmers market in the town. In order for LeRay residents to sell or purchase locally produced foodstuffs, residents and sellers either have to travel to Watertown, Carthage, or LaFargeville. Having a farmers market in LeRay can serve a variety of needs for the community. The feasibility of the market would need to be examined, especially in terms of any competition with existing markets in the region. Such a market does not have to be large. It would, however, require a dedicated group of people to get it off the ground and keep it running.

**GOAL 4. INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMLAND PROTECTION PROGRAMS**

Sometimes protecting farmland from development, in order to ensure that it will be there for the next generation, becomes the only option left on the table. An increasingly popular option for protecting farmland are Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs that identify key properties to protect and retain for agricultural or open space uses. Once properties are identified in a municipality, and the landowner volunteers to be a part of a program, the property is assessed for both its agricultural value and development value. At that time, the property owner can sell the development rights to their property to a management organization, such as the American Farmland Trust, and the land would be placed in a conservation easement. The landowner would be able to retain the right to use their property, the property will continue to be used for farming or as a conservation area, and the property remains on the tax rolls.

Sometimes, farmland protection programs join forces with other community goals. The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Land Protection Program is one such example. Skaneateles Lake is the water source for the City of Syracuse. In order to protect the quality of the water, the city implemented a farmland protection program that purchased the development rights of farmers so that the land would not be developed. As part of the program, additional best management farm practices were instituted on the farms to maintain water quality. To date, nearly 1,000 acres of farmlands have been purchased. The success of the program was largely due to a

strong outreach and education effort and sensitivity to farmer needs. A similar partnership could be pursued between the Town of LeRay and Fort Drum. The U.S. Army, in conjunction with local governments, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other federal and state agencies, is currently instituting the ACUB (Army Compatible Use Buffers) program, which seeks to preserve undeveloped buffers in areas around Fort Drum where noise and land use conflicts between the Fort and the communities may arise. While the program is still in its early stages, the town should consider the Fort a potential partner in its farm preservation efforts, since agricultural uses make better Fort neighbors than more people-intense uses like subdivisions and commercial establishments.



90 year old Frank Pitman (pictured with the City of Syracuse program director) is one of the success stories from the Skaneateles Watershed Land Protection Program.

Jefferson County has also initiated a county Purchase of Development Rights program in the county. The town should collaborate with Jefferson County on any efforts to protect farmland in LeRay. The key to a successful farmland protection program in the town is active engagement with the farming community. Towns wishing to pursue such efforts typically embark on an Open Space and/or Farmland Protection Plan that helps to set the stage for a farmland protection program by identifying priority parcels, funding mechanisms and utilizing the planning process to reach out to interested landowners.

## **LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **USES**

Proposed land uses in the Farm Core character area include farms, farm related operations and lower density residential areas. Higher density residential uses and intense commercial uses are not appropriate in the Farm Core. Current AR (Agricultural Rural) zoning permits a wide range

of commercial uses including “motels,” “small retail” and “essential services.” Such uses can generate additional income for property owners in the Farm Core, which in turn may help to reduce financial pressures to cease farming. However, a balance must be struck so that such commercial uses do not negatively impact agricultural operations in the long run.

#### **DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND DENSITIES**

Where feasible, conservation subdivisions should be used as a tool to absorb development while retaining large, unfragmented tracts of farmland. The town should revisit its base development density in the Farm Core - under current AR (Agricultural Rural) zoning, single-family residences on lots less than ½ acre in size are permitted. Lots may be as small as 15,000 square feet if utilities are provided. Smaller lots, in conjunction with conservation subdivision practices, may be appropriate. A concern, however, is the continued cutting out of lots in a piecemeal manner. If this trend continues, farmland operations will be negatively impacted due to the loss of farmer access to field areas and the fragmentation of pasture areas for sheep and cows.

#### **FORT-TOWN LAND USE COMPATIBILITY**

Key to the success and long-term vitality of Fort Drum is its ability to conduct ongoing training exercises and utilize the Wheeler Sack Army Airfield. As town residents are well aware, many fort activities - such as small arms training and bombing runs - generate noise. Other military installations across the country have encountered problems when development, particularly at higher densities, has “encroached” along the installations borders. Conflicts can arise between residential and commercial land uses and Fort training activities with respect to noise. New residents and businesses may be deprived of the full enjoyment of their property, and the military installation may be pressured to curtail its training activities and ultimately lose community support. In addition to land use conflicts over noise, there are a number of other issues that could cause conflicts, including light pollution that can hinder night training exercises and tall structures that can interfere with Wheeler Sack aircraft landing patterns.

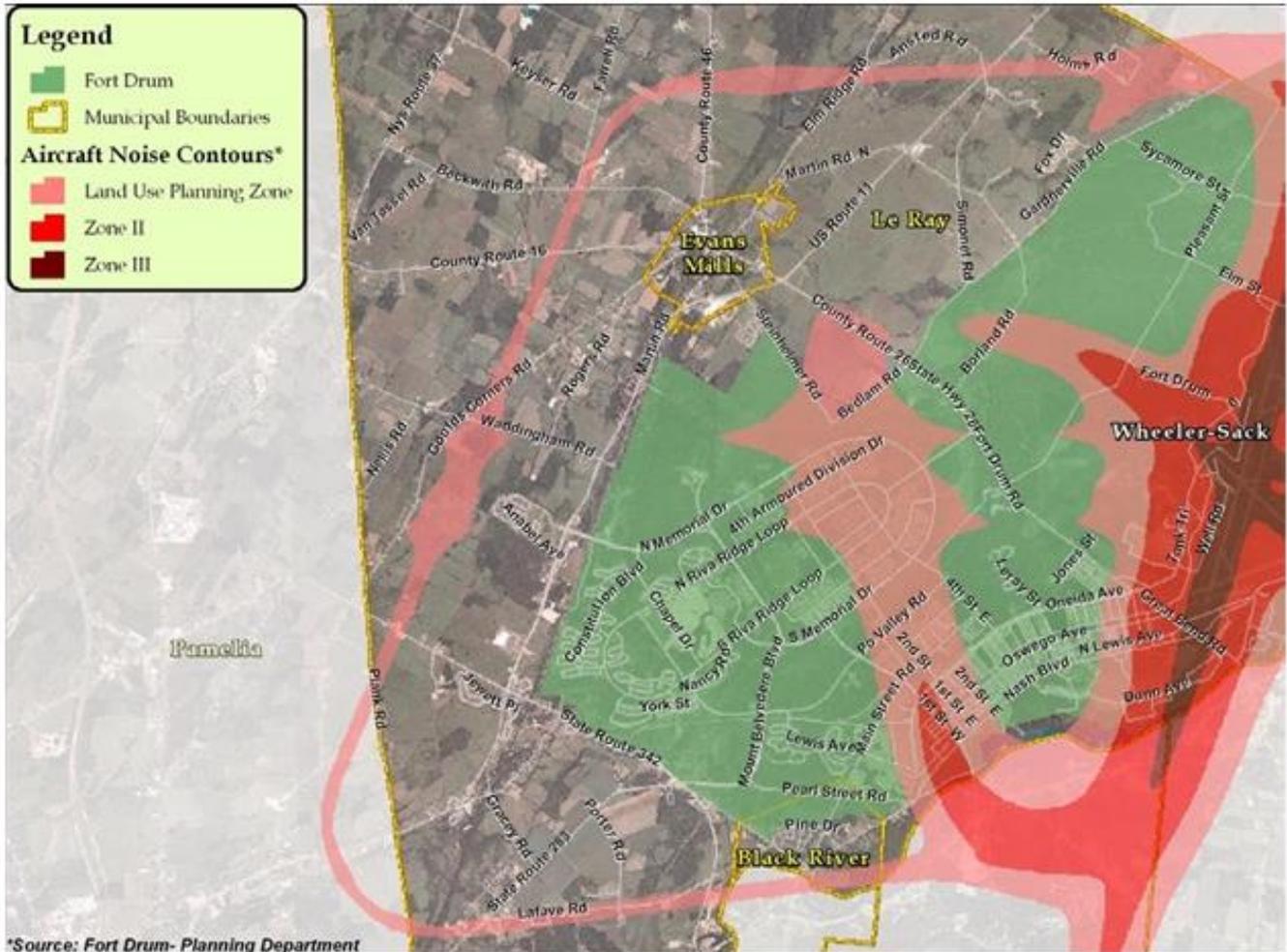
As shown in Map 17 on page 94, portions of the Farm Core character area are within the Land Use Planning Zone (LUPZ) for the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. The military designates LUPZ areas as locations where there is the potential for an increase in activity at Fort Drum to create

noise and vibration concerns for properties located within the zone. While there are no specific recommendations that the Army has in place for lands located in the LUPZ, in other communities, it is required that a disclosure explaining that a property is located in a LUPZ be included as part of any real estate transaction within the zone.

Another set of generators of noise are the various training activities that the Fort conducts in the range areas. The training activities with the most significance for the Town of LeRay are "demolition and large caliber operation." Demolition activities involve members of engineering units training to remove enemy access and fortifications, while large caliber operations involve the use of mounted machine guns by infantry units atop troop carriers such as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Serious noise impacts occur north of LeRay, starting in the Town of Philadelphia. The Town of LeRay can play an important role in ensuring that land use conflicts do not occur further north along the Fort border by "holding the line" on development in areas of the town immediately adjacent to where noise impacts can at times be a concern.

The town's goal of preserving agriculture in the northwest part of town - the Farm Core -- is therefore supportive of Fort Drum's mission and long term viability. As mentioned elsewhere in this plan, farming is generally a compatible Fort border use, particularly when it comes to noise. Lower development densities in farming areas mean less conflict between people and noise inducing activities on the Fort. Moreover, secondary impacts of development, such as light pollution, can be avoided. The town should actively seek support of the fort to help achieve its goal of preserving agricultural uses in the farm core. Goals and strategies for Fort-town collaboration are discussed in more detail below, in the section on the Fort Drum character area.

**MAP 17. WHEELER SACK ARMY AIR FIELD AIRCRAFT NOISE CONTOURS IN THE TOWN OF LERAY**



## TOWN CHARACTER AREAS: THE SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS

### SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS OVERVIEW

This area is defined as the properties to the west and north of Fort Drum behind the Route 11 and Route 342 commercial corridors, including the hamlet of Calcium; and all areas west of NYS Route 342 south of US Route 11, as shown on the map on page 97, Map 16b. Currently, there are numerous zoning districts that are located within the character area. The southwestern part of LeRay along NYS Route 283 is zoned for industrial uses, due to the presence of utilities and rail access. North of this, an area is zoned for agricultural development (AD). Along US Route 11 northward from the vicinity of the NYS Route 342 intersection, properties are zoned for a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses (BR-1), while a small segment of the area near the intersections of NYS Routes 342 and 283 is zoned to also allow mobile home parks (BR-2). Other zoning districts include:

**R-1 (Single Family Residential)** - Mostly between NYS Routes 3 and 283

**R-2 (Single and Two Family Residential)** - In the vicinity of Calcium

**AR (Agricultural Residential)** - North of the Industrial Area and across US Route 11 west of Route 342.

### SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS

#### CHARACTER AREA

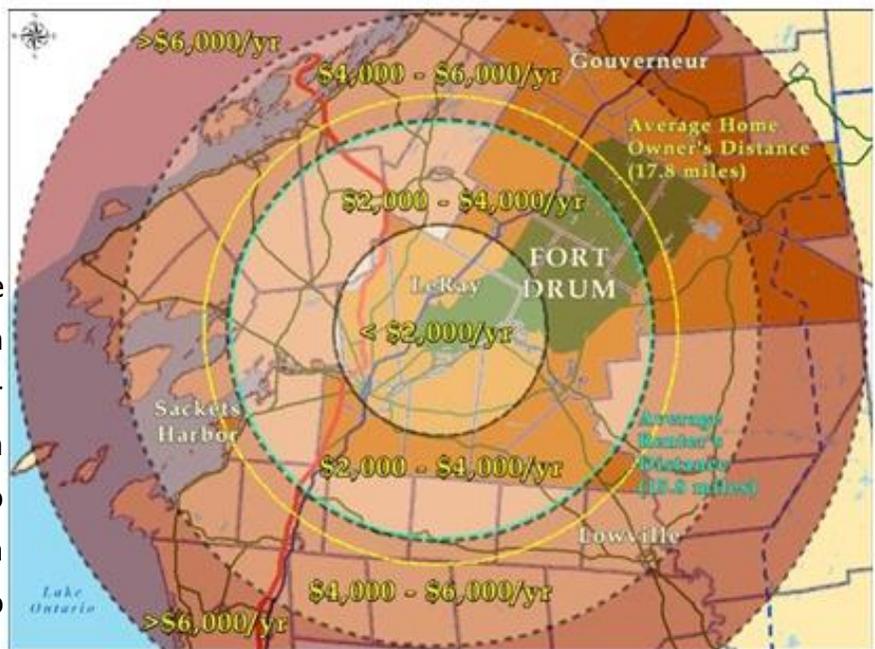
#### GOALS

1. Steer Residential Growth in the Town to the Southwest Neighborhoods.
2. Ensure that New Development Creates a "Whole Greater than the Sum of its Parts."
3. Provide Recreational Amenities.
4. Protect Habitats and Natural Resources.
5. Centrally Locate Community Facilities.

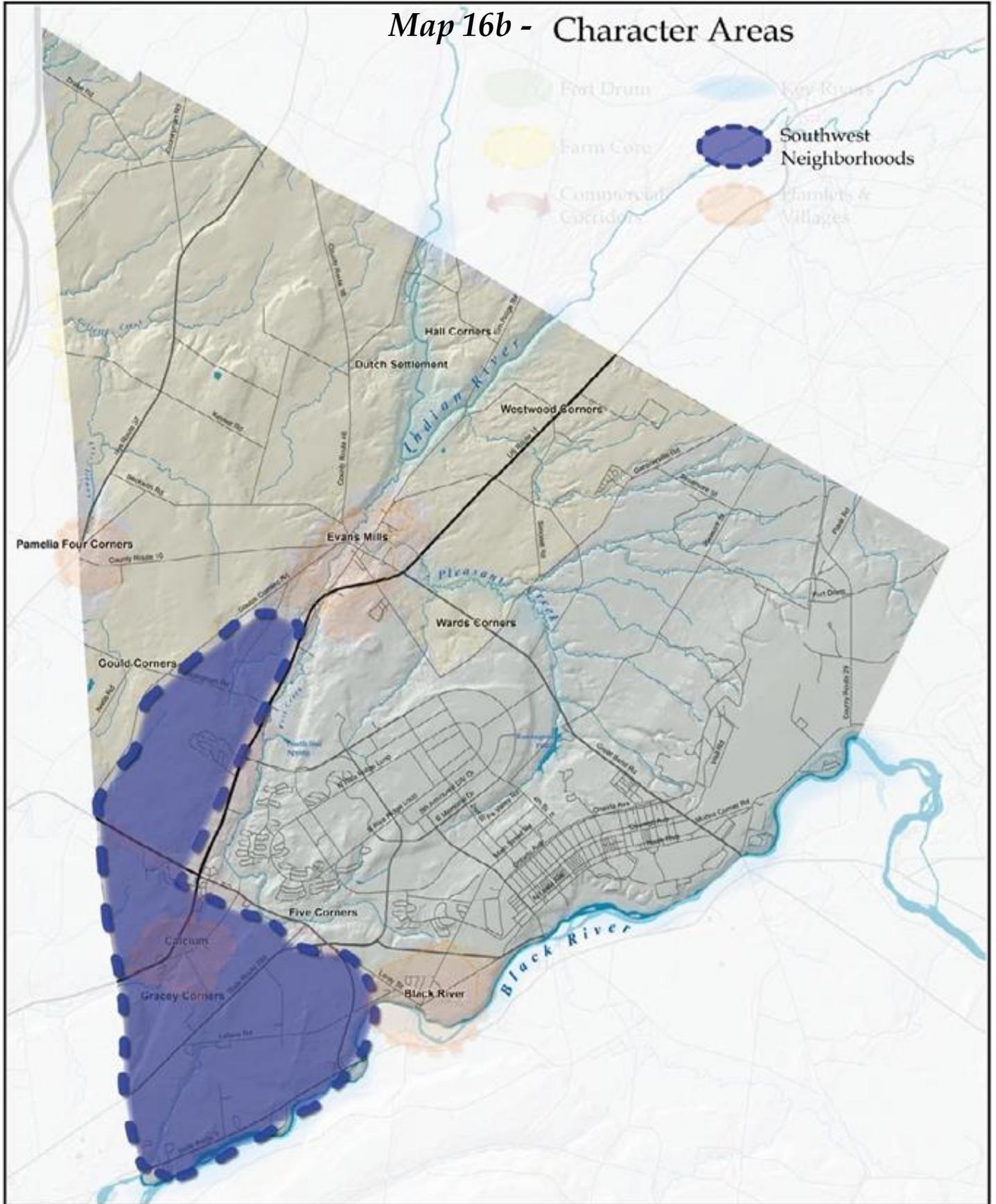
**AR-MHO1 (Agricultural Residential-Mobile Home Overlay) - North of Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area** (see page 105) near Goulds Corners Road and a section along LaFave Road.

This area of LeRay has been altered substantially over the last 40 years, slowly transitioning from agricultural in nature to areas consisting of large-lot single-family residences, many with individual driveway cuts onto the state roads. Also, areas between Route 342 and the entrance to Fort Drum have more recently seen the rise of several multi-family residential developments, both in the housing built in the late 1980's under the provision of Section 801 of the FY 1984 Defense Authorization Bill, and more recently, with the construction of Eagle Ridge. With existing infrastructure in place and a variety of potential infrastructure improvements to come in the near future for areas between Routes 3 and 11, additional development pressures will be created in this area. As the Fort continues to transition to a reliance on the private marketplace

to provide the majority of housing for Fort Drum families, the Route 11 corridor will continue to attract housing and commercial development. The prospect of continuing high fuel costs is likely to further concentrate development in the Town of LeRay relative to other Fort Drum Region communities (see diagram to right).



Map 16b - Character Areas



The existing recreational and social opportunities for residents of this area of LeRay are also limited, with no existing public park space, with the exception of the DANC Calcium trail. There are also no community centers located in this area. At the present time, the only community spaces that are available within the character area are at the Calcium Fire Hall, at the Calcium Primary School, or in area churches. Community groups do not have first priority for use at any of these locations.

It is a goal for the Town of LeRay to balance future residential and commercial development within these areas with existing agriculture and future open space opportunities. As part of this process, it is recommended that the town work towards the assembly of a greenbelt area to connect new trails to the DANC Calcium Trail and to existing trails in the Town of Rutland, the Village of Black River, and if possible, trails on Fort Drum. Part of the greenbelt should address potential trail connections and access points along the Black River and area streams. The concept of a greenbelt area harkens back to the concepts of Frederick Law

**SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS CHARACTER AREA  
VISION STATEMENT**

The Southwest Neighborhoods are where many of the town's residents live. Adjacent to shopping and services along Route 11, close to key entrances to Fort Drum, and convenient to Watertown and I-81, this area will likely continue to attract residents for years to come. It is the town's vision that this area continue to serve as a largely residential setting for the town, providing a variety of housing options, new recreational amenities and community facilities, and quality development projects that complement one another and collectively create a high quality living environment.

Olmstead, the famed landscape architect whose firm designed Thompson Park in Watertown. These trails would preserve wildlife corridors in the area, create alternatives to driving along area roads, and present a safe, beautiful alternative for hikers and bikers in the area.

## **SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

Much like the Town Wide Vision Statement above, the Southwest Neighborhoods Vision Statement expresses the town's vision for the future of this area of town, as well as an acknowledgment of the qualities that make it special and unique. The vision statement operates at a broad level, serving as the foundation for more specific goals and strategies, as well as a guide for future decision making in the town.

## **SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS GOALS & STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL I. STEER RESIDENTIAL GROWTH IN THE TOWN TO THE SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS**

#### **Strategy I.A. Target public water and sewer improvement to the Southwest Neighborhoods character area**

As noted above in the Farm Core character area discussion, while those living and working/farming in lower density areas of town can benefit from and enjoy the conveniences of public water and sewer, in general, the extension of utilities to such areas will create additional growth pressures. By targeting the extension/improvement of utilities to the Southwest Neighborhoods character area - as well as other areas of the town where concentrated development and activity is desired (see "Hamlets and Villages" character area discussion on page 129) - higher density development can be steered to areas of town where it is most appropriate and desired. Extensions and improvements to utilities outside of desired growth areas should only be undertaken after careful consideration of land use goals for such newly served areas.

#### **Strategy I.B. Provide for a variety of housing options to meet the needs of town residents**

The town should work with developers as projects come to LeRay to incorporate a mix of housing types in the Southwest Neighborhoods character area. The town should review its zoning to ensure that it allows for housing options and that it establishes appropriate areas for both multifamily housing and lower density single-family housing. Many residents have also noted significantly higher housing costs in recent years.

Ensuring that there continues to be a supply of affordable, well-designed housing is key. Providing opportunities for senior and assisted living housing is also of importance to the town. Providing housing across the lifecycle and enabling town residents to “age in place” ensures that the wisdom and experience of each generation of LeRay’s elderly residents will continue to influence life in the town.

**GOAL 2. ENSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT CREATES A “WHOLE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS”**

New developments should be designed to be compact, walkable, provide for and/or allow a mix of land uses including neighborhood-scale commercial, a variety of housing types and options, meaningful public spaces, and architecture that is consistent with the town’s historic building styles. This can be accomplished through establishment of neighborhoods that encourage these types of development as well as associated design guidelines that provide assistance in terms of street layout, site planning, and architectural styles. The recent larger scale residential development projects that have occurred in the town present opportunities to create high quality living environments that provide a place for community interaction and recreation. The challenge to the town is to ensure that each new development that lands on the ground contributes to an overall neighborhood, rather than existing as an isolated pod. Phasing in growth over time to create a quality neighborhood is illustrated using the case study of the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area on pages 105 through 111. The series shows how a high growth area of town can be planned and laid out, over time, so that the end result is something of which the town can be proud for many years to come.

**Strategy 2.A. Communicate a strong vision**

In areas of the Southwest Character area where development pressures are the highest, the town should develop and communicate a strong vision for how such areas will ultimately look, feel and function. Key elements include roads, parks, and the relationship of development projects to one another, and to other areas of town.

The town could formalize such a vision in the form of an Official Map, or create a Planned Development District that establishes base densities, locations of development areas and road locations and improvements. The vision can be flexible as well, to meet

on the ground realities that emerge on a project-by-project basis. By identifying these elements early on, the town can ensure that current, incremental development does not preclude the best case scenario at full build out. The Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area series, starting on page 105, represents a strong step in the direction of setting forth a clear vision. In particular, the series illustrates how incremental development can be planned and staged to create a unified and desirable neighborhood at full build out. The town's recently adopted Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines also provide guidance on site layout of multifamily development and providing connections between residential and commercial areas.

**Strategy 2.B. Ensure that road design is “context sensitive”**

Roads are key building blocks of quality living environments. They not only channel automobile traffic, but serve to establish the character of an area and provide opportunities for parallel circulation networks such as bicycle paths and sidewalks. Designing roads to fit the context of the land use and area they serve has been dubbed “Context Sensitive Solutions” (“CSS”). CSS is an approach that considers the total context within which a transportation facility exists. Movement and place considerations are important in determining the appropriate design speeds, speed limits, and road geometry. Similarly, the form and character of the adjacent context must also be considered. As the importance of movement increases, the emphasis on place can take on less importance. Alternatively, as the importance of place and character increase, the emphasis on vehicular movement diminishes and becomes secondary to maintaining the qualities and features of a place.

The town has made great strides in developing a vision and plan for the road network in its commercial corridors and adjacent high growth residential areas, through the adoption of Design Guidelines and the implementation of many of the ideas contained in the “US Route 11 and NY Route 342 Corridor Study” commissioned by NYSDOT. However, with an increasing number of large, higher density residential developments clustering together in high growth areas of the town, it is important that the town have a clear and comprehensive approach to developing road systems for these residential

areas that is context sensitive. Ultimately, it is about knitting these projects together and creating a high quality living environment for residents.

To this end, the town should consider developing more detailed road standards that provide guidance for how roads are built and designed - particularly in higher density residential areas. This could involve the development of typical "road sections" for various sized residential roads (public and private roads, parking areas, and access drives). These cross sections could illustrate not only the design of the road itself, but how amenities such as lighting, landscaping and other modes of transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle, would relate to the road.

Creating a consistent look and feel for roads in developing residential areas also ensures that they function as public gateways into neighborhoods, rather than a collection of private drives. A clear vision for road hierarchy in developing areas, will also ensure that the road network at full build out functions from both a transportation standpoint, and from a neighborhood quality of life standpoint.

**Strategy 2.C. Utilize the town's recently adopted design guidelines**

The town's recently adopted "Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines" provide guidance on the design and layout of both commercial and multifamily development, as well as how to make connections between residential areas and adjoining commercial areas. These guidelines should be utilized and referred to for all applicable development proposals.

**GOAL 3. PROVIDE RECREATIONAL AMENITIES**

Town residents have identified a need for recreational amenities in the town, particularly to facilitate organized sports activities for children and young adults. It makes sense to provide such recreational amenities in the Southwest Neighborhoods character area, where existing residential neighborhoods exist and where future residential neighborhoods are and will likely continue to emerge. Recreational amenities include trails, active parks and passive parks that can also double as habitat preserves. Opportunities for collaborating with Fort Drum on habitat preservation should also be explored. The Fort's ACUB (Army Compatible Use Buffers) program

seeks to preserve wildlife habitat outside Fort Drum borders, so that the Fort does not become the primary habitat for endangered and threatened species in the immediate region. Opportunities for collaborating with developers should also be pursued. Parks and residential development should be designed to complement one another and facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel between the two uses.

**Strategy 3.A. Develop active and passive parks in conjunction with new development**

As new development occurs, the town should consider conducting a park and recreation study to evaluate the town's recreational needs as well as financing options for such amenities. A Park and Recreation Study is identified as a Priority Action and discussed in more detail in Chapter VII, Strategic Plan.

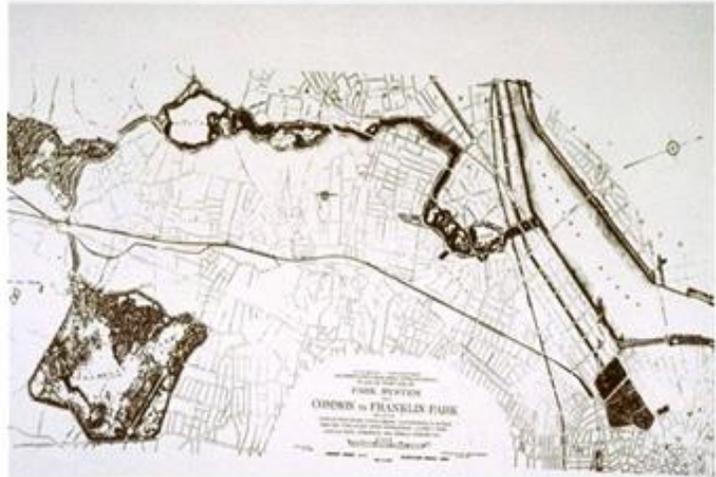
The concept of a centrally located community park is illustrated in the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area series. In this example, a centrally located park is integrated into a residential neighborhood and a greenway system. Such a park could serve as a central meeting point for the community, as well as provide a range of recreational options for the LeRay community and the region. It could also be an appropriate setting for a farmer's market - a concept described in the Farm Core character area section of the Plan starting on page 79. A limited amount of neighborhood commercial space could also be located adjacent to a community park such as a small ice cream shop, café or convenience store.

**Strategy 3.B. Make greenway connections**

Provide for enhanced **community/pedestrian connections** throughout LeRay via a linked greenbelt of parks. The greenway can provide pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular connections between residential areas, commercial areas, natural areas and park space, and important community institutions, such as schools.

Key elements of a connectivity system include:

- **SIDEWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN PATHS;**
- **BICYCLE PATHS;**
- **PARKS;**
- **CONNECTIONS OVER AND AROUND OBSTACLES, SUCH AS ROADS, STREAMS AND OTHER WETLAND AREAS, AND STEEP SLOPES.**



Boston's "Emerald Necklace" - a linked system of greenways and parks. Source: Library of Congress

The town's river systems can also play a role in connecting areas of the town together, as discussed in more detail in the Rivers Character Area discussion below. Expanding existing trails, such as the popular DANC-Calcium trail and connecting it with other regional trail systems, should also be explored. The Greenway Concept is illustrated in the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area series (see page 105).

#### **GOAL 4. PROTECT HABITATS AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

While the Southwest Neighborhoods character area has been identified as an appropriate location for town growth, particularly residential, the natural habitats and resources in this area should continue to be protected. Indiana bat habitat, in particular, can be found in areas along Route 11 and Route 342 where new housing developments have located in recent years. Fort Drum can be a partner in preserving habitat areas, in conjunction with the ACUB (Army Compatible Use Buffers) program. Developers can also be partners in this process, setting aside lands for protection; although lands that would not otherwise be developable - such as wetlands - should not count toward any town land set-aside requirements.

**GOAL 5. CENTRALLY LOCATE COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Community facilities, such as parks, schools and post offices, should be centrally located and convenient to residential areas, while providing adequate buffers between such uses and residential areas where they are needed (for instance - providing buffers or screening between loading areas and adjacent residential

units). As the Southwest Neighborhood character area continues to develop the need for new amenities and services will likely arise. Ensuring that these amenities are integrated into residential areas is of importance. Opportunities for better integrating existing community facilities, such as the Calcium Primary School, to the residential areas they serve, should also be explored. In addition to a potential new traffic light along Route 342 near the school



Conceptual rendering of a pedestrian overpass for Route 441 in Penfield, NY.

entrance drive, methods for getting children safely across Route 342 should be explored. An elevated pedestrian overpass would completely separate pedestrians from automobile traffic and could also serve as an attractive gateway feature into the town.

**ROUTES 342 & 11 FOCUS AREA**

The "Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area" is an area of the town that is currently experiencing significant growth. Taking existing conditions as a baseline, future growth has been projected for this area in a full build-out scenario. It should be emphasized that this scenario is fully conceptual and meant to show how incremental development in a high-growth area of town can - if properly planned - culminate in a new town neighborhood that incorporates high quality living environments with open space, parks, trails, and functional and attractive roads. As shown in the Focus Area Conceptual Plan series, the end result is a series of smaller neighborhoods linked together by roads, parks and greenways. In the process, preserving existing wetland, slope, and forest areas and protecting habitat space for the endangered and

threatened species and plants in the region, such as Henslow’s Sparrow, and Indiana bat. Ultimately, this high growth area of town could provide for a variety of housing types, including senior housing and assisted living facilities. The greenway that winds through the concept plan provides pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular connections between residential subdivisions, commercial uses on US Route 11, natural areas and park space.

The town has already established a conceptual baseline road system for this area of town. As each development comes in for review, they will be required to make a further link in the evolving road network. Looking ahead, it is important that this roadway system be designed to connect neighborhoods and enhance community character, rather than serve exclusively as high volume conduits for automobiles. The town may wish to formalize this conceptual road plan into an official map.

**FOCUS AREA SERIES**

The sequence on the following pages illustrates a conceptual phasing for the creation of the integrated neighborhood - the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area - as described above.

Symbols used in the Focus Area series maps are explained in the legend below:

**Legend:** Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area Plan

-  Roadway
-  Existing Residential
-  Potential Residential
-  Existing Commercial
-  Potential Commercial
-  Proposed conserved and enhanced greenway areas
-  Pedestrian trail
-  Multi-use recreation trail

TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

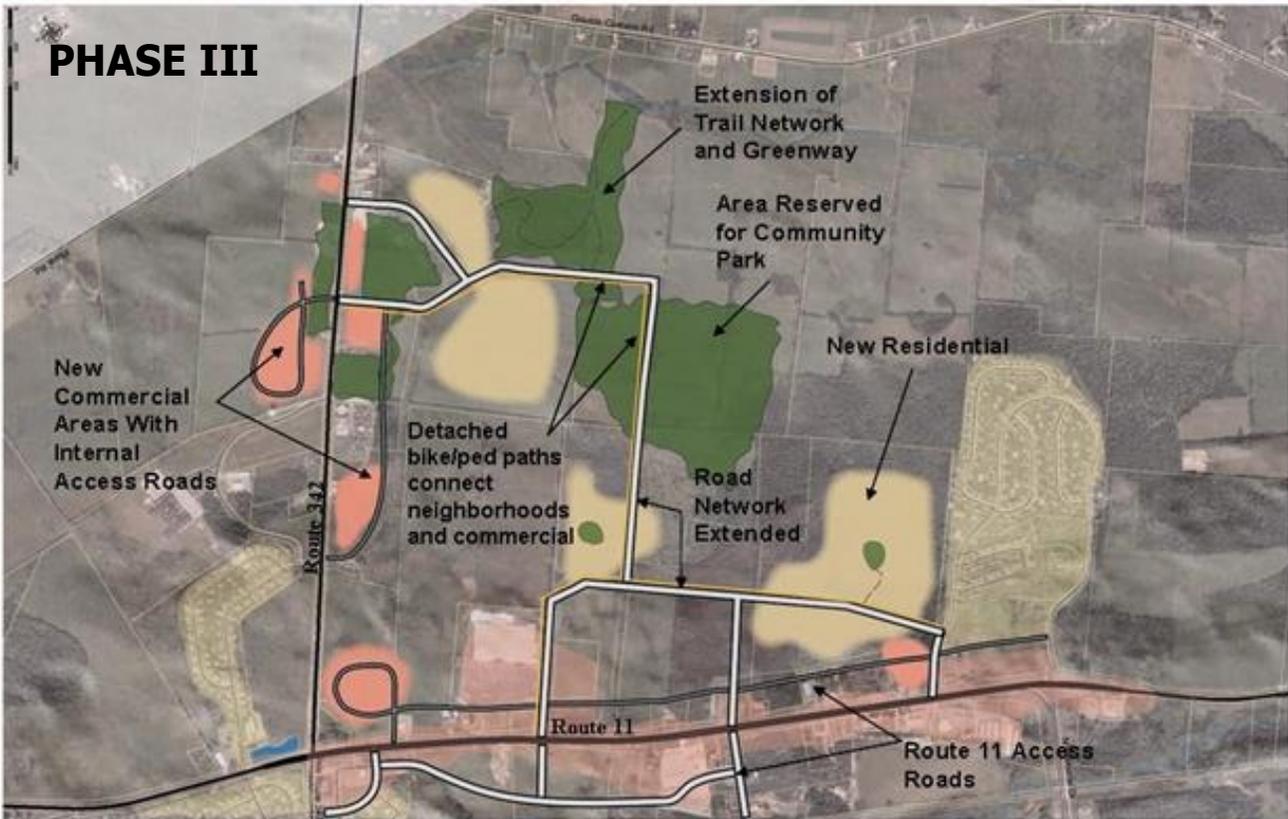


Existing Conditions.



Initial Development Phase - Projects in building or planning stages

TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

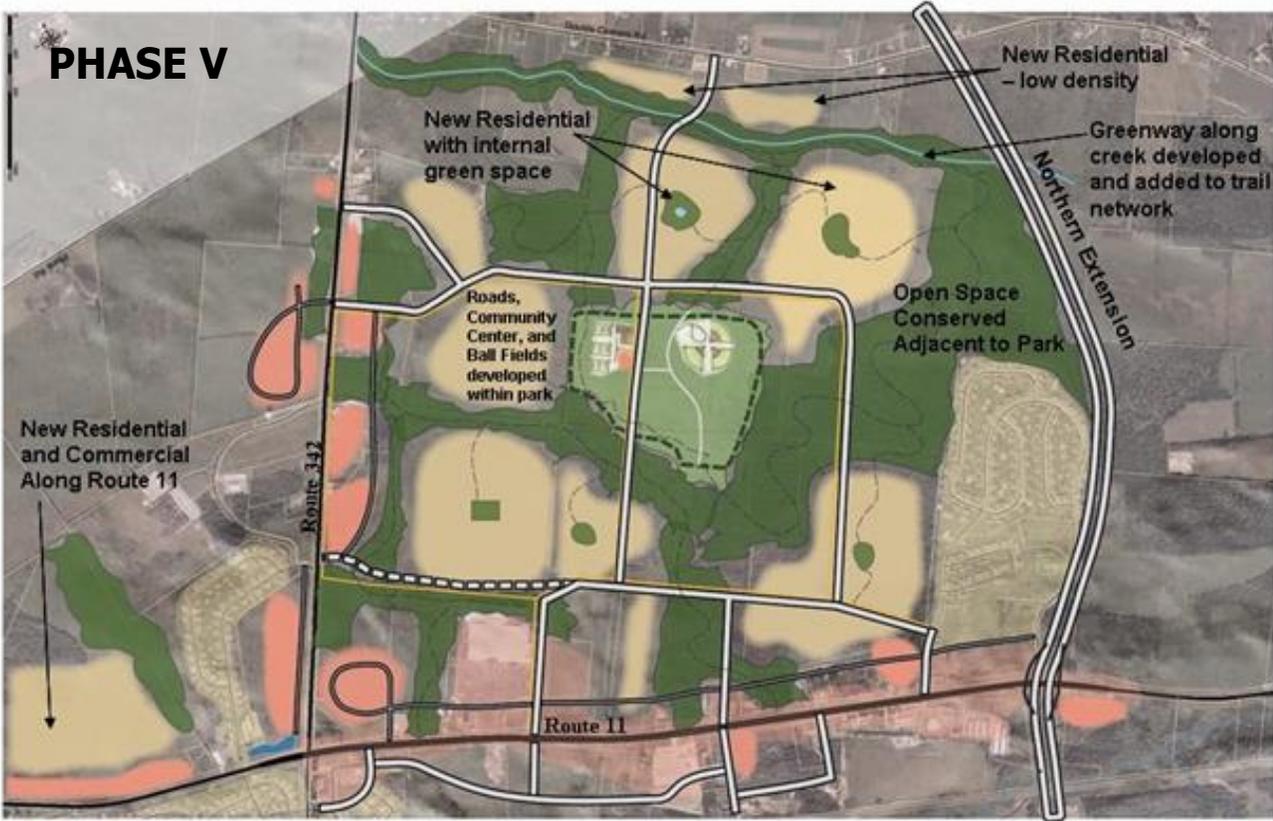


Additional Development. Road network begins to fill in. Area for Community Park Identified

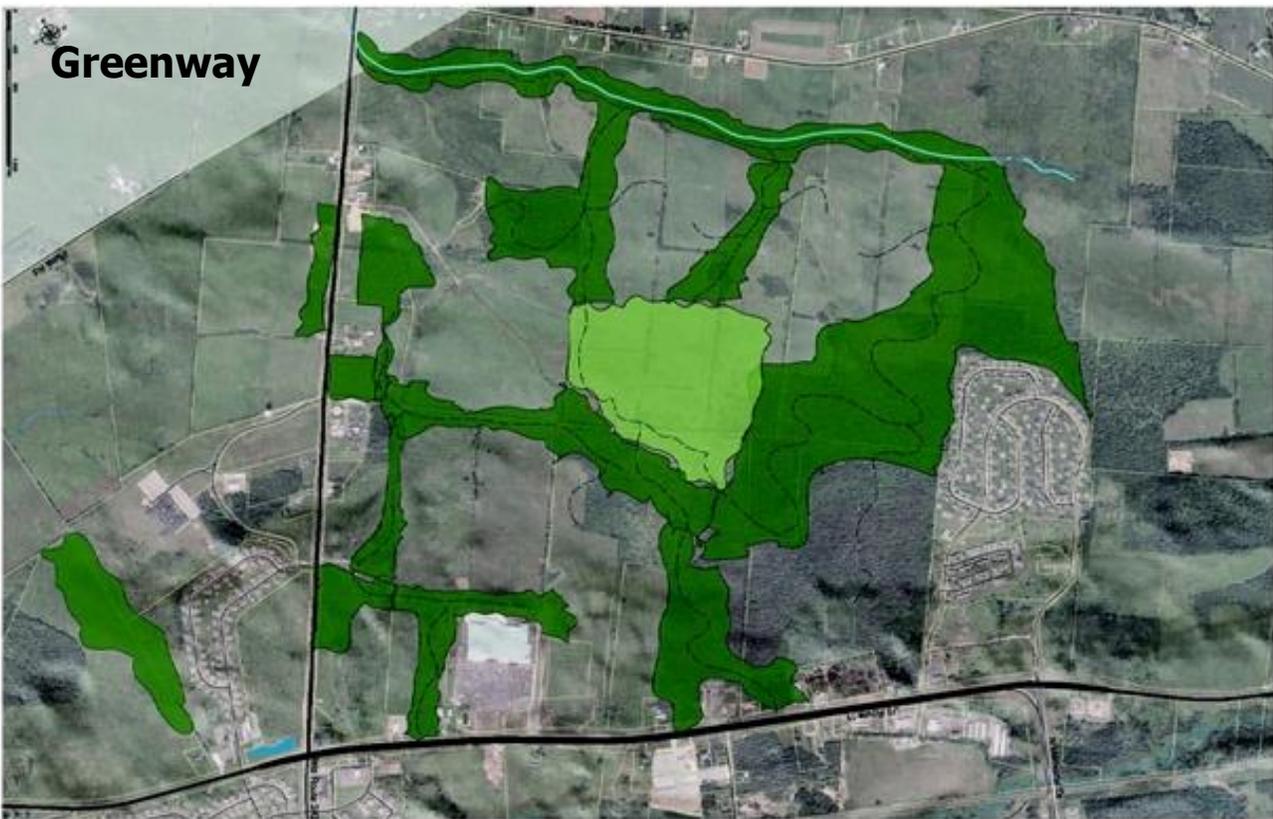


Fort Drum Connector Built. Park developed, trails added and greenway begins to emerge.

TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



The neighborhood is built out, with parks, natural areas and a full greenway.



A connected greenway system ties together parks, neighborhoods and commercial areas.



Centrally located to newly-built residential neighborhoods, this Oregon park possesses an attractive, well-defined entrance that complements nearby homes and is accessible to pedestrians. Within the park a diversity of amenities including sports fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, a skate park (left) and activity paths (upper right), ensure that the park is active throughout the day.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Parks should reach out to and embrace the residential neighborhoods in which they are located. A well-designed and accessible park is a community gathering spot that brings residents together and greatly enhances quality-of-life.



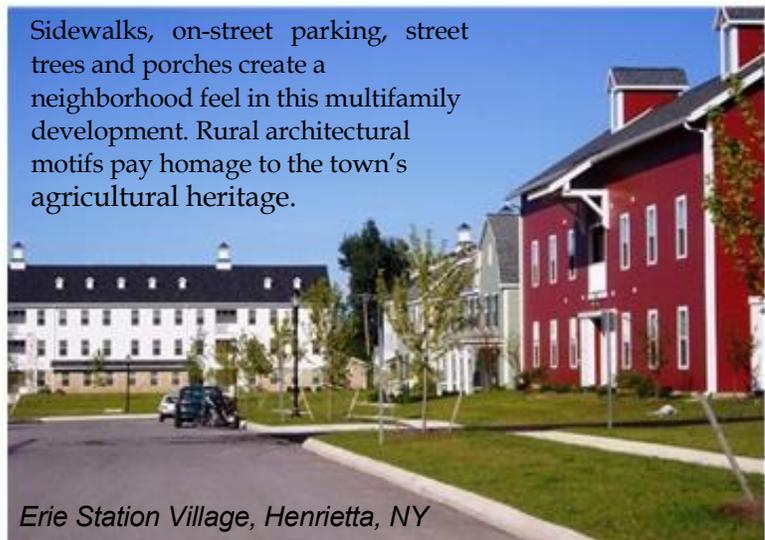
Portland, OR



Rochester, NY

Examples of successful pairings of open space and higher density housing.

Sidewalks, on-street parking, street trees and porches create a neighborhood feel in this multifamily development. Rural architectural motifs pay homage to the town's agricultural heritage.



*Erie Station Village, Henrietta, NY*

## **LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Proposed land uses in the Southwest Neighborhoods character area include:

- Mixed Uses (residential/office/retail);
- Single family residential;
- Parks;
- Neighborhood commercial areas (in addition to the large scale commercial areas along Route 342 and 11, which are discussed in more detail as a separate character area - "Commercial Corridors" below);
- Agriculture;
- Mining and Industrial Uses in Appropriate Areas.

## **WORKING FARMLANDS**

There are a number of active farm parcels along Route 283 in the Southwest Neighborhoods character area. These farmlands lie outside of the town's Farm Core where most town farms are concentrated. Increasing development and subdivision of land in the Route 283 area have brought residential and agricultural uses increasingly in conflict with one another. A recently approved water district is likely to further increase development pressures. As such, these farmlands may be suitable candidates for a farmland preservation project; however, their relative isolation from large, contiguous areas of farmland elsewhere in the town may also place them at a disadvantage with respect to some farmland protection programs.

The town should reexamine the Agricultural Development zoning for this area to determine if more flexibility in uses could help support the future viability of farming; as well as explore density and development regulations, such as conservation subdivision techniques described above (see Strategy 2.A. for the Farm Core character area on page 85) that are more sensitive to the agricultural landscape while respecting landowner equity.

Should farming be discontinued in this area of town, opportunities should be explored for providing open space, parks and coordinated neighborhood development, possibly via the town's Planned Development District zoning, along the lines of the neighborhood concept illustrated in the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area above.

**ROUTE 11 SOUTH OF ROUTE 342**

Town residents have indicated that the higher density, large scale commercial development along Route 11 north of Route 342, should taper off quickly south of Route 342 to lower density residential.

**INDUSTRIALLY ZONED LANDS ALONG ROUTE 283**

At the present time, a large portion of land in the western part of the town along Routes 3 and 283 are zoned for industrial uses. As of 2008, the use of land in the industrial district, with the exception of the Fabco property along Route 3, has not seen uses typically indicative of an industrial zone. Currently, the area houses a mixture of residences, small commercial uses, including restaurants and auto repair facilities, and a self-storage operation. It is recommended that areas of the district in the vicinity of LaFave Road be rezoned to recognize the existing residential neighborhood. With the recent extension of water service along Route 283 and the potential implementation of sewer service along the corridor in the coming years, it is recommended that the remainder of industrially zoned land in the town remain so in order to allow a site for future industrial development to take place in LeRay. The town may also wish to review whether residential uses should be permitted "as-of-right" in the remaining industrially zoned area in order to avoid potential conflicts between residential and industrial uses. Given the established current pattern and scale of "industrial" and residential uses in the area, such conflicts do not appear likely in the near future. However, development pressures may increase once recently approved public water lines are constructed in this area. A resultant increase in intensity of both industrial/commercial uses and residential uses may increase the chance for land use conflicts.

**ROUTE 3**

Town have residents expressed a desire to see the Route 3 corridor maintain its predominantly residential character, with neighborhood scaled commercial uses largely limited to where they currently exist. Recent extension of sewer lines through the corridor has raised concern amongst some residents that there will be an increased pressure to develop the corridor for more intense commercial uses. The town should examine the zoning in this area to reflect the desired balance between residential and commercial uses. Because of the proximity of the Black River to the Route 3 corridor, additional guidelines, policies and practices should be considered

that reinforce this relationship and maintain the quality of the corridor as an attractive town gateway.

**IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS FOR SENIOR HOUSING AND/OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES AND REVISE ZONING TO EXPLICITLY PERMIT SUCH USES**

There are currently no senior citizen housing complexes in the town, with the exception of the Milltown Senior Housing complex in Evans Mills, which does not directly provide any medical or specialized services to its residents. Nor does the town's zoning explicitly permit such uses. The advantage of having zoning and development regulations explicitly for senior housing is that it can address and provide for the additional services that such housing routinely requires. The town should identify areas within the Southwest Neighborhoods character area where such uses would be appropriate. A senior citizen housing complex could fit in well with the neighborhood concept plan shown in the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area series: proximity to parks, trails, shopping and other people all help to integrate seniors into the pulse of town life, helping to avoid the sense of isolation that all too many seniors face. Senior housing should allow for a series of options as the needs and lifestyles of elderly residents change. These options should include residential choices for active seniors as well as assisted living options for residents. With the recent allocation of 40 assisted living beds by the New York State Department of Health to the Watertown area, it is recommended that the town work with Community A.L. Corp., the organization in charge of the proposed regional assisted living facilities to ensure that if a series of satellite facilities for assisted living are constructed in the region, one or more of the facilities would be located in LeRay.

## TOWN CHARACTER AREAS: COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

### COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS OVERVIEW

The Commercial Corridors character area is depicted on page 117. Over the last two decades, the growth of Fort Drum has led to increased development pressures on the Town of LeRay. Since 1985, commercial growth has increased from a total of 3,400 square feet of commercial space to nearly 350,000 square feet. This has been most apparent along the US Route 11 corridor. Since 2003, a Super Wal-Mart, several small shopping centers, convenience stores, and several national and locally franchised fast food restaurants have opened along the corridor, spurred by the proximity to the Main Gate entrance to Fort Drum and the impending construction of the Fort Drum Connector. While this has led to an increase in shopping opportunities for the town and an increase to its tax base, there have been negative implications as well, such as an increase in traffic along US Route 11. The recently completed US Route 11/ NYS Route 342 corridor

study provides guidance for access management within the corridor area. There are several goals that need to be addressed. A goal for future development along this corridor is to look at providing access to all modes of transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle access, as well as other modes of transportation, such as horse and buggy. Also, adherence to the recommendations set forth in the Town of LeRay Commercial Corridor Guidelines should be emphasized for all

### COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR CHARACTER

#### AREA

#### GOALS

- 1) Create an Attractive, High-Quality Environment Along the Town's Commercial Corridors.
- 2) Focus Large Scale Development in Appropriate Locations.
- 3) Prepare for Land Use Change in the Vicinity of the Fort Drum Connector.
- 4) Employ Best Management Practices for Access Management and Parking Layout.
- 5) Provide for Alternative Modes of Transportation.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

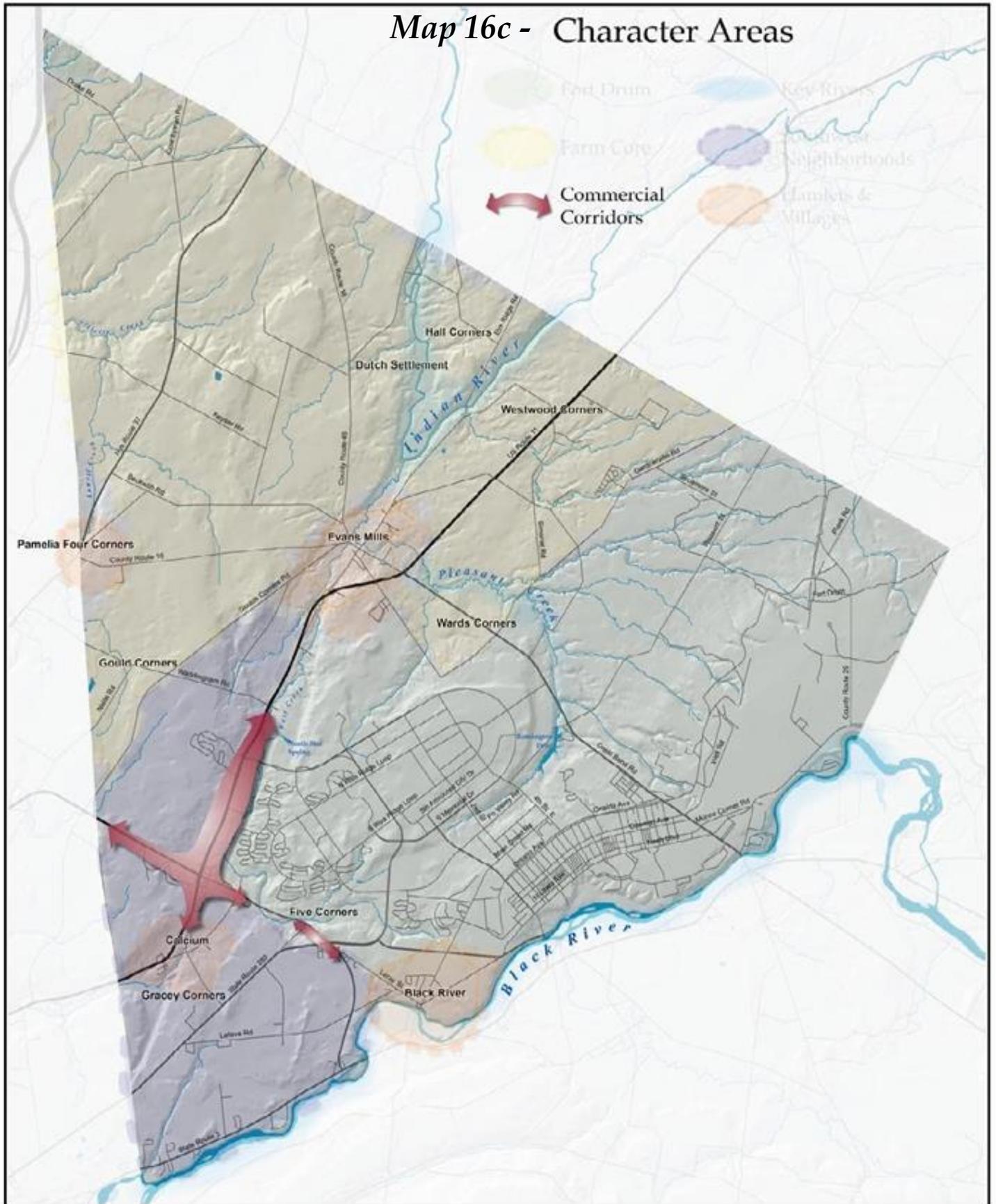
development in this area. Finally, provisions for traffic movement within the district in accordance with the recommendations included in the Route 11/342 corridor study should be addressed here.



Benches, ample sidewalks, covered walkways and landscaped courtyards enrich the pedestrian environment at the building edge and along the pedestrian pathway in these examples. Parking lots, service drives and the interface between buildings and parking all benefit from the addition of such elements.



Map 16c - Character Areas



## **COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

Much like the Town Wide Vision Statement, the Commercial Corridors Vision Statement expresses the town's vision for the future of this area of town, as well as an acknowledgment of the qualities that make it special and unique. The vision statement operates at a broad level, serving as the foundation for more specific goals and strategies, as well as a guide for future decision making in the town.

### **COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

The Town of LeRay has attracted a number of local and national retailers along NYS Route 342 and US Route 11. A goal for the Town of LeRay should be to create opportunities for continued growth to occur in a way that does not overwhelm its surroundings and adds to the town's resources. Attention should be paid to building and site design in adherence with the Town of LeRay's Commercial Corridors Design Guidelines. Also, a goal for this area should be to provide means for multi-modal access to retail and restaurant options to limit the impact of increased traffic along US Route 11 and to help to promote a healthier lifestyle. Lastly, attractive connections between the Commercial Corridor and adjacent residential areas should be provided in the form of roads, pedestrian paths and bicycle paths.

## **COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS GOALS & STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL I. CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE, HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT ALONG THE TOWN'S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS**

LeRay's commercial corridors, particularly Route 11, have grown enormously in recent years. Such corridors serve not only as transportation routes and centers for shopping and business activity, but as town gateways that set the tone and character for the town as a whole. The town's goal is to enhance and maintain these corridors as important gateways from an

aesthetic, functional, and economic point of view that strengthens the town's quality of life and "pride of place" for years to come.

**Strategy I.A. Ensure that development in the town's commercial corridors is consistent with the Town of LeRay commercial corridors design guidelines**

In June of 2008, the Town of LeRay adopted its Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines. The guidelines provide a template for the community, town leaders, and the development community to guide future development decisions in the town's commercially zoned areas, and that reflect the vision and goals set forth in the town's comprehensive plan.

**Strategy I.B. Maintain the town's commercial corridors as settings for active "people" oriented businesses**

The location of self-storage facilities, and other similar uses that do not involve an active, engaging retail or public component, can be problematic for key commercial corridors, as they can establish a development pattern that may not encourage "highest and best use." For example, customer driven uses, particularly those that involve significant investment and improvements, such as restaurants, mixed-use developments, or retail establishments, may think twice about investing in a corridor where they may find themselves side-by-side with a warehouse facility. It should be noted that that selfstorage and other similar uses are meeting needs in the community, and that they provide economic opportunities for those who develop and own them. However, it is important to find locations for such uses that do not front directly on the town's emerging premier retail and commercial corridors.

**Strategy I.C. Ensure that primary commercial highways are landscaped and beautified**

As noted above, the town's commercial corridors help set the tone and character for the entire town. Aesthetic considerations should therefore be part of future improvements to such roads. Landscaping, lighting, and median treatments are just some of the important character establishing components that can be part of an overall improvement

plan. The town's Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines provides additional guidance on these characteristics.

**Strategy I.D. Create a pleasant, pedestrian scaled environment**

All too often, in newer highway commercial districts, the needs of people are subjugated to those of the automobile. As the town's commercial corridors continue to develop, the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists should be taken into consideration. The town is already actively requiring proposed commercial sites to include provisions for pedestrians and other modes of transportation where appropriate. Such features make commercial areas - both internal access drives and parking lots -- safer and more attractive. The town's Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines provides detailed guidance on how to bring a pedestrian scale to the town's commercial areas.



Streetlights, sidewalks, outdoor-dining and stores that are built to a common setback line are just some of the design elements that transform a parking lot service drive in this shopping center, into a lively "street". Store entrances are inviting and open directly onto the adjacent sidewalk.

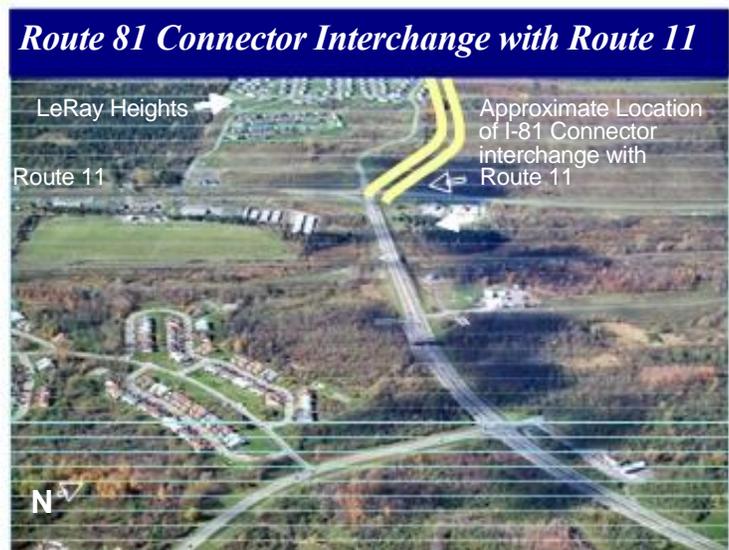
**GOAL 2. FOCUS LARGE-SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS**

At the current time, there is no differentiation in the scope of allowable commercial uses in various areas of LeRay. Based on the current zoning regulations, a large-scale retail store, such as Wal-Mart, could conceivably go into any one of several zoning districts within LeRay, dependent on the availability of infrastructure. Town residents have said that they do not wish to see large-scale commercial development along Route 11 migrate south of Route 342 or

further north into areas of town not currently served by public sewer and water, where commercial uses could come into conflict with the town's Farm Core. Residents have also said that large scale commercial growth on Route 342 should be limited to areas west of Route 11. The town's zoning would need to be reviewed and likely revised to achieve the above. Zoning tools may include a range of concepts, including maximum thresholds for building sizes in certain areas of town and revisions to permitted uses. Future infrastructure decisions should also reflect this goal.

**GOAL 3. PREPARE FOR LAND USE CHANGE IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED FORT DRUM CONNECTOR**

A planned interchange with Route 11 in the Town of LeRay will make it easier for those traveling in the region to directly access Route 11, as well as Fort Drum. This will represent a convenience for many town residents and Fort Drum personnel, but will also likely stimulate additional development and economic activity in the town. At the same time, this will create additional growth pressures further north along Route 11, bringing potential commercial uses closer to the town's core agricultural areas. It can be expected that highway automotive and convenience uses similar to those currently located along Routes 342 and 37 in the Town of Pamela, near I-81, Exit 48, will likely seek out the new interchange location in the Town of LeRay, as illustrated in the images on the following page.



Aerial view of proposed location of interchange between the Fort Drum connector and Route 11, in the Town of LeRay.

## TOWN OF LeRAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Route 342 in the vicinity of I-81, Exit 48 in the Town of Pamelia. A planned interchange between the Fort Drum Connector and Route 11 may attract similar auto-oriented and convenience uses as those seen in Pamelia.



I-81 Exit 48, in the Town of Pamelia. This is currently the most direct highway connection between I-81 and principal entry gate to Fort Drum. Over the years, Route 342 in this area has transitioned into an automotive services and convenience retail district typically seen near highway interchanges.

The town should review its zoning to ensure that development in this area provides for an effective transition to non-commercial areas immediately adjacent to the north. Current zoning in this area is BR-1 (Business Residential 1) and PDD (Planned Development District). Treating

this entire area as a large planned development district may help to ensure that it is developed in a coordinated and sensible fashion.

**Strategy 3.A. Ensure a high quality of development north of the proposed Fort Drum Connector.**

The Fort Drum Connector will likely spur growth near the planned interchange with Route 11, especially attracting automotive related uses. A balance should be struck between automotive uses and desired development types, such as offices, research facilities, and support businesses for industries that would benefit from a location adjacent to Fort Drum that the town wishes to see in this area. By requiring special permit review for auto- and truck-oriented uses, and by enhancing the buffer requirements and lighting restrictions included in this area, the town can better accommodate both types of uses.

**Strategy 3.B. Ensure pedestrian friendly options at the Fort Drum Connector exit with Route 11**

In order to ensure the continuation of a town-wide pedestrian network, one of the key components is to create as pedestrian friendly of an atmosphere as possible at the intersection of Route 11 and the proposed Fort Drum Connector. Through the use of lighting, the utilization of materials and design that provide a delineation of the pedestrian and vehicular spheres, the town will be able to provide pedestrian and/or bicycle pathways on either side of the proposed interchange.

**Strategy 3.C. Ensure that the Fort Drum Connector Interchange/overpass at Route 11 is Attractive**

The construction of the Fort Drum Connector interchange and overpass structure at Route 11 will leave a significant mark on the physical appearance of the town for years to come. The town should look at the construction of the interchange/overpass as an opportunity to enhance and define Route 11 as a town "gateway". Distinctive materials, textures and colors can all be incorporated into the designs that reflect the character of the town. The town should coordinate with NYSDOT and Fort Drum to arrive at a design that meets these goals. Although Route 11 is the only road that will have an interchange

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

with the Fort Drum connector, the town may also wish to explore aesthetic consideration for two other roads in the town that will be directly impacted by the Fort Drum connector: Nellis Road and Goulds Corners Road. Personalized overpass/interchange elements that may be appropriate for LeRay include: allusions to Fort Drum; materials that draw inspiration from the town's traditional limestone architecture; and designs that reflect the town's rural heritage.



Landscaping, colors, textures, materials and symbols are just some of the elements that can be utilized to “dress up” and personalize large highway and transportation structures. The town should coordinate with NYSDOT and Fort Drum to ensure that the Fort Drum connector overpass/interchange is aesthetically pleasing and contributes to town character.

### **GOAL 4. EMPLOY BEST PRACTICES FOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND PARKING LAYOUT**

#### **Strategy 4.A. Create a network of internal access drives that minimize curbcuts on Routes 11 and 342**

Recently, several efforts are underway to help to better define future roadways for properties in the vicinity of Routes 11 and 342 and the proposed Fort Drum Connector.

First, in August of 2007, the US Route 11 and NYS Route 342 Corridor Study was completed. As part of the study recommendations, several internal roadways were proposed connecting the internal parcels to Routes 11 and 342, and to Goulds Corners Road. Another recommendation of this project was to construct a series of interconnections between adjoining properties along US Route 11, allowing shoppers to drive from retail establishment to retail establishment without having to use US Route 11. The town is currently implementing this approach on a case-by-case basis as new properties are developed and/or redeveloped. The town's Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines also require internal access drives.

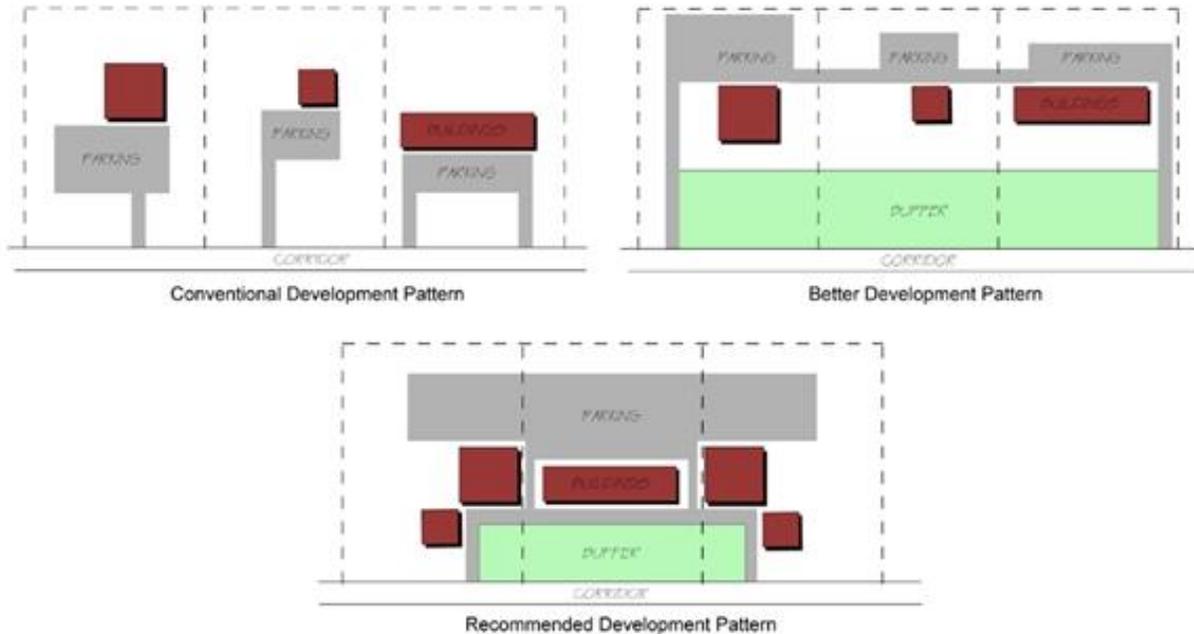
**Strategy 4.B. Encourage shared parking between adjoining properties**

The town should consider revising the town zoning code to require shared parking between properties. Requiring interconnections to be created between adjacent commercial properties along the corridor allows for shared parking between neighboring businesses or community facilities and limits the total amount of parking spaces and impervious surface area needed along the corridor.

**Strategy 4.C. Make connections with adjacent land uses**

In addition to facilitating connections between commercial properties, the town should encourage connections between residential and commercial areas through a variety of means, including roads, pathways and sidewalks. The Johnson Road stub next to Wal-Mart is an example of providing such a connection. As residential development fills in behind Wal-Mart, Johnson Road will be extended to provide a connection between a higher density residential area and the town's main commercial area. Such connections not only take automobile traffic off of the town's already crowded highways by providing alternative routes, but also facilitate pedestrian and bicycle trips along a more direct and safer route. It is important that such road connections, when made, incorporate pedestrian amenities.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Buildings, parking lot(s) and open space shall relate to one another in such a way as to create the feeling of one unified development and minimize entry points from the main corridor.

### **GOAL 5. PROVIDE FOR ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

At the present time, US Route 11 corridor presents an atmosphere that is unfriendly to nonautomobile users. This is due to several factors, including the distance between uses, the setbacks of uses from the highway corridor, the lack of sidewalks or bicycle paths along the corridor, and the high vehicle speeds along the corridor. Consequently, pedestrian and bicycle use of the corridor is minimal.

#### **Strategy 5.A. Create a continuous pedestrian pathway on the side of route 11 within the commercial corridor character area**

A policy for LeRay is to gradually construct a continuous pedestrian path along Route 11 through the town. Currently, this path is being constructed on the east side of US 11. Along the west side of the highway, pedestrian access is encouraged, either along the street front or through a series of internal walkways due to topographical constraints. These walkways would connect businesses fronting US Route 11, as well as tie into interior pedestrian circulation systems. The town is requiring applicants for projects in this area to reserve a strip of land for a sidewalk and/or path that would be built by the

town at a future date. NYSDOT approval would be required in areas where the proposed path is within the DOT right-of-way. Eventually, this pedestrian pathway could be part of a larger town network or greenway that links the various parts of the town together and builds on existing trail systems, such as the DANC-Calcium trail.



A continuous pedestrian/bicycle activity path is appropriate in areas with large setbacks. A more intimate interface between structures and the pedestrian realm can occur along internal service drives.

**Strategy 5.B. Provide pedestrian improvements along internal access drives**

The town's policy for applicants should incorporate pedestrian paths and/or bicycle paths as part of the overall development plan. Because of the variation in conditions from site-to-site, as well as the incremental nature of development, the exact locations and dimensions of such amenities would be determined in the early stages of the development review process.

**LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**FOCUS LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS CHARACTER AREA**

While both of the existing zoning designations are generally appropriate for the current and future uses along these corridors, some modification to the existing zoning code may be necessary. For example, in both of these areas, it is possible under the existing zoning for a large big-box store to be located anywhere within either district, as long as sewer service is available to the site. One possible approach is to modify the existing zoning code to restrict the maximum square footage of commercial uses in the BR-2 zoning district.

**MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF SELF STORAGE AND WAREHOUSE FACILITIES ALONG ROUTES 11 AND 342**

The town could take a number of approaches with respect to this issue. For instance, the town could require larger setbacks for storage and warehouse type uses that would discourage or prohibit them from directly fronting along Route 11 and Route 342. Alternative locations for such uses will need to be explored. For self-storage facilities, whose customer base draws heavily from Fort Drum, alternative locations will need to maintain proximity to the fort and be visible from town roads. Along Route 342 and Route 11, there may also be appropriate locations that are tucked behind existing businesses and/or hidden from view by topography. In such cases, a visible sign along the corridor can be placed, directing customers to the use, while the actual facility can remain off the main road frontage.

**PREPARE FOR LAND USE CHANGE IN VICINITY OF THE FORT DRUM CONNECTOR**

While the land adjacent to the proposed Fort Drum Connector is zoned for a mix of commercial uses, much of this land is vacant. It is reasonably anticipated that the construction of the Fort Drum Connector will create demand for high-intensity auto and truck based uses at the intersection of the Connector and US 11. It is important for the town to provide guidance to potential developers of these properties to ensure that the recommendations included in the town's recently adopted Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines are adhered to. It is also important for future development of this type, such as truck stops, fast food restaurants, motels, or truck repair facilities to provide additional buffering and adhere to enhanced lighting restrictions in order to allow areas behind the Route 11 frontage area to be developed for highest and best uses while retaining a rural character. Also, it is recommended that the town address future access issues within this area, similar to what has been done to the south and west of the proposed Connector. The end goal for this area is a high-quality environment that:

- Benefits from its proximity to Fort Drum and the Fort Drum Connector;
- Transitions smoothly to residential and agricultural areas of town to the north;
- Integrates with the Route 11 corridor and mix of commercial and residential uses to the south;
- Respects and incorporates natural features such as West Creek; and
- Accommodates limited, well-designed auto- or truck-oriented uses that will not discourage other types of development, such as commercial and office uses.

## TOWN CHARACTER AREAS: HAMLETS & VILLAGES

### Hamlets & Villages Overview

The Hamlets & Villages Character Area is depicted on Page 131. There are two villages whose boundaries lie at least partially within the Town of LeRay. The larger of the two is Black River, in the southern section of LeRay straddling the Black River. While the section of the village north of the Black River is in LeRay, areas south of the river and along Route 3 are in the Town of Rutland. The other village in LeRay is Evans Mills, located in the north-central section of LeRay. Several community facilities, including the LeRay Town Hall and the Evans Mills Primary School are located either in or adjacent to the village. There are also several hamlet areas in LeRay, the largest of which are Calcium and Pamela.

For the most part, these communities are older in comparison to other sections in LeRay. Also, in the villages, many commercial buildings are vacant, with parking cited as an impediment to drawing users to these locations. Much of the existing

infrastructure and community facilities in LeRay, including the LeRay Town Hall, libraries, parks, and schools, are located in both of the villages (Evans Mills & Black River) and, to a lesser

### **HAMLETS & VILLAGES**

#### **CHARACTER AREA**

#### **GOALS**

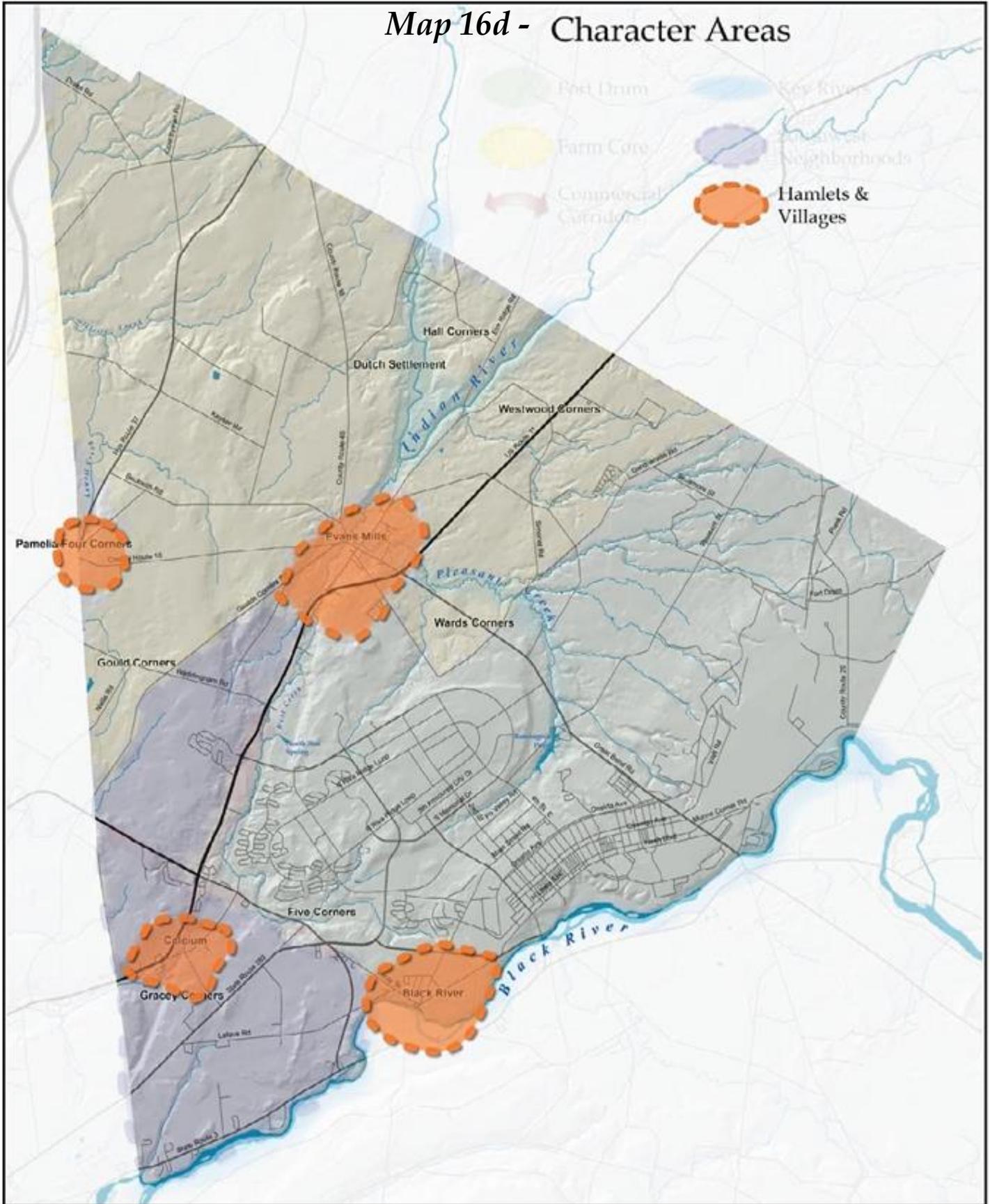
1. Support the Vitality of Hamlets and Villages.
2. Encourage the Location of Community Facilities in Hamlet & Village Areas.
3. Ensure that Development in Hamlets and Villages Complements their Historic Scale and Character.
4. Enhance Pedestrian Amenities.
5. Provide "Placemaking" Opportunities via Distinctive Signage.
6. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Design at Hamlet and Village Edges.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

extent, in the hamlet areas such as Calcium and Pamela Four Corners. These areas also are the location of many of the historic structures in LeRay. The village and hamlet areas provide opportunities for village-scale infill development, redevelopment of historic buildings, and higher density housing than what is available elsewhere in LeRay. While the town has little influence on zoning and development in the village areas, the town and villages should collaborate on common goals regarding the shape and form of development, provision of community facilities and services, and infrastructure needs. Also, the concepts of village scale development can be applied to hamlet and newly developing areas of LeRay, as sewer and water service becomes available to those areas of the town.



Map 16d - Character Areas



## **HAMLETS & VILLAGES CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

Much like the Town Wide Vision Statement on Page 75, the Hamlets & Villages Vision Statement expresses the town's vision for the future of these areas of town, as well as an acknowledgment of the qualities that make it special and unique. The vision statement operates at a broad level, serving as the foundation for more specific goals and strategies, as well as a guide for future decision making in the town.

### **HAMLETS & VILLAGES CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

The Town of LeRay takes pride in its village and hamlets. These historic settlement areas anchor the town with their historic structures, public facilities and concentrations of businesses. It is the goal of the Town of LeRay that such places remain vital and important features of town life for years to come. The town will work with its hamlets and villages to encourage appropriate redevelopment and revitalization, as well as guide new development to these areas in a scale and manner that complements their village and hamlet character.

## **HAMLETS & VILLAGES GOALS & STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL I. SUPPORT THE VITALITY OF HAMLETS AND VILLAGES**

#### **Strategy I.A. Partner on infrastructure improvements that support hamlet and village revitalization**

The town's infrastructure decisions and policies influence growth patterns across the town, including hamlet and village areas. The town should partner with villages and hamlet areas on infrastructure projects and policies that serve to reinforce and revitalize these important community centers.

**Strategy I.B. Review on-site parking requirements**

The villages may wish to review on-site parking requirements for their downtown areas to ensure that they are not unnecessarily high and therefore discourage redevelopment and reuse in downtown areas. Requiring shared parking in such areas, particularly with adjacent businesses whose usage patterns would lend themselves to shared parking (such as an office and restaurant, the former with daytime peak parking needs, and the latter with evening peak parking needs) can help to reduce the need for individual parking lots for every use.

**Strategy I.C. Review zoning to allow for outdoor dining and other active uses along building frontages**

Village and hamlet environments can present many opportunities for “people-scaled” activities, such as outdoor dining along sidewalks. The villages may wish to review their zoning with respect to outdoor dining and other activities that help to enliven downtowns and leverage the unique attributes of village environments. It should be noted, however, that outdoor uses should only be approved if adequate room is available in the pedestrian environment to allow both the outdoor use and the safe movement of people and vehicles.

**GOAL 2. ENCOURAGE THE LOCATION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN VILLAGE AND HAMLET AREAS**

Historically, hamlets and villages have served not only as concentrations of settlement, but as locations for community facilities that serve the larger needs of the town. In recent decades, villages in the region and across the country have seen important community resources and uses, such as post offices and schools, relocate outside of traditional downtowns into more remote locations. Often, such new locations are less accessible to village residents, further encouraging automobile dependence. Additionally, such locations often do not have the “visibility” and public presence of their former, village locations, with the result that the bonds between such institutions and the public they serve can often feel weakened. For instance, school buildings that once proudly fronted on Main Streets across the country have often relocated to the edges of communities. While space needs and other practical considerations factor into such moves, a balance must be struck between such factors and the importance of

retaining public institutions in highly visible, walkable traditional downtown locations. It should therefore be the town's policy to actively support the concept of its villages and hamlets, where appropriate, as central locations for important community and public institutions.

**GOAL 3. ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT IN HAMLET AND VILLAGES COMPLEMENTS THEIR HISTORIC SCALE AND CHARACTER**

The loss of historic structures and the historic built form of hamlets and villages can have negative impacts. Zoning tools and guidelines for hamlet and village areas can help to ensure that these places retain the characteristics that make them special places. Sometimes financial incentives and assistance can make the difference between a tear-down of an historic structure, or its rehabilitation and re-use.

**GOAL 4. ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES**

The modern reliance on the automobile has served, in many communities, to overwhelm pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of other means of transport. While the automobile will continue to play a dominant role in transportation, hamlets and especially villages should leverage their "walkable" qualities by improving and expanding pedestrian amenities. Strategies include expanding the existing sidewalk network to encompass adjoining areas, providing trails connecting the village centers with adjoining residential, commercial, and recreational areas; and providing bicycle racks in convenient locations.

**GOAL 5. PROVIDE "PLACEMAKING" OPPORTUNITIES VIA DISTINCTIVE SIGNAGE AND OTHER FEATURES**

There are a variety of methods that can be explored to provide more visible gateways, such as distinctive signage made of wood or stone strategically placed at village or hamlet gateways to greet visitors. Interpretative signage can also highlight the historic qualities of the regions villages and hamlets.

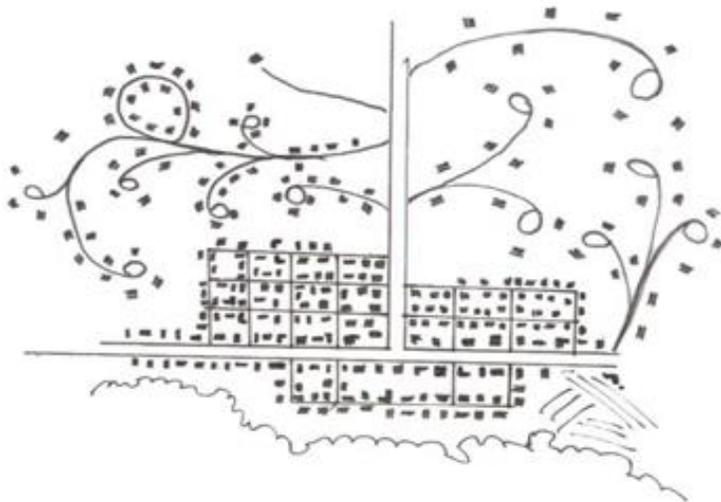
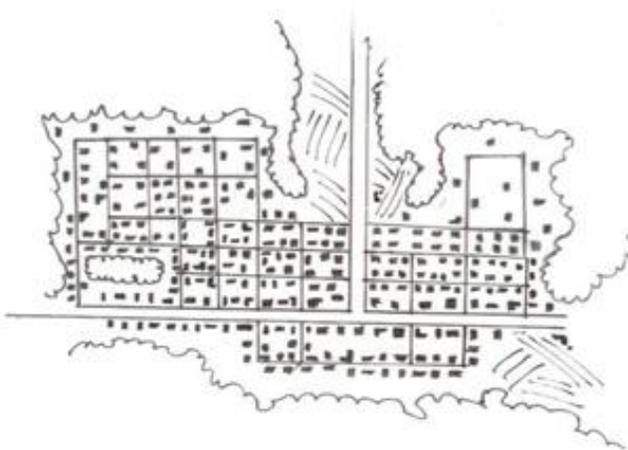
**GOAL 6. ENCOURAGE TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN AT VILLAGE AND HAMLET EDGES**

As areas at village and hamlet edges have been developed, the form of development typically does not possess any characteristics that relate it to the village/hamlet it borders. By

encouraging developers to design areas immediately outside the village or hamlet similar to the village areas, several goals are accomplished. First, the community is able to preserve more open space, since lot sizes would be smaller, and green areas at the borders of the project could conceivably serve as a greenbelt for the village or hamlet area. Second, the areas would better integrate into the village fabric, with sidewalks and scale similar to the villages. Third, the feasibility for providing utility service to these neighborhoods would be enhanced, since the distance utilities would need to be extended to serve the new neighborhoods would be much less. A series of conceptual images on the following page depict how town lands near villages and hamlets can be developed to reinforce village qualities.



The contrast between the historic development pattern of the Village of Evans Mills (top) and the “modern” development pattern of the nearby Pheasant Creek Apartments (bottom) is apparent in this aerial view.



This series of images looks at alternatives toward extending an existing village (top). In the preferred example (middle) the village grid system is preserved, and much of the forested and farm area at the village edge is preserved. In the other example (below) the forest and fields surrounding the village are removed and all newly created traffic is funneled onto the main roadways.

## **LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **HAMLET ZONING**

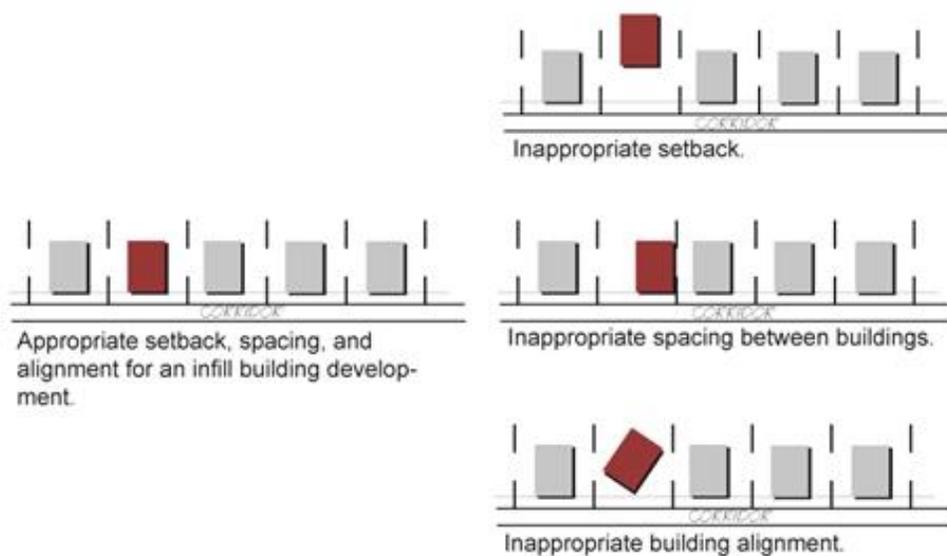
The town's zoning does not recognize its two major hamlets: Pamela and Calcium. The base zoning for the Hamlet of Pamela Four Corners is AR (Agricultural Rural Residential) and for Calcium, R-1 and R-2 residential. While all three of these zoning districts allow a variety of uses, including 1-family (all three districts) and 2-family residential (AR and R-2), the zoning districts do not in any way differentiate these hamlet areas from surrounding non-hamlet areas of town. The town should consider adopting new zoning districts that are hamlet-specific and that encourage development that strengthens the hamlet character of these areas. Without public sewer and water, it may be more challenging to encourage hamlet-scale development patterns in Pamela.

The following guidelines set forth basic principals of hamlet development:

- Cul-de-sacs should be prohibited where connections between streets can be made, except where such connections cannot be reasonably made or do not serve the overall public good of LeRay. The public good served by connecting streets includes, but is not limited to: 1) The safety and convenience conferred on pedestrians and drivers by providing more connectivity and options for movement; and 2) by building on the established character of village and hamlet areas, which derives in large part from an interconnected street grid.
- Streets should be appropriately scaled to neighborhood dimensions.
- Residential and garage structures should be appropriately scaled to their respective lots.
- Setbacks of structures should be consistent from lot to lot and should adhere to a maximum setback standard to ensure that overly large setbacks do not compromise the hamlet/village scale.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Treed planting strips between the sidewalk and the street should be provided where feasible. Tree plantings should be appropriate to the constraints of their setting, including width of planting strip and existing utilities.
- Lighting should be provided in the planting strip between sidewalk and street. The lighting should be appropriately scaled and shielded. Light sources should be chosen to prevent glare and harsh lighting conditions.
- Porches and windows are preferred over large, flat expanses of blank walls and/or street facing garages.
- In general, backyards should not face public streets.
- Large expanses of asphalt, concrete or other impervious surface treatments should be minimized, particularly within front yards.
- All new overhead utilities should be buried. When opportunities present themselves, existing overhead utilities should also be buried;
- Mixed uses (residential and commercial) are encouraged in hamlet centers.



**VILLAGE-HAMLET TRANSITION AREAS**

While in most villages, there is a defined sense of building form and layout, once development moves across the village boundary, typically this form is quickly supplanted by large lot, suburban style development with little transition between the two areas. Establishing a Village/Hamlet transition zoning district would encourage more compatibility between established areas of settlement and new development. In such transition areas, development that extends the existing street grid into newly developed areas adjacent to villages could be encouraged. Similar design guidelines and practices to those set forth above under “Hamlet Zoning” should be employed in Village-Hamlet transition areas.



**EAST OF EVANS MILLS**

The area between Evans Mills and Fort Drum, along Route 26, is in a Land Use Planning Zone (LUPZ) noise contour associated with Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield (see Map 17 on page 94) much of this area is currently zoned as a Developing District (DD). The Developing District allows for a variety of uses with site plan approval, including mobile home parks, multiple family dwellings, research and office facilities, and restaurants. While the LUPZ noise contour represents the lowest level of noise impact, the town should work with Fort Drum to ensure that future land uses in this area are both supportive of the adjacent village yet appropriate for noise levels associated with an LUPZ noise contour. Keeping this in mind, it is recommended that the area within the DD that is currently served by public sewer and water in the town (the area adjacent to the southwest corner of Evans Mills between US Route 11 and Steinhilber Road) remain in the DD, while rezoning the remaining existing DD areas, including all areas within the LUPZ noise contour, to a zoning district that permits uses compatible with Fort Drum activities.

**EAST OF BLACK RIVER**

This area, generally described as north of the Black River, south of the Fort Drum boundary, and east of the Village of Black River, extends along Maple and Pearl Streets. Most of the area is currently zoned for residential use, while a portion of the district, near the intersection of Pearl and Maple Streets, is currently zoned for various business uses. Most of the properties are



The area east of the Village of Black River between Pearl Street (NYS Route 283) and Maple Street would be ideally suited for an extension of the traditional neighborhood design seen in the village.



Consistent setbacks, architecture, and unifying elements such as the white picket fence, strengthen village/hamlet character (Dryden, NY)

currently being used for residential uses, with some preserved lands along the Black River.

While much of the land is outside all Aircraft Noise Contour zones, parts of this area are affected by noise created by aircraft activities at Wheeler Sack Army Air Field. The plan envisions that, except for areas indicated as Aircraft Noise Contour Zone 2 map (Page 94), an extension of the hamlet/village form should be desired. This is due to two factors. First, sewer and water service currently exists in or can be easily extended to these areas. In addition, the area is accessible to Fort Drum via Gate 4. Because of these factors, it is sensible to direct development into this area.

## TOWN CHARACTER AREAS: KEY RIVERS

### KEY RIVERS OVERVIEW

Rivers and streams in LeRay are spread throughout the town. Existing rivers and stream areas include the Indian and Black Rivers, Perch Creek, West Creek, Black Creek, other tributaries and streams and surrounding lands, as indicated on Map 16e on the following page. These rivers and streams provide key aspects of the character for LeRay and its residents. The rivers provide scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, such as fishing, hiking, and kayaking. While there may be opportunities for the rivers and streams in the Town of

LeRay to be utilized as sources for renewable energy, particularly along the Black River, these uses could interfere in the recreational uses for the rivers and streams, as well as interfere in any conservation efforts along these corridors. A balance between these goals is desired, and a better understanding of the capacity of the Black River to provide additional hydropower needs to be explored.

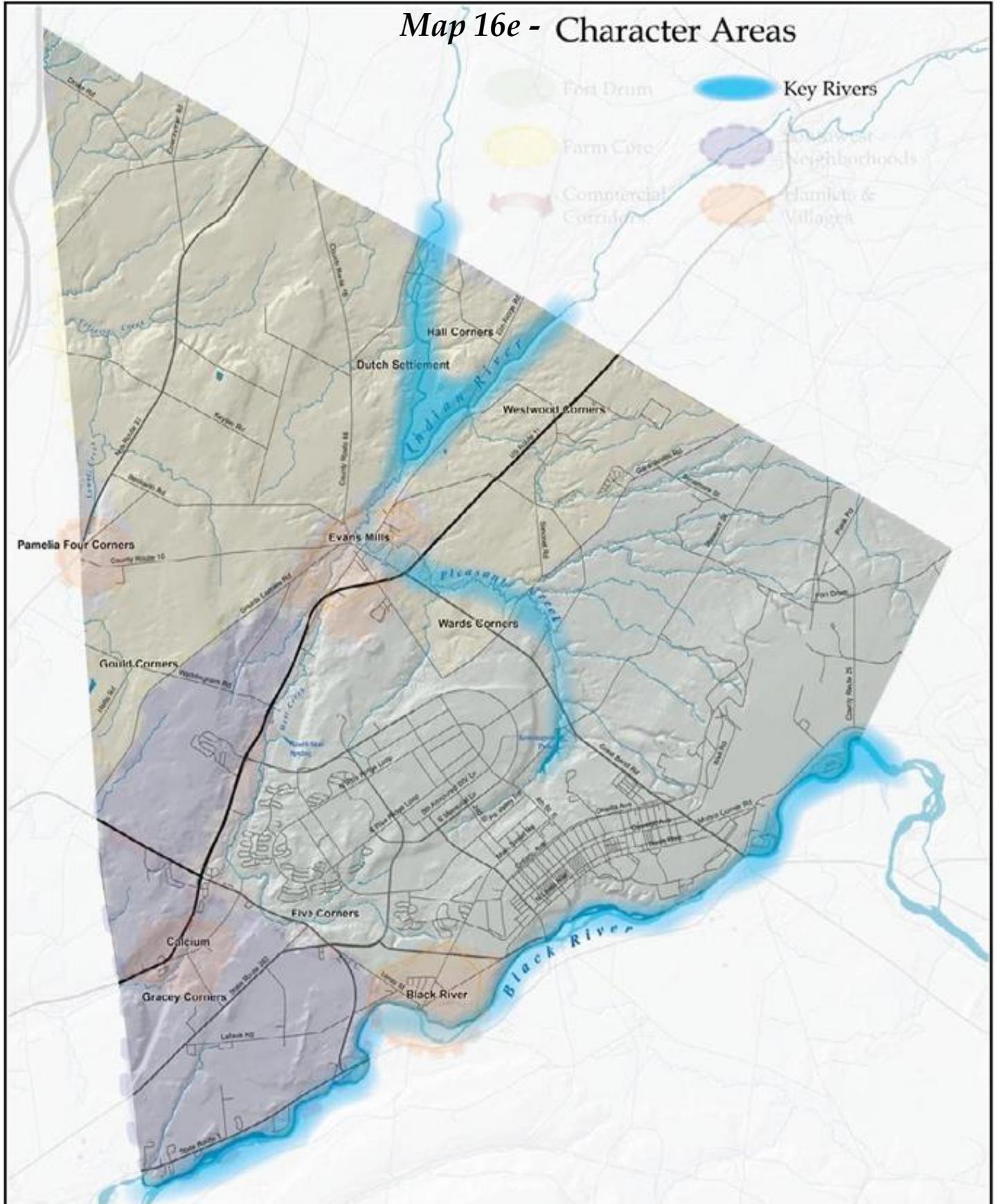
### KEY RIVERS

### CHARACTER AREA

### GOALS

1. Focus Future Parkland Toward Rivers
2. Protect Significant Natural Resource Areas
3. Investigate Hydropower Opportunities

Map 16e - Character Areas



## **KEY RIVERS CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

Much like the Town Wide Vision Statement above, the Key Rivers Vision Statement expresses the town's vision for the future of these areas of town, as well as an acknowledgment of the qualities that make it special and unique. The vision statement operates at a broad level, serving as the foundation for more specific goals and strategies, as well as a guide for future decision making in the town.

### **KEY RIVERS CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

The Black and Indian Rivers and their tributaries add to the natural beauty of the Town of LeRay while providing town residents with recreational opportunities. Enhancements to the river areas should improve the recreation options of town residents while not detracting from the natural value of these water bodies. The rivers and streams, particularly the Black River, are viable facilities as sources for limited hydropower to provide renewable energy to the region, yet the importance of the recreational and conservation uses along these waterways is of paramount importance to the town. It is the goal of the Town of LeRay to balance the utilization of the river as a hydrological power source with the ability of LeRay's residents to use the river and stream corridors for both recreational and conservation uses.

## **KEY RIVERS GOALS & STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL I. FOCUS FUTURE PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE AREA TOWARD RIVER LOCATIONS WHENEVER POSSIBLE**

At the present time, there is a limited amount of river-oriented park space in the Town of LeRay. Other than areas on Poor's Island and Overlook Park in the Village of Black River, there are no existing park facilities along the riverfront areas of LeRay. LeRay residents and area visitors can use the stream lands for a variety of recreational uses. At the same time, a trail system can be established along the sides of the rivers and streams, providing alternative

means of transportation and enhancement of recreational and social options in a pastoral environment. As part of this trail system, put-in points can be established where feasible so canoeists, kayakers, and fishermen can easily and safely gain access to the Indian and Black Rivers for recreational uses.

**Strategy I.A. Work with private landowners to provide access to properties along the river for trails and fishing areas**

**Strategy I.B. Provide put in sites at regular intervals along the Black and Indian rivers**

In particular, the town should explore improving Graham Park, a currently underutilized, town-owned property along the Black River and Route 3.

**Strategy I.C. Address river access as part of a potential park and recreation master plan**

**Strategy I.D. Consider undertaking a New York State Department of State waterfront visioning plan**

**GOAL 2. PROTECT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS**

At the foundation of LeRay is a thriving environment of large tracts of woodlands, scenic views, wooded hills and ridges, streams, ponds, and wetlands, and diverse wildlife habitats. In addition to working agriculture, these resources are some of the most significant contributing factors to the unique character of LeRay, particularly along its rivers and streams. While current town regulations form a base for protection, expanded regulations and policies could help to ensure that these features are maintained as the town grows. Such regulations need not focus exclusively on reducing development, but explore how to better arrange development on the landscape to preserve environmental features and town character. In addition to water quality protection efforts discussed above, the key elements of the town's natural resources program should focus on:

- **Conservation of large tracts of woodlands** to avoid fragmentation of the limited number of woodland properties in LeRay, both in this character area and elsewhere in LeRay. A particular focus of these efforts should be the targeting of large, unbroken tracts of wooded areas and stream corridors.
  
- **Protection of scenic, wooded hills and ridges** from significant development.
  
- **Maintenance of wildlife habitat** to promote these efforts, LeRay should work closely with interested and willing landowners, local land trusts such as the 1000 Islands Land Trust, the US Army through its ACUB program, and other partners to identify potential conservation projects and funding opportunities.

A detriment to the ability to use the river for recreational uses such as fishing and kayaking is the threat of pollution in the town's streams from industrial and large-scale agricultural uses. While there are limited industrial uses currently present in LeRay, agriculture, despite the loss of farmlands in recent years, remains a key industry in LeRay. These farms, for the most part, are a low-density use of lands from a human standpoint. However, due to the intensity and scope of certain agricultural uses, a great deal of manure, fertilizers, and other pollutants can be created by larger-scale farms. If these waste products and enhancements are not treated in a safe and efficient manner, or if there are not means of limiting the discharge of nutrients from the fields into the river ecosystem, the area's rivers will be altered substantially, with algae blooms and pollutants serving to slowly starve and eliminate native flora and fauna, including the existing pike, bass, and trout in the Black and Indian Rivers, Perch Creek, and other tributary streams.

A secondary threat to these waterbodies and the creatures living within are invasive or non-native plant and animal species. Many of these species of plant and aquatic life, brought from other regions either accidentally or purposely, have made themselves at home along the streams and lands of the North Country. Encountering no natural predators, the invasive species have slowly killed off native flora and fauna via their aggressive tactics. Over time, the native fish and wildlife are eliminated. It is imperative that in order to retain the existing habitat and ecosystem that the spread of exotic and invasive species be stopped and eradicated, and

the existing habitat be restored to the greatest possible extent. There are several existing programs overseen by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the US Department of the Interior that can help to provide financial assistance in the eradication process in areas where invasive species might be a concern in LeRay.

**Strategy 2.A. Work with local farms and businesses to eliminate the release of natural and man-made pollutants into the town's rivers and streams**

**Strategy 2.B. Work with local residents and state and regional wildlife experts to eliminate the spread of invasive species in and along the town's rivers and streams**

**GOAL 3. INVESTIGATE HYDROPOWER OPPORTUNITIES**

A portion of the areas adjacent and within the rivers and streams of LeRay are situated in a way that allows their utilization for hydropower. At the present time, there are two hydropower facilities on the Black River, one in the vicinity of the Village of Black River and one in the vicinity of the Hamlet of Felts Mills in the Town of Rutland, along the southern border of LeRay. As energy costs continue to rise, the Black River continues to serve as a low cost, renewable, local energy alternative. An assessment of the existing hydropower facilities and opportunities for additional or expanded facilities could be undertaken. Any plans for expanded facilities would have direct benefits for town citizens and would be environmentally responsible.

## TOWN CHARACTER AREA: FORT DRUM

### FORT DRUM OVERVIEW

This character area is defined by the boundaries of Fort Drum, the largest military facility in the northeastern United States, as shown on the Map 16f on page 148. While the Town of LeRay has limited influence on the events and development that occur within the boundaries of Fort Drum, due to the scale of the fort in relation to the town as a whole and its influence over the remainder of the town, it is necessary to address Fort Drum within the greater framework of LeRay.

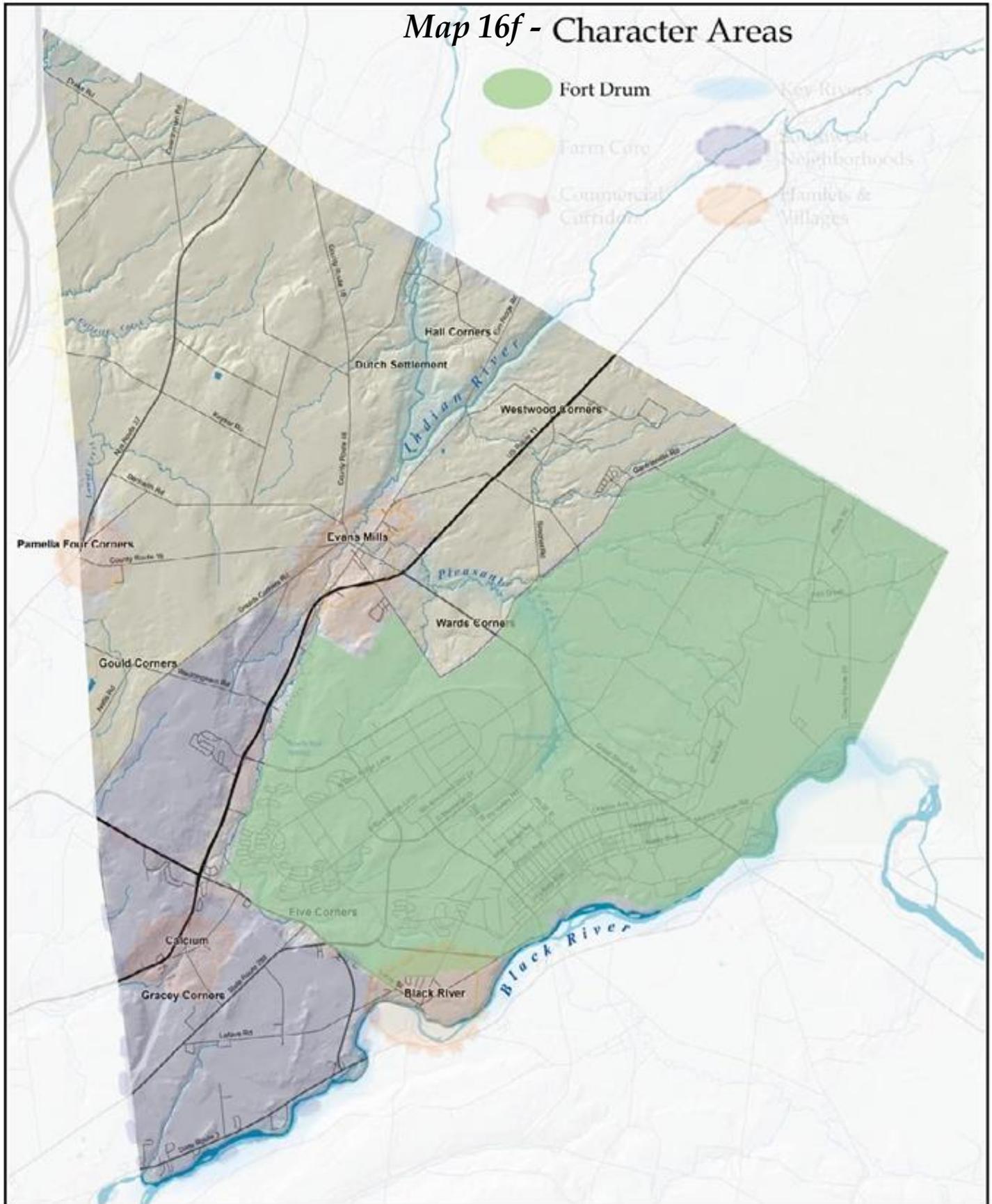
Fort Drum personnel and their families, both on-post and in the civilian areas of LeRay constitute the majority of the town's residents. Over 60 percent of LeRay residents live on Fort Drum, and approximately two-thirds of residents employed in LeRay are soldiers at Fort Drum. A key goal in the next several years is to work

with Fort Drum officials in ways that provide both increased opportunities and an enhanced quality of life for LeRay residents while also providing Fort Drum with the means to continue to meet their goals regarding the training that occurs on post and the overall quality of life for soldiers and the families residing on post.

#### **FORT DRUM CHARACTER AREA GOALS**

- 1) Improve communications between Fort Drum and the Town of LeRay.
- 2) Collaborate to improve multi-modal access between Fort Drum and LeRay.
- 3) Work with Fort Drum, Jefferson County, Jefferson Community College, and other universities to study the feasibility of locating a JCC Branch Campus and higher education center in LeRay.
- 4) Work to jointly identify areas that are appropriate for land acquisition as part of the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program.

Map 16f - Character Areas



## **FORT DRUM CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT**

While Fort Drum is not under the direct jurisdiction of the Town of LeRay, it is still important for the town to have a vision for the area that expresses the relationship between Fort Drum and the LeRay community, as well as to serve as a basis for future decision making and interaction between the fort and the town.

### ***FORT DRUM CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENT***

The Town of LeRay is proud of its proximity to Fort Drum. The soldiers stationed at the base and their families contribute vitality, economic stimulus, diversity, and employment to many of the Town's residents. A goal for the Town of LeRay is to enhance communication and to find ways to collaborate with Fort Drum in ways that benefit both Fort Drum and LeRay. By working to strengthen this bond, the Town of LeRay can continue to evolve and grow in a way that allows both military and non-military residents to take pride in their community.

## **FORT DRUM GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL I. BETTER DEFINE A COMMUNICATION PROCESS BETWEEN FORT DRUM AND THE TOWN OF LERAY**

**Strategy I.A. Formalize documentation with Fort Drum planning officials that defines a protocol between the base and the Town of LeRay regarding planning issues that could affect both parties**

This could be structured similar to intergovernmental coordination policies between adjoining towns.

**Strategy 1.B. Ensure that both Fort Drum and the town have up-to-date, adequate information to proactively plan and collaborate on encroachment and quality of life issues**

At the present time, an informal communication process between the town and Fort Drum exists. As part of this process, the base planner regularly attends planning board meetings, provides input on projects within LeRay that may affect the base, and is in frequent interaction with the town's Community Development Coordinator. The town and the fort should continue to work toward implementing a mutually beneficial process for interaction to recognize each other's role in the community. Providing the town with information on encroachment concern areas is especially important, to ensure that the town can proactively plan to avoid encroachment conflicts. Similarly, the fort and town have a common interest in ensuring that the town grows and develops in a manner that increases the quality of life for residents, both those affiliated directly with Fort Drum, as well as those who are not.

**GOAL 2. COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE MULTI-MODAL ACCESS BETWEEN FORT DRUM AND LERAY**

**Strategy 2.A. Work with Fort Drum to provide safe, secure means for pedestrians and bicyclists to access Fort Drum**

The only safe means of access to and from Fort Drum is via automobile, since pedestrian and bicycle access to the base are along the same roadways as auto traffic. Consequently there is no sidewalk access to the base. While wide shoulders exist both on base and in LeRay that can provide for bicycle travel, due to the high auto speeds, this is not safe. In other areas, such as adjacent to the village of Black River, access is only available during limited hours. By working to identify locations for, and provide secure access to pedestrian entrance points, the likelihood of use of existing and future sidewalks and trails, both on the base and in LeRay will increase.

**Strategy 2 B. Actively cooperate in local and regional efforts to provide transit service to the Fort Drum area**

The nearest existing form of public transportation to the Town of LeRay is in the City of Watertown. This may change with a proposed public transit line between Gouverneur

and Watertown, with stops in between, that is expected to begin in February 2009. With the existing commercial and residential facilities and proposed growth along the US 11 corridor and the impending construction of the Fort Drum Connector, a park & ride area in conjunction with a shopping area along Route 11 near the Main Gate entrance to the base or a shuttle service connecting the apartment and commercial complexes along Routes 11 & 342 and on-post would be a valuable starting point in encouraging residents to utilize public transit on a limited basis. Also, with the continuing growth in the number of multi-unit residential developments in LeRay, density will soon exist to provide a localized circulator between the base and the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area (page 105). This system could serve as a starting point toward the implementation of a larger system that could eventually integrate access to the villages of Evans Mills and Black River, the City of Watertown, and adjoining towns. The system would serve to provide access for soldiers living on-post and their families to commercial areas of LeRay. A proposed transit system would also limit auto dependency for soldiers and family members, lowering the amount of traffic on area roads.

**GOAL 3. STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF LOCATING A JCC BRANCH CAMPUS AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER IN LERAY**

As LeRay grows and attempts to diversify its economic base away from its current dependency on Fort Drum, there is an increasing need for residents to be sufficiently educated in order to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving regional and global job market. At the same time, there is increasing military demand for a flexible, quick thinking soldier in combating resourceful opposition in the Global War on Terrorism, which benefits from classroom education in both a military and non-military setting. Because of these changes, a significant portion of the residents of LeRay and the surrounding region, both military and civilian, have looked for means of furthering their educations. This has included taking courses at Jefferson Community College, both at their Watertown campus and at the Fort Drum Education Center, and at other colleges and universities offering courses at Fort Drum and at other locations in the region. While this has allowed residents to stay home and gain the education to compete in the greater marketplace while continuing to work, there is the possibility that these options may not always be easily accessible to area residents. If an event similar to the events of September 11, 2001 were to take place, access to the base could be limited.

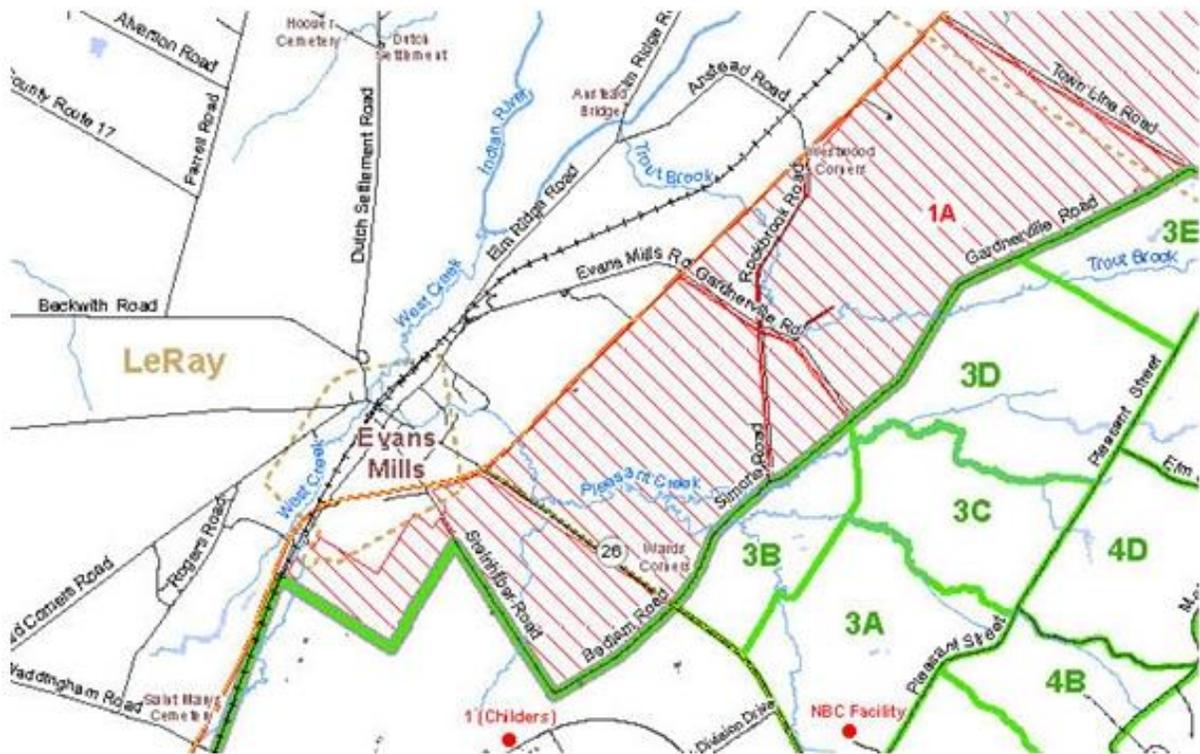
The offerings that are available at Fort Drum, particularly for Upper Level (junior and senior classes) and graduate students, are currently limited due to both space constraints and the deployment schedule limiting opportunities for soldiers to partake in non-military classroom training. Increased demand for classroom education at Fort Drum has caused JCC and the other educational institutions using Fort Drum facilities to have outgrown the existing education center on the base. These entities, particularly JCC, are seeking a larger facility to continue their educational mission as the military and region's needs evolve and change. While existing facilities in the town and region, such as Calcium Primary School and the Indian River High School in Philadelphia are currently utilized for college classes, and could be further used for some of these needs, JCC and other schools would prefer to have a facility that can be used by the various higher education institutions in both the daytime and nighttime hours in order to accommodate a variety of schedules and programs. By working with these institutions to provide a branch campus and higher education center in LeRay, the ability of the Town of LeRay to diversify its employment base will be enhanced and town residents will be able to further their educational horizons to better compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Also, soldiers will be able to gain the educations that they need to better defend our nation's interests in the world.

**GOAL 4. WORK TO JOINTLY IDENTIFY AREAS THAT ARE APPROPRIATE FOR LAND ACQUISITION AS PART OF THE ARMY COMPATIBLE USE BUFFER (ACUB) PROGRAM,**

As part of the ACUB program, Army planners, in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, various state and national governmental agencies, and local governments, are working to find lands that have significant environmental features such as wetlands or steep slopes or lands that are currently home to or have the potential to become habitat for endangered or threatened species such as the Indiana bat or Henslow's Sparrow. These issues, in particular the presence of endangered and threatened species, have the potential to negatively affect soldier training and operations on the Fort, since in LeRay, many of the lands that are most desired for development due to its proximity to Fort Drum and the proposed Fort Drum Connector are also key summer habitat areas for the Indiana bat or habitat areas for other endangered or threatened species. If suitable habitat is not preserved in off-post areas, Fort Drum will become the only habitat area in the region, further limiting the ability of the military to train. In LeRay, several of these areas have already been identified north of Fort Drum

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

between US 11 and the base, as shown on the accompanying map. Some of these habitat areas may also double as passive recreation amenities, such as trails. Linking such areas together and making them accessible is a goal of the town (see the Southwest Neighborhoods character area discussion above - Goal 3, Goal 4 - and the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area series starting on page 105).



Priority ACUB areas in LeRay. Fort Drum may also consider ACUB projects outside of the priority areas, particularly those with a habitat conservation component.

While some lands have been preliminarily identified by both the Army and by town staff, it is important that the town continues to work with Fort Drum to identify suitable lands for this program in ways that create benefits for both Fort Drum and the Town of LeRay and its residents - and of course the landowners who choose to participate. The benefits can take a variety of forms: the preservation of farmlands, the enhancement of park and trail opportunities, or in the preservation of the Indiana bat and its habitat. By looking at lands that can both preserve the current agricultural lifestyle in much of LeRay, by providing protection of key habitat areas, and by allowing training at Fort Drum to continue into the future, LeRay and Fort Drum can meet their common goals.

**PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK**

## **CHAPTER V - GREEN PLANNING**

In addition to land use and town policies associated with specific character areas, one topic area emerged in the planning process as cutting across character areas - Green Planning. The concept of Green Planning is being embraced by more and more communities at the local level as concerns about the environment and climate change mount and as people around the world are realizing that we are all connected as residents of one planet and that the impacts of local communities can have a direct impact on the collective quality of life and the environment across political and cultural boundaries.

### **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The use of energy in the United States continues to increase while at the same time energy costs are rising. As of July, 2008, crude oil was at an all-time high of \$143 per barrel. In the United States, the consumption of energy is attributed to two major sectors: buildings and transportation. Much attention has been given to creating more fuel-efficient vehicles to help reduce transportation-related energy usage. However, there are more effective ways to approach transportation-side energy usage at the local and regional scales - through the coordination of land use and transportation. By creating communities where people can walk to the store or take a bus to work, we can have a much greater impact on energy usage.

On the other end of the spectrum, our buildings account for a large majority of energy consumption in the US. According to the U.S. Green Building Council, buildings in the United States account for 36 percent of total energy use and 65 percent of electricity consumption. Buildings have many other impacts ranging from greenhouse gas emissions to raw material usage. As energy prices continue to increase, the costs of constructing and operating buildings continue to increase, placing burdens on homeowners, governments, and businesses.

The costs of unsustainable land development, planning and building construction can be immense and they are often unknowingly imposed on the entire community. For example, if not planned and sited properly, development can impact natural resources such as drinking water, requiring the construction of costly water treatment systems. Several major research studies have suggested that there is a connection between sprawl and health problems such as obesity, because these developments are typically disconnected from other destinations and designed

for automobile travel. In contrast, mixed-use communities provide opportunities for people to walk, bike or use a combination of transportation modes to travel between neighborhoods, and to stores, schools, offices and other destinations.

Rising energy costs and the impacts of our (national and local) land use and transportation decisions affect families and businesses in everyday activities - at the gas pumps or in the grocery store. Rising energy costs also effect our local governments -for example by costing more to plow the roads, pave the streets, or heat the schools. These costs eventually trickle down to the taxpayer.

Each building can play a part in reducing the energy usage, greenhouse gas emissions and material usage by employing green building techniques. The North Country has been a pioneer in the use of green building practices related to energy conservation. Homes are well insulated and sited to take advantage of solar heat gain. Roofs are pitched and metal roofs are used to address the issues of heavy snowfall. These types of regionally-appropriate building techniques have been around for centuries. In recent years, most newly built homes, both locally and nationally, have been built to a standardized template that places little regard for regional vernacular. A home built in Watertown is, for the most part, similar to a home built in Florida, with the same design features included. In many cases, the result is excessive electrical or natural gas use due to air conditioning or heating needs that could be otherwise mitigated if local building customs were adhered to.

It is also important to note that while green building techniques can substantially reduce our energy usage, the careful siting of development in areas with existing infrastructure and public transportation systems is the most important decision that can be made to reduce our collective impacts. Green building techniques are not only for new buildings - they can be used to retrofit existing buildings. Whether a building is new or old, green building practices should be monitored to ensure that they are operating effectively over their lifetime.

## CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The creation of healthier, more environmentally sustainable communities requires the cooperation of many different players. The following list begins at the broadest level, with “regional planning” strategies to address development patterns and practices that transcend municipal boundaries, and concludes with strategies for maintaining “healthy indoor air quality” for individual structures. Communities interested in creating healthy communities should diversify their approach by implementing strategies along the entire spectrum, from broad regional strategies, to the nuts-and-bolts strategies relating to buildings and indoor environments.

1. Thoughtful **regional planning** to ensure that new development is sited in or near areas with existing infrastructure, services, and public transportation systems.

Regional planning considerations might include:

- Locating housing near where people work and near schools
- Preserving large areas of significant resources such as agricultural soils, drinking water and forests
- Concentrating development in areas with existing services
- Developing regional multi-modal transportation systems

2. **Neighborhood scale planning** to ensure diversity and connectivity within and among communities.

Neighborhood planning considerations might include:

- Planning for mixed-use development that allows people to pick up groceries or other necessities without making long trips
- Developing interconnected street networks that allow people and children to walk or bike from one neighborhood to another
- Making safe pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and schools
- Linking neighborhoods to trails and bus stops

3. Careful **site planning** to minimize the impacts on the environment and reduce the development “footprint.” A building should be sited in the area that will have the least impact on the environment.

Site planning considerations might include:

- Reuse of previously developed sites
- Use of stormwater management best practices that filter pollutants before they reach groundwater or surface water
- Preservation of mature vegetation and trees
- Managing erosion during construction
- Protect existing natural features such as wetlands, rivers, and stream channels, including riparian and wetland buffer areas, aquifers, etc. These areas serve to improve water quality and maintain biological integrity of aquatic resources as well as provide areas for recreational activities and wildlife habitat

4. Using materials and techniques to **conserve energy**.

Energy conservation techniques might include:

- Using passive solar orientation to take advantage of the sun’s heat in the winter months
- Selecting renewable local building materials, such as local timber, which does not have to be shipped across the country
- Use of appropriate alternative energy sources such as geothermal, solar or wind power
- Use of energy-efficient lighting and energy efficient appliances
- Use of high R-value insulation materials

5. Using materials and techniques to **conserve water**.

Water conservation techniques might include:

- Using water saving shower heads, faucets and toilets
- Recycling of greywater (wastewater from sinks, tubs, or laundry machines)

- Using native plants and grasses that require less watering
6. Using materials and techniques to ensure **healthy indoor air quality** (90% of our time is spent indoors).

Techniques to preserve indoor air quality, and thus maintain healthy indoor environments, might include:

- Selecting low-emitting building materials
- Using natural ventilation systems
- Making sure to flush out the building before it is occupied to remove noxious or toxic gases present from the settling of carpeting and other building materials.

## **IMPLEMENTING GREEN BUILDING AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

There are a number of ways that green building practices can be implemented in a community. Below is a short summary.

1. Many communities are taking a closer look at their **zoning and land use regulations**, which are sometimes not supportive of green building practices. Review and analysis of town code can help to uncover potential barriers for green building and site development. For example, regulations may require excessive parking and not allow for the use of pervious pavements or unpaved overflow parking areas. Another example would be a regulation that prohibits wind mills on farms and rural areas, or makes it excessively difficult for a landowner to erect a windmill. In the case of LeRay, care should be taken to site windmills, or other like tall structures, in areas that do not impair Fort Drum's training and operations.
2. Many communities make efforts to **design and construct public buildings - such as town halls, schools, and community centers - using green buildings practices**. Green buildings can be cost-effective for a community and they also serve as a model for other development. The LEED Green Building Rating System® is the most

commonly-used standard for green building in the United States. However, there are other standards such as the US Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Home program. Some communities have even developed their own set of standards.

While a community must always consider its fiscal responsibility to taxpayers, it can be wise to spend a little extra to evaluate the cost savings of green building over time. Many communities have found that while the initial costs of a green building may be higher than a conventional building, the long-term cost savings can be substantial.

3. Some communities have taken steps to influence the private market by creating **incentives to promote green building practices**. For example, the Town of Acton, MA offers a density bonus for buildings that achieve LEED certification in the East Acton Village District.
4. Some communities are **requiring new development to adhere to green building standards** if it meets certain thresholds, such as commercial square footage. For example, the Town of Babylon, NY adopted a local law that requires LEED certification for new construction of commercial, industrial, or multiple family buildings over 4,000 square feet. The town refunds the certification fees to the developer.
5. **Education** is a major component of green building. Education extends across the spectrum- from homeowners, to town departments, builders, and contractors. Promotion of green building alternatives and their benefits to homeowners is one way to influence decisions. Hands-on training for all departments of town government - from the highway department to the building inspector - can help to ensure coordination and eliminate conflicts between policies and programs. Promotion of green building practices to developers can also be done by providing information when they first inquire about a development project. Information on existing state and federal programs and grant opportunities, such as those offered by the NYS Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA) can also be provided at Town Hall.

Green practices and resource conservation can be implemented in many ways at the local level. Town departments and programs should be coordinated in order for effective municipal actions to take place. For example, some of the types of actions that might be taken at the municipal level by the town highway department include:

- Transition highway vehicles to alternative fuels
- Landscape with native plants or avoid the use of invasive species
- Use recycled materials in road pavement
- Evaluate the potential impacts of road salts or highway mowing on important species or natural communities
- Develop effective stormwater management systems that also serve as wildlife habitat

**PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK**

## **CHAPTER VI - TOWN-WIDE PRINCIPLES**

The following “Town-Wide Principals” summarize the town’s policies and priorities at a townwide level. The principals should be looked at as a guiding framework for future town actions and decisions.

### **I. MAINTAIN LERAY’S UNIQUE SENSE OF PLACE**

LeRay’s cultural characteristics and qualities help define its unique “sense of place” or identity. These features include rural corridors and roads, historic buildings and sites, the Villages of Black River and Evans Mills, small hamlets and neighborhood areas, residential neighborhoods along the Black River, and the open, rural character of the town’s agricultural areas. As the town grows and changes, special attention must be paid to the treatment of these areas and features. Future growth in rural LeRay should find a balance between landowner needs and flexibility and maintenance and enhancement of the area’s unique sense of place.

### **2. FOCUS DEVELOPMENT ON AREAS BEST SUITED FOR GROWTH AND CHANGE**

Future development within LeRay should be focused in areas that are most appropriate and suited to accommodate growth and change. Some of the key “ingredients” to consider include accessibility to water and sewer services, major roads, and existing growth zones such as the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area near Fort Drum. With the increase in fuel costs that has taken place over the last several years and its proximity to Fort Drum, it is likely that future residential and commercial development will continue to locate in this area. By focusing growth in these areas, and encouraging development to occur in a way that will promote a range of transportation and housing options, the ability to preserve remaining agricultural areas and environmentally sensitive areas in LeRay will be enhanced significantly and the town will create new areas in which to live and work that will contribute to quality of life for years to come.

### **3. UTILIZE A CONSERVATION DESIGN APPROACH FOR DEVELOPMENT**

New development can have a major impact on the resources and features that the town's residents consider special and unique. In order to allow for an appropriate level of development that does not adversely impact LeRay's sense of place, all significantly -sized development should utilize the **conservation design** approach for site planning and layout whenever possible. In addition to protecting scenic views, as discussed above, the conservation approach will help maintain important water resources, provide for usable open space, and generally ensure that development considers the natural environment and agricultural uses as the key components to site layout, not the maximization of units according to minimum lot sizes and setback requirements.

### **4. LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY GROWTH**

The scale and scope of development in the Town of LeRay presents not only challenges to the town, but also opportunities. In other communities, the often scattered, piecemeal nature of growth can make it hard to develop an overall community vision. In contrast, the Town of LeRay has an opportunity to develop a vision and approach for absorbing growth that results in coordinated, high quality living and working environments that relate to one another. Larger development projects also present opportunities to provide key town amenities such as parks and trails. The key to successfully integrated growth will depend on a strong town vision for how it wants to look and feel moving forward.

New developments should be designed to be compact, walkable, provide for and/or allow a mix of land uses including neighborhood-scale commercial, a variety of housing types and options, meaningful public spaces, and architecture that is consistent with the town's historic building styles. This can be accomplished through establishment of **new traditional neighborhoods** that encourage these types of development as well as associated design guidelines that provide assistance in terms of street layout, site planning, and architectural styles. LeRay provides the community (and region) with opportunities for education, recreation, and general enjoyment of the outdoors, such as the areas along the Black and Indian Rivers. Building off of these resources and previous planning efforts and successes the town should work to:

- Provide for enhanced **community/pedestrian connections** throughout LeRay. These pedestrian connections should follow natural features and connect residential areas with parks, other recreation areas, and commercial centers;
- Create and enhance **low-impact recreation** opportunities, particularly those uses that do not adversely impact or require significant modification of the natural environment (e.g., horseback riding trails and off road bicycling, not amusement parks). To achieve these objectives (pedestrian connections and low-impact recreation), the town should investigate opportunities to formalize existing trail networks through a landowner incentive program and collaborate with adjoining towns to extend trail systems throughout the region;
- Plan for and provide **community facilities and active recreational amenities** such as parks, playgrounds and sports fields and courts. Such uses can anchor new neighborhoods and encourage walking and bicycling as an alternative to driving. Placing these facilities close to the people that will use them, is the best approach. Children, in particular, can benefit from easy access to such facilities - as can parents, who will be able to spend less time shuttling children back and forth to widely scattered destinations.

## **5. PARTNER WITH FORT DRUM FOR MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL SOLUTIONS FOR LERAY AND THE REGION**

Perhaps more than any other community in the North Country, the fate of the Town of LeRay is tied directly to that of Fort Drum. But the relationship is a two-way street. The fort relies on the town to provide key support systems for its personnel, such as places to live, work and shop. The fort also depends on the town to follow land use practices that do not hamper the fort's ability to carry out its training activities and operations. The town and the fort must continue to partner together to find mutual win-win solutions that benefit each other.

**PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK**

## **CHAPTER VII - STRATEGIC PLAN**

Recommendations are the centerpiece of the comprehensive plan. They synthesize all of the goals and policies into a single, coherent vision. The overall objective of the plan is to provide guidance for the town's future decision making.

### **PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **I. OVERALL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Establish a committee or task force to prioritize the comprehensive plan recommendations and initiate implementation. (Note: the town board should assume lead responsibility; however, the task force could also include members of different boards and committees such as the comprehensive plan advisory committee, the zoning board of appeals, the planning board, representatives of Fort Drum and the Villages of Black River and Evans Mills, as well as nonaffiliated individuals and volunteers).

The town should also review and update the plan on a regular basis to ensure that it continues to reflect the long-range planning objectives of the community. Specifically, the town should conduct an annual progress review detailing achievements; steps completed on goals, and reset or confirm implementation priorities

#### **2. CONDUCT A ZONING UPDATE**

Establish a zoning update task force to update and amend the town's zoning and development regulations. Such a task force should include individuals from various town boards and committees including but not limited to the town board, planning board, zoning board of appeals, other sub-committees, unaffiliated town volunteers, and town staff as appropriate (perhaps approximately 5 - 7 members). Also, at this point, town staff should be involved in applying for state and national grants that would provide a great deal of the funding for the zoning update. Potential aspects of a zoning update may include:

- Develop a town-wide Conservation Subdivision ordinance as the preferred method of residential development in LeRay outside of the mixed use, hamlet, and focus areas.

- Review permitted commercial uses outside of the Commercial Corridors character area with respect to density and use, particularly related to so-called “big box” development and other high intensity commercial uses.
- Establish new districts to implement the Character Areas (see Chapter IV of the plan).
- Continue to address transition areas adjacent to villages and hamlets. Identify appropriate uses, intensity and scale for transition areas.
- Establish Flexible Development Standards

Flexible development standards deviate from traditional “black and white” zoning regulations, in that they allow for flexibility and creativity to carry out a community’s vision for itself, while respecting the rights and ambitions of individual landowners. Flexible standards can focus more on the quality of development, rather than simple quantity. For instance, the same number of new homes can be arranged differently on the same property, to very different affect. In general, individual project densities are less of a concern than the overall stabilization of development intensity across LeRay and the shifting of allowable densities away from areas that are not served by public infrastructure in favor of areas where infrastructure is available. Meanwhile, in those parts of town with sewer, water and roadway infrastructure in place, a higher level of density can be allowed as a trade-off for the provision of other public amenities such as open space, parks, or other community needs. One method to accomplish this is the use of **sliding scale zoning**, a technique that rewards high quality development that includes a mixture of uses, provisions for community facilities, or enhanced multi-modal access between the proposed development and other areas of the town, through density bonuses. Using the sliding scale approach, projects that protect community-identified resources on the site (such as views and wildlife habitats) or include appropriate infrastructure would be allowed a higher overall density compared with projects that did not make similar efforts. This provides landowners with flexibility to develop at low densities while meeting minimum requirements or at a higher density through high quality site design.

### **3. DEVELOP A FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN**

Develop a town plan for the identification and protection of key farmland, in conjunction with the US Army's ACUB program and efforts currently underway in Jefferson County. The program should also identify appropriate funding mechanisms including grants, develop regulatory mechanisms for sensitive features such as stream corridors, establish developer incentives to protect open space during the development process, and address stewardship needs. The development of such a plan and implementation efforts will need to closely involve LeRay's landowners and farmers. Currently, New York State funding is available to help finance local farmland protection plans through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

### **4. IMPROVE AND AUGMENT PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

The Town of LeRay, in collaboration with the Villages of Black River and Evans Mills should refine efforts to assess its recreational needs. Emphasis should be placed on identifying suitable locations for parks and other active and passive recreational opportunities, identifying specific recreation needs of town residents of all ages, assessing the costs involved in the implementation of such a plan, and identifying ways that parks and recreation facilities can tie into existing and proposed neighborhood areas. Also as part of this process, a town-wide trail and pedestrian mobility plan should be implemented that would identify key access areas and connection points for pedestrian and multi-use trail facilities, emphasizing connections to schools, residential neighborhoods, villages, and shopping and employment centers.

A Parks and Recreation Master Plan should serve the following three broad purposes:

- Provide a rational basis for maintenance and improvement of parks, recreational and community facilities and services;
- Establish long-range goals for facility acquisition and improvement projects; and
- Identify a wide variety of funding sources for recreational enhancements.

Specific Park Strategies for the town include:

- Review the need, location, and programming of a neighborhood oriented community center. Initial concepts may include a year-round indoor recreational and educational facility which could incorporate game rooms, a gymnasium and arts and craft workshops, possibly in conjunction with efforts undertaken by Jefferson Community College. Also, space and facilities could be provided outdoors for skateboarding and other extreme sports;
- New facilities (i.e. youth centers, community pool, skating rink, additional child care programs) should be conveniently sited in or near residential neighborhoods or in village or hamlet areas, where they can be easily accessed by residents and contribute to the sense of community;
- While community and recreational facilities should be improved and/or expanded to meet the growing needs of the town, LeRay should seek opportunities for the efficient and multiple uses of facilities, as well as cooperation and collaboration with adjoining towns, in order to limit increases in costs;
- Continue to cooperate with New York State in preservation of the Coyote Flats State Forest;
- Offer recreation programs and facilities, which promote tourism and preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of the town as well as its natural resources;
- Pursue and promote the development of public/private regional recreational facilities and activities;
- Establish public access to LeRay's water resources including the Indian and Black Rivers;
- Because residential development is occurring at a fast pace, the following actions may be taken in addition to, or previous to completing a full park and recreation study:

- Review the town’s policy with respect to “fee in lieu of land” policies for parkland. Such fees should reflect current land values in the town. The town should also consider reviewing its policies with respect to recreation fees for multifamily housing. Currently, the town does not require a per unit fee for multifamily developments, although the town does require a land set-aside for the provision of private recreational amenities for the residents of an individual multifamily development.
  
- Prepare a separate or “advance phase” park study for park facilities in the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area. As noted elsewhere in the plan, the Route 342 & 11 area is the site of many new and proposed residential developments, many of which are larger in scale and density than what the town has experienced in previous years. Town residents have also expressed a desire for more park amenities, particularly as a venue for organized youth sports programs. Providing such a recreational facility in the Route 342 & 11 Focus Area, adjacent to the town’s most densely populated areas, was strongly supported by town residents. Because development is occurring so rapidly in this area, preparing an advance phase of an overall town parks and recreation plan that focuses on this area of town may be desirable. It only takes one inappropriately sited project today, to prevent the ability of the town to provide a public park in this area tomorrow.
  
- Prepare a town-wide trails and greenway plan. Similar to the provision of parks, developing a plan for trails and greenways will ensure that today’s development decisions do not unnecessarily compromise the town’s ability to provide a linked network of trails and parks tomorrow. The trail plan would build on existing trail assets such as the DANC-Calcium trail; look at ways to build trail segments in connection with development, parks and protected habitats; and identify other potential trail opportunities in the future - such as utility right-of-ways and discontinued rail right-of-ways.

## 5. ENSURE HOUSING CHOICE AND AFFORDABILITY

The Town of LeRay should work with Jefferson County, Fort Drum and local and regional housing agencies toward meeting both the town's and region's need for affordable housing. The town's strategies for affordable housing should build on the existing efforts that are being conducted regionally. Specific strategies include:

- PROMOTE AFFORDABLE HOUSING. In conjunction with Jefferson County, establish an affordable housing task force to consider these and additional strategies for the creation of affordable housing units in LeRay. Members of this task force should be a mix of community members, representatives from both of the villages, developers, and member of the various town advisory boards.
- PROMOTE A MIX OF HOUSING TYPES. A mix of housing types, including housing for the elderly, ensures a diversity of living environments across the spectrum of incomes, ages and lifestyles. The livability of these developments should be a prime concern in the review process. Large-scale developments for the elderly would be most appropriately located near the Commercial Corridor areas along Route 11, in areas adjoining villages or hamlets, and in areas near services.
- Cooperate with local housing agencies to assist LeRay in providing assistance for low to moderate-income housing; and maintenance and rehabilitation activities in the town. The town should coordinate such efforts with the Jefferson County owner-occupied rehabilitation program, which provides funds on a competitive basis to owner occupants seeking to upgrade and maintain their dwellings.



Affordable housing should be integrated with market-value homes. *Image source: [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org) / Dan Burden*

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Consider establishing an inclusionary zoning ordinance in larger subdivisions requiring that 10-20% of housing within a new development be affordable to residents making less than the regional median income, including any BAH funds, or some type of incentive program for the provision of affordable units. Provide density bonuses, a streamlined development process, or other incentives for achievement of this goal. A density bonus could also be put into place for the inclusion of senior housing within a community.
- Evaluate alternative types of housing that increase density and provide more diverse housing opportunities (e.g., small lots for single family detached units, two-family units, etc).
- Mobile homes - or manufactured housing - can be a source of affordable housing, provided that it meets standards for safety and energy efficiency. The town should review and, where necessary, revise its regulations governing mobile home regulations to bring them in line with current New York State Law. The town should also partner with the owners of mobile homes and parks to seek funding to improve and enhance such properties.
- Identify opportunities for accessory dwelling units (also known as "in-law apartments" or "granny flats") which could help supply a significant amount of workforce housing and housing to geobachelors stationed at Fort Drum within existing built areas and new neighborhoods.
- Review how changes in the town's zoning and development regulations might impact the provision of workforce housing. Furthermore, work to ensure that affordable housing units are not being concentrated in any one area, but dispersed throughout the town where infrastructure and services are available. Also, provide incentives and methods to reduce development costs to encourage the development community to provide such units.

- Provide for a range of senior housing opportunities in LeRay including independent and assisted living facilities. Place senior housing in close proximity to commercial uses, medical facilities, park lands, and community facilities to ensure easier access for seniors

## **6. IMPLEMENT GREEN PLANNING POLICIES**

- **TOWN ENERGY AUDIT:** The Town of LeRay should assess its current energy usage, both for town and community facilities and for town vehicles. Once this assessment is completed, a plan should be implemented for town facilities to utilize less energy. Some of the recommendations could include better insulating town facilities, changing traditional incandescent light bulbs to either energy saving, longer lasting fluorescent or LED bulbs, or by adding improvements to town facilities such as solar panels or green roofing for greater energy efficiency.
- Ensure new development does not adversely impact the town's drinking water resources. Work towards a goal of zero runoff from new development.
- Promote "low impact development" techniques such as bio-retention ponds, green roofs, and pervious paving materials during the site planning process. These techniques can greatly reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and pollution generated by new development.
- Maintain and protect LeRay's stream corridors and wetlands, both along the Black and Indian Rivers and along tributary streams within LeRay. Stream corridors and the related ecological habitat provide recreational and educational opportunities; beautification and aesthetic enhancement of the town; effective visual and auditory screening between adjoining land uses; and enhanced property values. Proper management of stream corridors will continue to enhance the quality of life for residents of the Town of LeRay. One tool to consider, a stream and wetlands preservation ordinance would provide a framework to develop buffer zones for the town's streams, flood plains and wetland areas as well as the requirements that minimize the land development within those

buffers. Also, provide opportunities for these corridor areas to be utilized as low impact recreational areas and for river access.

- Ensure that the town's zoning and subdivision regulations support the construction of small scale solar and wind power systems. This will allow for LeRay residents to lessen long-term energy costs for residents and businesses and to promote community sustainability.

## **7. DEVELOP A COORDINATED AND DIVERSE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

In much of LeRay, the only relatively safe means of access from point to point is via automobile, since minimal provision has been made for alternate forms of transportation in LeRay. In most areas of LeRay, no sidewalks are provided, bicyclists and horse drawn wagons are forced to coexist with vehicles moving at high speed and there is no public transportation available with the town. Several options should be assessed in addressing these deficiencies. First, all future subdivisions (over a certain size) and non-residential facilities should be required to provide for pedestrian and non automotive access along their site frontage. Also, by working in consultation with Jefferson County, Fort Drum, and other area agencies, studies should be undertaken that would lead to a regional transit system connecting LeRay, Fort Drum, and Watertown with reliable service. Finally, LeRay should invest in a trail and greenway system that connects neighborhoods, commercial areas, and civic areas in a way that will provide easier access to these areas. These concepts are discussed in more detail within the individual area recommendations.

- **COORDINATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS WITH LAND USE POLICY**
  - Require new developments to demonstrate that there will be adequate road capacity for traffic demands created by the new development before approval or issuance of permits.
  - As roadways are added, each roadway should be assessed in relation to the overall roadway system in LeRay.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Fully utilize all available federal and state funding for transportation enhancement projects.
  - Promote connectivity of roadways in new developments. An inter-connected street pattern will provide travel options and alternatives for local residents and should be encouraged. For example, where stub streets are provided or future connections are planned, limits on cul-de-sac lengths (currently 1,000') could be eased or removed.
  - As demands on the town's road network increases, the town should continue to prepare site specific road improvement plans to identify future roadway connections and patterns. A possible example would be in the areas of Route 11 north of the boundaries of the recent Route 11/342 Corridor Study after the construction of the Fort Drum Connector. These studies should also include a land use element describing appropriate uses and densities. This localized planning tool will help to ensure that future growth beneficially impacts the community and ties into the town's vision. When completed, these plans could be adopted as amendments to the comprehensive plan.
- **REVIEW AND ENHANCE ROADWAY DESIGN CRITERIA**
    - Consider allowing flexibility (e.g., smaller road widths) for development projects that protect open space, natural features, and important cultural resources through the conservation subdivision approach or other development/conservation techniques.
    - Develop new Roadway Standards that are "Context Sensitive" - i.e., that respond to and enhance the land use contexts that they serve. For instance, roads serving residential areas should possess different qualities than roads that serve commercial areas. Moreover, different road standards should be provided according to the road's function.

• **EXPLORE PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS**

At the present time, options for travel beyond automobile based uses are limited in LeRay. As mentioned elsewhere, there are limited pedestrian options in LeRay. Also, there is not public transit or regional bus service available to residents within the Town of LeRay. With Fort Drum continuing to assume a larger role in the community as an employment and residential center and the cost of gasoline continuing to rise, it is imperative that LeRay address its transportation needs in cooperation with Fort Drum, Jefferson County, neighboring municipalities, and other regional entities. The following strategies and policies should be implemented to provide LeRay residents a greater range of transportation options, both within the town and on a regional basis:

- Work with Fort Drum to assess the feasibility of shuttle service between Fort Drum and the Route 11 corridor, including stops at retail centers and multi-family complexes. A park and ride facility allowing users to park off-post and ride into base should be included.
- Work with Fort Drum, Jefferson County and St. Lawrence County on the development of a regional public transit network.
- Encourage land use densities and patterns that are conducive to public transit service.
- Encourage short term car-rental companies such as Flex Car to locate within LeRay to minimize the need of automobile ownership for residents of LeRay.

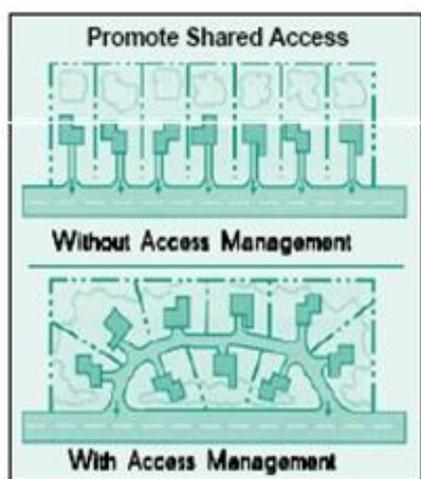
• **ENHANCE SIDEWALKS, CROSSWALKS AND TRAIL FACILITIES**

There are significant needs and issues related to the pedestrian environment within LeRay. These should continue to be addressed through the town's subdivision and site planning processes. The following strategies and policies should be implemented to enhance walking and bicycling within the town:

- Develop a town-wide sidewalk and trail plan for LeRay. The plan should focus on ways to enhance the town's on-road and off-road bicycle and pedestrian system. Components of the plan could include identification of priority areas for improvements, town-wide linkages, intermunicipal connections (e.g., rail trails, trails for ATV and snowmobile uses), funding, and an implementation schedule. (Note: this could be integrated with other open space and/or park planning efforts such as the recommended Greenprint plan and Park and Recreation plan.)
- In general, sidewalks should be provided in the more dense areas of town and connect residential zones to commercial areas, schools, and parks.
- Pedestrian crosswalks and bicycle crossings should be provided throughout the community as necessary for the safety, convenience and feasibility of pedestrian travel between the community's residential, shopping, employment, recreation and institutional sites.
- Provide access for alternative transportation (e.g., bicycle lanes and horse and wagon access), limit the conflicts between automobile and non-motorized forms of travel, and employ traffic calming techniques where applicable.

• **LIMIT DIRECT ACCESS TO COLLECTOR AND ARTERIAL ROADS IN LERAY**

In many areas of LeRay, all properties have direct access to collector and arterial roadways.



This leads to several issues, including impacting traffic flow and safety concerns. While the town has restrictions in place for commercial uses, in residential areas there are no such restrictions. By designing small-scale roads that would tie into the primary roadway at each end of a subdivision, options for access would be provided and conflict between highspeed roadway traffic and lower speed neighborhood traffic would be minimized.

## **8. SUPPORT THE REVITALIZATION OF EXISTING CENTERS**

The town's existing development sites, particularly those in or adjacent to village or hamlet areas, offer excellent opportunities for infill, locations for the development of small, local businesses, and for overall economic development. These areas should be targeted for re-use and intensification as appropriate. In general, the town should protect and enhance established commercial business areas as they provide vital service for residents and encourage reuse of underutilized and vacant properties. In the village areas, this would have to be further explored by village residents and officials. Additional recommendations related to revitalizing existing, underutilized areas include:

- Direct commercial development to locations appropriate for the scale and intensity of specific activities and consistent with the land use plan.
- Review and revise existing zoning and permit regulations as needed to minimize constraints to adaptive re-use, particularly in retail and industrial areas.
- Partner with villages to develop an action plan for revitalization of commercial areas in villages and hamlets, including comprehensive strategies for addressing complex problems of decay, vacancies, and disinvestment.
- Encourage reuse of underutilized properties and identify the major redevelopment and revitalization opportunities in the town and establish criteria for evaluating them. For example, there are several parcels throughout the town marked by vacant buildings that once served as either light industry or secondary commercial uses. Reuse of such vacant buildings, in particular within the villages of Black River and Evans Mills, is encouraged. As a first step, all such vacant and underutilized buildings should be inventoried.

**9. COORDINATE INFRASTRUCTURE WITH LAND USE POLICY AND GOALS**

- Protect resources by focusing growth and the provision of services within development areas and limiting new infrastructure in areas of town where growth should be limited (e.g., according to the land use plan).
- Continue to work with DANC and other regional utility providers to maintain and enhance utility services within LeRay.
- Develop a town-wide (or area wide) Generic Environmental Impact Statement to coordinate long term growth with the town's capacity to provide infrastructure services such as water and sewer.
- Work with developers to build infrastructure in conformance with the town's land use plan and growth policies.

**10. MONITOR GROWTH AND UPDATE LAND USE POLICIES AS APPROPRIATE**

As new residential and commercial development comes to LeRay, it is important that the community continue to track and monitor growth. The comprehensive plan along with town land development regulations should be seen as a dynamic work that should be revisited on a regular basis to reflect updated best practices as well as the evolving conditions of the community. Recommendations to this end include:

- Work to adopt an official town map pursuant to Town Law §270 that will designate existing and future roadways, park sites, and trails/sidewalks within LeRay.
- Monitor residential and commercial growth by zoning district, school district and type (e.g., single family, multi-family, etc.), both on and off of Fort Drum. Establish a rate of growth or threshold for off-post growth that would trigger further study or consideration of new development policies.

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Periodically review height and density limits to discourage uses that are inappropriate in size and scale vis-à-vis the surrounding uses.
- Consider developing a Generic Environmental Impact Study (GEIS), either town-wide or focused in specific areas such as the BR-1 zoning district in the vicinity of US 11/NYS Route 342, that would involve a detailed build-out study to identify and evaluate the specific impacts expected from development and growth on all town services and aspects of livability including sewer, water, transportation and traffic, schools, rural character and open space. This type of study could then serve as the basis for establishing an impact mitigation program for future development that allows impacts to be evaluated and mitigated on a comprehensive, rather than project-by-project basis.

## Town-wide Principles

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Projects</b>
Ongoing	Maintain LeRay's unique sense of place
Ongoing	Focus development on areas best suited for growth and change
Ongoing	Utilize a conservation design approach for development
Ongoing	Leverage for opportunities presented by growth
Ongoing	Establishment of new traditional neighborhoods
Ongoing	Enhanced community/pedestrian connections
Ongoing	Creation and enhancement of low-impact recreation opportunities
Ongoing	Plan for and provision of community facilities and active recreational amenities
Ongoing	Partner with Fort Drum for mutually beneficial solutions for LeRay and the region

## Strategic Plan

Timeframe	Projects
0 to 3 years	<b>Overall Plan Implementation</b>
0 to 2 years	<b>Conduct a Zoning Update</b>
	Develop a Conservation Subdivision ordinance
	Review permitted commercial uses outside of commercial corridor area with respect to density and use
	Establish new zoning districts to implement character areas
	Continue to address transition areas adjacent to villages and hamlets
	Establish flexible development standards
1 to 3 years	Develop a farmland protection plan
Ongoing	<b>Improve and Augment parks and recreation facilities</b>
	Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan
	Review the need, location, and programming of a neighborhood oriented community center
	Siting of new facilities near village and hamlet areas or residential neighborhoods
	Design recreational facilities to enable multiple uses on a yearround basis
	Continue to cooperate with New York State in the preservation of Coyote Flats State Forest
	Offer recreational programs and facilities, which promote tourism and preserve and promote the natural resources and the historical and cultural heritage of LeRay.
	Pursue and promote the development of private/public recreational facilities in LeRay
	Establish public access to LeRay's water resources along the Black and Indian Rivers
0 to 2 years	Review the town's "fee in lieu of land" policy for parkland
	Prepare an "advance phase" park study for areas within the US Route 11/NYS Route 342 Focus Area
	Prepare a town-wide trails and greenway plan
Ongoing	<b>Ensure Housing Choice and Affordability</b>
	Promote affordable housing
	Promote a mix of housing types
	Cooperate with local housing agencies to provide low and moderate income housing in LeRay
2 to 5 years	Consider establishing an inclusionary housing ordinance

TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

	Evaluate alternative housing types that will increase density and provide more diverse housing options
1 to 3 years	Review and, if necessary, revise local regulations related to mobile homes in LeRay
	Identify opportunities for accessory dwelling units in LeRay
	Review how changes in the town’s zoning and subdivision regulations might impact the provision of workforce housing
	Provide for a range of senior housing opportunities, including independent and assisted living options
<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Implement Green Planning Policies</b>
<b>Within 1 year</b>	Perform a Town Energy Audit
	Ensure that new development does not adversely impact the town’s drinking water resources
	Promote low-impact development techniques, including bio-retention ponds, green roofs, and pervious paving
	Maintain and protect LeRay’s stream corridors and wetlands
	Ensure that the town’s zoning and subdivision regulations support the construction of small-scale solar and wind power systems

TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Develop a coordinated and diverse transportation system</b>
<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Coordinate transportation improvements with land use policy</b>
	Require new developments to demonstrate that there will be adequate road capacity for traffic demands created by new development
	Assessment of each new roadway in relation to the overall roadway system in LeRay
	Fully utilize all available federal and state funding sources for transportation enhancement projects
	Promote connectivity of roadways in new developments
	Prepare site-specific road improvement plans to identify future roadway connections and patterns
<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Review and enhance roadway design criteria</b>
	Consider allowing flexibility in roadway design for development projects such as conservation subdivision or other development/conservation techniques.
	Develop Context-Sensitive Roadway Standards that respond to and enhance the land uses that the roads serve.
<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Explore public transit options</b>
	Work with Fort Drum to assess the feasibility of shuttle service between the post and the Route 11 Corridor.
	Establish a Park and Ride at the North Gate of Fort Drum
	Work with Fort Drum, Jefferson County, and St. Lawrence County on the development of a regional public transit network.
	Encourage land use densities and patterns that are conducive to public transit service in areas where transit is desired.

TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

	Encourage short-term rental car companies and car sharing services such as FlexCar to locate in LeRay.
Ongoing	<b>Enhance sidewalks, crosswalks, and trail facilities</b>
<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Coordinate Infrastructure with Land Use Policies and Goals</b>
	Protect resources by focusing growth, services, and infrastructure on areas where growth is desired and limit infrastructure in areas where growth should be limited
	Continue to work with DANC and regional utility providers to maintain and enhance utility services
	Develop a Town-wide or area-wide GEIS to coordinate longterm growth with the town's ability to provide infrastructure services Work with developers to build infrastructure in conformance
	with the town's land use plan and growth management policies. <b>Monitor Growth and Update Land Use Policies as</b>
	<b>Appropriate</b> Work to adopt an official town map pursuant to Town Law §270 that will designate existing and future roadways, park sites, and trails/sidewalks in LeRay Monitor residential and commercial growth by zoning district,
	school district, and type of housing, both on and off Fort Drum. Periodically review height and density limits to discourage uses that
	are inappropriate Consider developing a Generic Environmental Impact Study
	(GEIS) either town-wide or focused on specific areas within the existing BR-1 zoning district along US Route 11 and NYS Route 342.

## **CHAPTER VIII - CONCLUSION**

The Town of LeRay is at a crossroads. Recent growth has brought new conveniences such as shopping and services, new housing, and economic activity. Town residents and stakeholders want to leverage the growth of today to ensure that the LeRay of tomorrow is a town that all can be proud of. The comprehensive plan sets forth strategies and recommendations that build on LeRay's positive attributes, the things that make it special and unique, while planning and preparing for change. Having a proactive vision in place for how the town should look and feel in years to come will help to ensure that future decisions and development do not occur in a vacuum, but are guided by a community supported vision. New growth in some areas of town presents "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunities to create high-quality living and commercial environments that build long-term value. By phasing in amenities, such as trails and parks, with each new development, the town can ensure that incremental growth over time will add up to a the kinds of places that town residents have said that they want to live and do business in. Encouraging growth in focused areas of town also takes the pressure off of other, less built-up areas, which helps to preserve rural character and the working farms that are responsible for it.

People, jobs and employers are increasingly mobile and, more than ever before, pick and choose where they wish to settle down. A "high quality of life" positions a community to attract and retain investment and be fiscally healthy. In the end, while the comprehensive plan will provide guidance for the town to achieve its goals, it will be up to the people of LeRay to take the plan's ideas and recommendations from concepts to reality.

**PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK**

## **CHAPTER IX - DGEIS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan was reviewed and adopted in conformance with New York State Town Law and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). To this end, a single document combining both the analysis required by SEQRA and the comprehensive plan itself, was created -- a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS). The DGEIS, on file at the town, provides additional background information on the town and discussion on the alternatives and impacts that were considered in the creation of the final comprehensive plan. According to The SEQR Handbook, which is published by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), "a generic EIS is a type of EIS that is more general than a site-specific EIS and typically is used to consider broad-based actions ...the generic EIS can examine the environmental effects of programs or plans that have wide application or restrict the range of future alternative policies such as agency regulations or permit programs, master plans, or resource management plans".

A comprehensive plan, by its very nature, takes a comprehensive look at the environment and setting of a community and identifies and examines potential impacts of land use and planning decisions and policies, as well as an investigation of alternatives. These elements are present throughout this plan, but are also addressed specifically in the DGEIS document, under Sections 7 DGEIS Impact Analysis and 8 DGEIS Alternatives.

The Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan sets forth a community established vision for the future of the town. It contains a comprehensive overview of the town's existing conditions, as well as focused strategies and recommendations for the issues and opportunities that are most important to the town and where land use change is most likely and/or desired. The overriding theme of the plan centers on strengthening the qualities that make LeRay special and leveraging them for economic success and a continued high quality of life in the face of growth pressures largely exerted by the adjacent Fort Drum. While preserving the agricultural areas that have provided LeRay with much of its character is central to this theme, the plan focuses on a number of other opportunities for the town, such as the envisioning of the areas near the intersection of US Route 11 and NYS Route 342 as a series of neighborhoods, tied together with

a park system, and the implementation of a series of design improvements to businesses along the US Route 11 corridor in the vicinity of Fort Drum.

The plan itself will not directly result in any physical changes to the town. Rather, it establishes a vision for the town and strategies for implementing this vision subsequent to plan adoption. Moreover, the plan is a living document. Within the bounds of the general planning principles that the plan sets forth, there is flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and new opportunities that the future may present. The plan can and should be revisited periodically to ensure that it continues to accurately reflect the goals and vision of town residents and the evolving state of the town itself.

The following discussion is an evaluation of the impacts of this plan pursuant to its adoption. Since adoption of the plan does not directly result in any physical changes to the town, or constitute any changes to the regulations and laws governing the town, this discussion is necessarily generalized in scope.

## **LAND USE AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

Overall, the LeRay Comprehensive Plan does not propose significant changes to the town's existing zoning and land use patterns. Rather, the plan seeks to adjust the town to the changes that have taken place in LeRay in the last several years, as the growth of Fort Drum has resulted in a number of existing and proposed developments in the town, mainly along the US Route 11 corridor, while putting a plan in place that will provide for an improved LeRay in the long term.

The area to the north and west of Fort Drum, on the north side of US Route 11 and bounded by NYS Route 342, Goulds Corners Road, and the proposed Fort Drum Connector is an area that has seen considerable growth pressure in recent years. Currently, the Eagle Ridge Village housing complex is under construction, with several retail developments recently constructed or proposed along Route 11, including a Wal-Mart Supercenter at Route 11 and Johnson Road. The comprehensive plan looks at this area and envisions additional new neighborhoods, consisting of a mix of single family and multifamily residential uses in the interior areas, with mixed use areas and commercial/office uses closer to the corridor roadways. A series of parks

## TOWN OF LERAY - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

and trails are envisioned to connect the residential areas to one another, as well as to act as preserve area for endangered and threatened flora and fauna in the town. The comprehensive plan also recommends that a community park housing a variety of active and passive recreational uses should be constructed in this area.

While much of this land is currently vacant and/or used for low intensity agricultural uses, adverse impacts are not expected in connection with a transition to residential uses in the vicinity of Routes 11 and 342. The town acknowledges this area as a center for future development, as much of the land in the district is zoned Business Residential 1 (BR-1). The existing BR-1 zoning designation allows for a mix of residential uses of up to seven (7) gross dwelling units per acre and for a large assortment of commercial and non-residential uses, thus no large scale zoning changes would be needed. The potential development of this area of LeRay would occur over a long-term horizon, allowing the community time to process and accommodate growth. While this growth would occur with or without a plan in place, by having a framework to work with, the town can create neighborhoods that benefit LeRay and improve the quality of life of its residents.

While there would be a significant number of potential new residents in this area whether the plan was approved or not, with the plan in place, the overall effects on the region would be minimized. Existing and currently proposed infrastructure and services will be utilized to accommodate this growth, limiting the need to extend infrastructure or collector roadways into other areas of LeRay. For example, much of the additional traffic volume would utilize recently expanded or proposed roadways connecting newly built subdivisions to Fort Drum and Watertown, including US 11 and the Fort Drum Connector. Also, existing sewer and water capacity exists through the Development Authority of the North Country's trunk lines along US Route 11. It is also noted that Indian River schools will have sufficient capacity for additional students once proposed district-wide expansion projects are completed in 2010. Another benefit of this development is that residents of the focus area would be able to access commercial areas along Routes 11 and 342 via a series of trails and internal roadways, limiting extensive use of state maintained roadways in the town. These factors will aid in limiting the spread of high-intensity development into other areas of LeRay and the region, resulting in the preservation of remaining farmland and rural character in LeRay and providing the development

density necessary to begin to discuss regional improvements such as public transit to sections of LeRay.

No significant negative impacts are anticipated with respect to land use or demographics as a result of the comprehensive plan.

## **PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

The LeRay Comprehensive Plan envisions the creation of a town-wide park network that is interconnected, easily accessible from all areas of LeRay, and interwoven into the fabric of town life. This network, or “greenway” concept, also applies to smaller areas of town, such as areas where new housing is likely to concentrate. This concept is shown in connection with the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area series, discussed in Chapter IV of this plan. This same area was also seen as an appropriate area of town for providing town recreational facilities, such as a town park that could fulfill a community identified need for active and passive recreational amenities and space. In addition to park space, the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area concept incorporates natural open space areas, which can provide habitat area for various endangered and threatened species and preserve significant natural features such as wetlands and successional forestlands. Lastly, the Routes 342 & 11 concept plan and themes can be applied to any area of town experiencing significant residential growth.

In other areas of LeRay, additional trails, parks, and open space are proposed, both in and adjacent to existing neighborhood areas and along the Black and Indian Rivers. This enhancement of parklands and open spaces will provide for the protection of threatened lands in the town, allowing town residents to continue to enjoy the natural beauty that exists in LeRay, as well as providing options not currently present to the town’s residents.

No significant negative impacts are anticipated in respects to parks, recreation, and open space as a result of the LeRay Comprehensive Plan.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

All of the recommended actions and objectives contained in the LeRay Comprehensive Plan seek to enhance the existing character of the community. The recommendations included in the

Farm Core character area seek to preserve the existing farmland and rural character of much of the town. In the Southwest Neighborhoods character area, the recommendations communicate a vision for the creation of a series of interconnected neighborhoods and parklands for town residents instead of a disconnected series of apartment complexes and subdivisions. The plan also addresses the importance of the continuance of the village development pattern at the boundaries of Black River and Evans Mills; and the preservation of lands along the Black and Indian Rivers and other creeks and streams in LeRay. Finally, the plan discusses ways that Fort Drum and LeRay can work toward mutually beneficial solutions for the community and the fort.

The plan also identifies a number of areas in the town that are particularly important to the overall character of the town.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated with respect to community character.

## **ECONOMY**

The LeRay Comprehensive Plan seeks to ensure that the town remains economically healthy. The approach is two-fold: (1) Strengthen the town's unique qualities and characteristics; and (2) Seize opportunities to make LeRay a convenient and economically relevant place to do business for Fort Drum soldiers and employees, town residents, and residents of the North Country. The plan's recommendations will help to enhance the quality of life in LeRay, providing for better economic opportunities for the town.

This two-fold approach has been applied to the vicinity of the proposed Fort Drum Connector interchange at Route 11. The town anticipates an increase in development pressures in this area. The town's vision is for hotels, restaurants, and offices that would benefit from its proximity to both an interstate highway and to Fort Drum. The development of this area, in conjunction with the recently adopted Town of LeRay Commercial Corridors Guidelines, would be designed in a way that would provide a sense of place for those visiting or doing business while giving LeRay residents economic opportunities that may not be otherwise available locally. By providing guidance in achieving these goals, the comprehensive plan will help enable a higher quality of development than what may otherwise occur. The plan also acknowledges that

automotive uses will be drawn to this new interchange and sets forth recommendations for reasonably accommodating these uses without discouraging other types of uses.

No significant impacts are anticipated by implementation of the comprehensive plan with respect to the economy. However, the town should be cognizant of the long-term maintenance and operating costs of improved and expanded park and recreation facilities and programs, which costs should be evaluated and planned for in conjunction with more detailed park plans that further develop the concepts and ideas presented in this plan.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The LeRay Comprehensive Plan sets forth recommendations for mitigating the impacts of the large volumes of traffic that utilize US Route 11 and NYS Route 342 everyday, as well as factoring in changing traffic patterns from the proposed Fort Drum Connector. Such mitigation involves the provision of pedestrian amenities such as trails and pedestrian connections to businesses along Routes 11 and 342, and the construction of a network of internal roadways that would allow residents to avoid using state roads for local travel. At the same time, the plan acknowledges the importance of allowing state maintained roads in LeRay to continue to handle large volumes of traffic. However, the proposed recommendations have built-in flexibility so that they can be adapted with relative ease should future traffic volumes on Routes 11 and 342 decrease in connection with potential changes to the larger regional transportation network, including construction of the Fort Drum Connector.

Potential impacts in connection with the transportation recommendations include construction of a series of internal roadways within the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area, the provision of transit service to Watertown and Fort Drum, and the construction of pedestrian and bicycle trails in the town.

Specific mitigation measures would be developed in connection with the preparation of detailed “pre-build” street improvement plan. The town will work closely with New York State Department of Transportation and the Jefferson County Highway Department to ensure that such improvements faithfully carry out the vision and goals of the plan.

The plan discusses the proposed Fort Drum Connector with respect to its potential land use impacts to the town. More specifically, the plan looks at how design decisions can be made that allow for aesthetic considerations to be taken into account during the construction of the Connector. The plan also seeks to provide and enhance pedestrian and bicycle transportation options along the Route 11 Corridor in the vicinity of the Connector exit at Route 11.

No significant impacts are therefore anticipated with respect to transportation.

## **OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

### **I. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS**

Because the proposed action is the adoption of a comprehensive plan, it will not result in any direct unavoidable adverse environmental impacts. In fact, the comprehensive plan and the recommendations it sets forth can be periodically reviewed and, as necessary, revised by the community to reflect changing conditions, opportunities and community values.

### **2. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES**

The proposed adoption of the comprehensive plan, in and of itself, would not entail any physical changes or improvements to the town, and would not therefore entail any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.

Typical irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources associated with development and human activity include the commitment of land resources; manpower for the construction of structures; building materials such as wood, concrete and stone; energy resources such as gasoline, diesel fuel, and electricity; and water for domestic use and irrigation. These resources would be used whether or not the comprehensive plan were adopted. Since any proposals for development would be subject to individual site-specific environmental reviews at the time of application for approval, irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources cannot be fully quantified at this time.

### **3. GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS**

The Proposed Action is not expected to induce a significant change in overall growth. Even the proposed transition of the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area from open space area to residential and commercial space, would not have a significant impact within the larger context of the town and neighboring communities, since this change is within the bounds of the existing zoning in the district. Moreover, growth is already occurring in this area and will continue to occur, with or without a comprehensive plan in place. The plan simply sets forth a vision for how that growth can occur in a positive manner that yields long term benefits for the town. Proposed improvements in the town, however, are expected to increase the town's attractiveness as a place in which to live and do business. In this sense, implementation of the comprehensive plan will induce positive economic growth. The proposed community park is also anticipated to bring more vitality and activity to the core areas of LeRay, as well as serve as a potential attraction to community and regional youth groups. The plan discusses traffic and parking improvements that could be undertaken to meet additional demands on the street network and parking supply. It is anticipated that transformation of the town core will not occur instantly, and that such improvements and mitigation measures can be provided in phases.

### **4. EFFECTS ON THE USE AND CONSERVATION OF ENERGY**

The proposed adoption of the comprehensive plan, in and of itself, would not entail any use of energy. Rather, the vision it sets forth is one of interconnected, village scaled neighborhoods that encourage walking and bicycle use, while minimizing the need to drive to most everyday uses. Moreover, a section of the comprehensive plan recommends the adoption of "Green" planning principles that would serve to lessen the use of non-renewable energy sources and recommend incentives for using energy efficient buildings design, appliances, and fixtures in new construction or the reuse of existing facilities.

### **5. ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY**

There were no major issues of controversy in LeRay that were raised in connection with the comprehensive plan. Some members of the public did express concern over the plan's recommendations to limit the impact of a concentration of self-storage facilities along Route 11, the town's premier commercial corridor. Solutions to this issue can be worked out as part of specific zoning and development revisions.

## **6. CRITERIA FOR THE UNDERTAKING AND APPROVAL OF FUTURE ACTIONS**

Any proposed town action, legislation, approval or any physical improvement, change or development within the town discussed in this DGEIS will be subject to its own environmental review under SEQRA when such development or action is proposed. Through that process, the potential impacts described above would be mitigated to the maximum extent practicable. While those potential impacts have been described conceptually herein, reference to them in this DGEIS is not intended to serve as a substitute for a site-specific environmental review which will still be required on a case-by-case basis at the time that an application for development approval is submitted or the town seeks to adopt new legislation or undertake any other action requiring public review.

### **DGEIS ALTERNATIVES**

Pursuant to Section 617.9 (b)(v) of New York State Environmental Conservation Law, SEQRA requires that alternatives be examined as part of the environmental review process. The planning process leading up to the creation of the LeRay Comprehensive Plan, and the very plan itself, is an exercise in alternatives. The discussion below considers alternatives, including a "No Action" alternative, under major topic areas of this plan -the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area, the existing Developing District area to the south of Evans Mills, and the area to the North of the proposed Fort Drum Connector.

### **LAND USE ALTERNATIVES**

There was strong community consensus over the future land use vision for the town, namely a vision that preserves the agricultural roots of the community while providing a framework for growth occurring in the town in the vicinity of Fort Drum. In some areas, however, due to their location adjacent to Fort Drum or development pressures, discussion of alternatives took place.

### **ROUTE 342 & 11 FOCUS AREA ALTERNATIVE I: PLAN ALTERNATIVE**

The increased development along Routes 11 and 342 presents an exciting opportunity for the town to create a cohesive, high quality neighborhood, encompassing a pedestrian friendly

atmosphere, a mixture of uses and housing types, and community facilities, rather than a collection of scattered, unrelated development. The ultimate form that development takes in this area will establish the character and quality of life in the town for many years to come. The comprehensive plan lays out a vision for this area that would allow for logical road connections, a large amount of park space, and trails to connect neighborhood areas, as shown in the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area series in Chapter IV of this plan.

### **ROUTE 342 & 11 FOCUS AREA ALTERNATIVE 2: NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

If the Routes 342 & 11 Focus Area were to be developed without an underlying plan in place, several issues would remain unresolved. The ability of the internal roadway system to be used as a viable alternative to state maintained roads in the area would be limited. Moreover, the community would struggle to provide alternatives to auto use both in this area and on a town-wide basis. Most importantly, the ability to identify space for a community park, obtain funding for such a park, and construct the park would be difficult to achieve without having a plan in place. In many communities with development pressures similar to LeRay, logical areas for park space was not identified early on, leading to the communities spending more money at a later date for parkland that was not in proximity to neighborhood or community residents without an automobile.

### **DEVELOPING DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE I: PLAN RECOMMENDATION**

The Developing District (DD) Zoning District in the Town of LeRay was envisioned at the time of the Fort Drum expansion in the mid-1980's as a district where the development of office and research facilities and other complementary uses that could benefit from proximity to both Fort Drum and the Village of Evans Mills would take place. While this designation has remained in place for the area for greater than 20 years, due to the lack of existing infrastructure in much of the district and the relocation of the Fort Drum Main Gate to Operation Iraqi Freedom Drive, little development of any kind has taken place thus far. While the town sees the potential for development occurring here, the location adjacent to Fort Drum serves both as a benefit and as an impediment to the town, since a large portion of the district has been identified as areas that existing development rights could be potentially be acquired by the US Army as part of the Army Compatible Use Buffers (ACUB) program. This is due to the area's proximity to training areas on Fort Drum and the location of an Accident Potential Zone (APZ) for Wheeler Sack Army

Airfield (WSAAF) in a section of the existing district. Based on discussions as part of the comprehensive plan process, it was recommended that the DD zoning district be reduced in size to areas currently served by public sewer and water services that are located outside of the APZ, with the remainder of the land designated for primarily agricultural uses.

**DEVELOPING DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE 2: NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

If no action took place in this area, development of permitted uses within the DD zoning district could potentially locate in areas immediately adjacent to Fort Drum. The creation of new businesses in the DD zoning district would spread traffic impacts further to the north on US Route 11, past the proposed Fort Drum Connector. More importantly, because of the DD zoning district's proximity to Fort Drum, particularly in the areas within the APZ for WSAAF, potential conflicts between on-post activities and community residents could occur. In the long-term, if enough development occurred in areas surrounding the base, including areas within the DD zoning district, the ability of Fort Drum to maintain its ability to train soldiers to fight the Global War on Terror could be compromised. The resulting encroachment and conflict issues may lead to the closing of Fort Drum by the US Army, worsening economic conditions in both LeRay and the Fort Drum region.

**FORT DRUM CONNECTOR NORTH AREA ALTERNATIVE 1: PLAN ALTERNATIVE**

With the construction of the proposed Fort Drum Connector, it is anticipated that a variety of development pressures will come to areas immediately adjacent to the proposed Connector interchange at US Route 11 in LeRay. While areas to the south and west of the interchange either have existing development, or have pending development that is in various stages of the site plan review process, development pressures, for the most part, have not spread north of the proposed interchange. It can be reasonably anticipated that with the construction of the interchange this will change, since much of the truck traffic headed northward, both into Fort Drum and to other locations in the region along Route 11 would enter and exit the Connector at this location. Because of this, demand would be created for auto intensive land uses similar to the area near exit 48 on Interstate 81, where northbound traffic currently exits the interstate system to go to Fort Drum and points northward. While this land currently is zoned to accommodate these uses and the plan would allow uses of this nature to take place, the plan recognizes that such business types as truck stops, warehouses, and truck repair facilities may

not allow lands adjacent to this location to be used for its highest and best use if no action was taken. The plan recommends that in addition to the adhering to the town's Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines, auto oriented businesses in this area adhere to additional screening, buffering and lighting restrictions above and beyond those found elsewhere in LeRay.

**FORT DRUM CONNECTOR NORTH AREA ALTERNATIVE 2: NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

If there was not a plan in place, the presence of a new interchange at US 11 and the Fort Drum Connector would bring auto oriented development to areas north of the Connector. Due to the presence and visibility of these uses, both from the highway and from areas behind Route 11, locally desirable land uses would be unlikely to locate here. This would lead to an expansion of uses such as warehouses, truck repair facilities, and self-storage facilities in the town, similar to uses present in the Town of Pamela adjacent to Exit 48 of Interstate 81. A concentration of such uses, at the expense of any other types of uses, is contradictory to the town's long-term vision for Route 11. Through application of the town's design guidelines and revisions to the town's zoning and development policies, a reasonable amount of well designed auto-oriented uses can be permitted, in conjunction with other types of development that the town wishes to encourage.

## **APPENDICES**



APPENDIX A  
Town of LeRay Community Survey



# Town of LeRay Community Survey

The Town of LeRay was awarded a New York State Quality Communities Grant in 2007 to prepare a Town-wide Comprehensive Plan. The Town will be hiring a consultant in the near future to prepare the Plan. Your responses to this survey will be very valuable in the preparation of the Plan.

**1. Identify the three community issues of greatest concern for you and your family. (Please check (  ) only three that apply.)**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 15% Cost and availability of housing   | 29% Local jobs/economic opportunities    | 20% Youth/senior services              |
| 27% Preservation of open space   | 26% Environmental quality                | 16% Public sewer and/or water services |
| 15% Access to parks, recreation  | 25% Pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods    | 69% Property tax burden                |
| 22% Local shops and services   | 14% Design standards for new development | 6% Other                               |
| Please identify other community issue of greatest concern for you and your family. |  | 100%                                   |

**2. Identify the three types of economic development you believe the community should focus most on. (Please check (  ) only three that apply.)**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 13% Promote superstores                 | 25% Promote office parks/high tech industry                      | 22% Promote compact business development in/adjacent to community center |
| 17% Permit commercial strip development | 28% Promote manufacturing  | 64% Promote adaptive reuse and conversion of underused buildings/sites   |
| 27% Encourage home-based businesses     | 75% Actively support existing local businesses (including farms) |  |

**3. Identify three types of new commercial businesses you believe are most needed in the community? (Please check (  ) only three that apply.)**

- |                                    |                                      |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6% Auto repair shops               | 20% Movie theaters                   | 20% Major department stores    |
| 2% Auto dealers                    | 4% Fast food restaurants             | 34% Hardware and lumber stores |
| 26% Supermarkets/grocery stores    | 70% Restaurants other than fast food | 11% Gift/tourist shops         |
| 9% Convenient stores w/gas station | 14% Hotels/motels                    | 4% Video rental stores         |
| 21% Drug stores                    | 21% Banks and financial institutions | 20% Book stores                |

**4. Identify the three types of housing most needed in the community. (Please check (  ) only three that apply.)**

- |   |                             |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 34% Rental units                                  | 77% Moderate-income housing | 12% Multiple-family housing |
| 58% Senior housing, including 'in-law apartments' | 13% Luxury housing          | 22% Condominiums            |
| 49% Assisted living/nursing homes                 | 4% Mobile home parks        |                             |

**5. Do you support expanded protection for any of the following? (Please check (  ) Yes or No.)**

	Yes	No
Farmland.....	78%	22%
Forest land .....	88%	12%
Open space .....	72%	28%
Scenic vistas .....	78%	22%
Wetlands .....	71%	29%
Stream corridors .....	80%	20%
Aquifers/groundwater .....	83%	17%
Historic buildings .....	80%	20%

**6. Identify the three local services you would currently rate best performing. (Please check (  ) only three that apply.)**

48% <i>Fire protection</i>	59% <i>Snow removal</i>	29% <i>Transfer station/recycling</i>
38% <i>Ambulance</i>	2% <i>Youth activities</i>	13% <i>Library</i>
10% <i>Police</i>	1% <i>Senior services</i>	15% <i>Public sewer</i>
23% <i>Road maintenance</i>	29% <i>School quality</i>	24% <i>Public water</i>

**7. Would you support an increase in local taxes of, for instance, \$25 per assessed \$100,000 of proptery value, for any combination of the following? (Please check (  ) Yes or No.)**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Parkland.....	37%	63%
Trails.....	43%	57%
Park improvements .....	40%	60%
Preservation of farmland ...	41%	59%
Preservation of other open space .....	41%	59%
Pedestrian improvements (trees, benches, lighting, ect.) .....	48%	52%
Sidewalk expansion .....	40%	60%
Expanded youth/senior services .....	55%	45%

**8. Are you a full-time resident? (Please check (  ) Yes or No.)**

96% *Yes*                      4% *No*

**9. Please identify one idea to make our community a better place to live.**

100%

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!**

**2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey**

	<b>Police Protection</b>	<b>Leash Law</b>	<b>Burning Barrels</b>	<b>Noise law</b>	<b>Additional Services</b>
1	safety	roaming dogs	ban these	enforce a noise law	grocery stores, drug stores in Evans Mills
2	law enforcement/presence	leash law for dogs	no open fire pits	control loud music from cars	promote Mom and Pop stores
3	local police force	leash law for dogs	ban or control burn barrels	loudness of bar in Evans Mills	Wegman's supermarket
4	better law enforcement	keep dogs tied		lack of noise ordinance	main grocery store
5	community safety patrols	dogs must be leashed			build a mega gym
6	more constant police presence	leash law for dogs			promote department stores, restaurants, theaters
7	law enforcement				grocery stores, drug stores in Evans Mills
8	full-time police presence				grocery store
9	police -security				banks off base
10	better police protection				a mall is needed
11	enforcement of speed laws				all stores should give military discounts
12	enforcement of speeding on County Route 138				sitdown restaurant
13	control traffic better on Route 3 from Wtn to Great Bend				Olive Garden Restaurant
14	more police patrols especially for speeding				get a supermarket like Price Chopper
15	neighborhood security				something for Route 3 N
16	police protection				medical, dental offices
17	law enforcement for Town of LeRay				pharmacy
18	safety				grocery store
19	police patrol				discourage chain stores
20	more police protection				physician's offices
21	make community a safer place to live				child care centers
22	police protection in schools				adult daycare center
23	police protection - major drug use in area				grocery store in Village of Evans Mills
24	traffic monitoring by law enforcement				drug stores in Village of Evans Mills
25	law enforcement				more stores
26	more security on streets				real hotels
27	better traffic monitoring, cars speed				more shops for plus size women
28	need a full-time Police Department				local grocery stores and restaurants
29	crack down on crime caused by Fort Drum				doctors
30	closer supervision on bars in town				real restaurant
31	more police patrolling the area				nice dept. store
32					grocery store
33					want attractive stores
34					fullt stocked hardware store
35					more daycare and after school programs
36					support construction of fine arts center
37					need good family restaurant
38					need hardware store nearby
39					attract new businesses
40					large grocery store
41					grocery store owned by local resident
42					having a tourist information shop/booth



## 2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey

	Community Activities	Open Space	Pedestrian Amenities
1	group community activities	promote windmills	need streetlights and sidewalks in Hamlet of Calcium
2	more entertainment locally	utilize vacant land for development	street lighting in Calcium
3	develop youth club program	quit promoting sprawl	add sidewalks
4	there is nothing for youths to do	better, efficient use of	streetlights
5	need program for youths	expansion or improvements to parkland	install sidewalk from Cemetary Road to Waddingham Road
6	want a Chucky Cheese	parks	sidewalk restoration to promote walking
7	activities for youth	preservation of open space	Patricia Drive's sidewalks need to be repaired
8	nice parks for children	preserve open space areas	sidewalks and bike lanes
9	more community events		more bicycle and pedestrian accessible stores
10	things for children to do		improve sidewalks
11	skateboard park/recreation site		sidewalks and bike lanes
12	provide kids with place to skateboard		facilities for biking and walking
13	provide place for kids to ride skateboards		
14	improvements to ballfield		
15	clean up park in Riverbend		
16	expand activities for children		
17	local community center/YMCA		
18	need winter recreation for children		
19	baseball field has expanded but ice rink has disappeared		
20	youth and community activities		
21	work with Fort Drum to open Remington Pond		
22	community center		
23	winter and summer sports		
24	community pool		
25	activities for children		
26	community pool		
27	outside recreational activities		
28	public playground like Thompson Park		
29	more things for children to do		
30	downtown businesses with family centers		
31	park with baseball for kids/playground		
32	community based activities promoted by Fire Dept, churches		
33	increase positive activities for our youths		
34	encourage more youth /family oriented businesses		
35	olympic size pool to give youth a place to swim		
36	skate park at community park		
37	more services for youth		
38	water park or beach for children		
39	more equipment at recreation park		
40	development of youth center/park area		
41	better environments for school-age youths		
42	town to continue to support Jack Williams Park for ice rink		
43	need place for young kids to hang out		
44	need year round youth services for junior high (11 to 15) age group		
45	more community functions -socially and informative		
46	family recreation area with playgrounds and skate park		
47	safe place for kids to go and things for them to do		

## 2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey

	Property Taxes	Property Maintenance	Trails
1	lower taxes	roadside cleanup	Finish paving the Black River Trail
2	taxes are high	community spring cleanup	want walking and biking trails along highways
3	decrease taxes	address clutter	wide sidewalks
4	taxes too high	address abandoned buildings	maintain Black River Trail
5	maintain tax rates	appearance of properties	develop walking trail parallel to Black River
6	outrageous rate of assessments	eyesores	atv and snowmobile trails
7	lower property taxes	homes are not being maintained	create walking/biking trails to connect to Fort Drum
8	stop giving tax breaks	offer trash cleanup service	atv trails that connect to the village
9	lower taxes	law for property owners to clean up litter and debris	prohibit use of atv trails on public streets
10	no more PILOT's	clean up private property	trail for four wheeling and snowmobiling
11	lower taxes for seniors	lower tax rate	recreational trails
12	taxes seem high	clean up poorly maintained residences	nature trails for walking, biking, jogging
13	stop raising taxes	revitalization of village prohibiting junk	do not allow atv's on public roads
14	no more taxes	forced cleanup of properties	do not allow local roads to be used by atv's
15	keep tax rate down	enforce code violations	open roads to atv's
16	property tax burden	improve rundown facades	too much atv traffic
17	reduce taxes	enforce cleanup of yard debris	pave Black River end of walking trail
18	lower taxes	demolish abandoned structures	
19	lower taxes	control trash around residential properties	
20	give senior citizens a break	care of property	
21	property considerations for local residents	lack of Trash Ordinance	
22	keep taxes under control	enforce laws	
23	lower the assessments	clean up yards	
24	lower property taxes	cleanup debris and cars	
25	lower tax rate	commend the Black River Village spring and Fall cleanup	
26	lower taxes	home/yard maintenance	
27	low property tax	remove junk from premises	
28	reduce taxes	enforce property upkeep	
29	lower taxes for senior citizens	neighbor's garbage	
30	quit raising assessments	require upkeep of property	
31	taxes too high	strict enforcement of property	
32	decrease taxes	junk property maintenance law	
33	keep taxes down	up keep of rental units	
34	tax breaks for seniors	ordinance to require homeowners to maintain their property	
35	cut taxes for seniors and farmers	keep litter picked up	
36	assessments too high on private homes	clean up is a must	
37	lower taxes	property maintenance law	
38	quit raising taxes	pass and enforce property maintenance laws	
39	build up tax base to lower taxes		
40	taxes are too high		
41	tax breaks to senior citizens		
42	tax breaks to Veterans and Fire Dept.		
43	no more taxes		
44	lower tax rates		
45	lower property taxes		
46	cut taxes to seniors		
47	decrease taxes, increase tax base with commercial development		
48	keep taxes low		
49	townwide veterans tax exemption		
50	keep property taxes low		
51	lower taxes		
52	less taxes for residents/more for corporations		
53	stop raising taxes		
54	don't give tax breaks to businesses		
55	property tax burden		
56	reduce taxes		
57	reappropriation to improve community development		
58	no tax breaks for large companies		
59	no PILOT Agreements		
60	don't give tax breaks to businesses		
61	decrease property taxes		
62	keep assessments down		
63	stop giving tax incentives to housing developers		

**2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey**

	<b>Shared Services</b>	<b>Transportation (Town)</b>	<b>Transportation (State)</b>	<b>Aesthetics</b>
1	shared services with Fort Drum		lower speed limit on Rte. 283 in residential areas	good landscaping
2	consolidate government services	traffic flow and volume	reduce speed limit on 342	quiet and clean
3	consolidate Fire Depts	public transportation	speed limit needs to be reduced on Route 11	limit development to preserve small town character
4	consolidate Ambulance squads	public transportation	improvement of roads to 81	set design standards for housing development
5	consolidate Local Government	bus service	better roads for 342	properly design new projects
6	shared services between towns and villages	road repairs - Duffy Road is not paved	traffic light on Route 11 where Dunkin Donuts is	
7	combine services between municipalities	bus service	control traffic better on Route 3 from Wtn to Great Bend	
8	smaller government at local level	provide public transportation	lower speed limit on Steinhilber Road	
9	county-wide fire and ambulance services	lighting and paving	traffic control (more traffic lights)	
10	stop government spending, share services with the village	better roads and snow removal	traffic control measures on Rt 11 from 342 to north side of North gate	
11	consolidate and streamline towns and villages	decrease congestion	complete the Northern Route, traffic is ridiculous	
12	wants consolidation of governments	traffic control	better traffic lights	
13	village and town become one government	rural transit facility	reassessment of speed limits on town roads	
14		improve road conditions	restore berm near NYS 342 to keep Black River back on Route 3	
15		consider traffic safety	Goulds Corners Road should be 45 mph	
16		road maintenance	lower speed limits on roads	
17		improved highways with better traffic control	widen Route 342	
18		supports connector roads between developments to decrease congestion	slower speed limit on Goulds Corners Road	
19		potholes on Gardnerville Road	speed limits too high in residential areas	
20		maintainance of Gardnerville Road	reduce speed on Gardnerville Road	
21		lawn repair as a result of snow removal	traffic flow and volume	
22		road repair	cleanup garbage along Route 3	
23		bus stops	lower speed limit on Lafave Road to 30mph	
24		public transportation	better traffic control on Route 11, reduced speed and fewer passing options	
25		senior citizens transportation		
26		repair town roads/ shoulders are nonexistent		
27		traffic control		
28		remove old firehall and make a parking lot		
29		clean up area along Cullen Drive		
30		under pass on Route 11 needs replacing		

**2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey**

	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Zoning/Setbacks</b>	<b>Other</b>
1	affordable for senior with porches and green space	increase lot size	townwide newsletter
2	local citizens cannot afford housing	confine single and double-wide trailers	better control of military personnel
3	rental units not for military	no car dealerships on Route 11	feel like being forced out by Fort Drum
4	subsidized housing for retirees	no more strip malls	better paying jobs
5	keep Fort Drum Housing on base	control retail expansion	better full-time jobs
6	modern luxury housing	attract development that is energy efficient	need to be prepared if Fort Drum closes
7	increase affordable housing	stop development	utilize old factories on County Rte. 17
8	homes for owners, not renters	limit store development on 11 and 342	worried well will go dry because taking water for new housing
9	make more homes available at a reasonable cost	less red tape reviewing development proposals	concerned with schools
10	senior housing/ assisted living	no strip clubs, loan shops	alternative fuels
11	housing for seniors	do not promote superstores	community involvement
12	make housing more affordable	no more mega business	don't feel they should have to pay school taxes
13	801 housing converted to low cost senior citizen housing	focus development where traffic is	better management of public funds
14	no more housing in LeRay	no more growth	sound control for Race Track
15	low moderate income housing	keep growth on Route 11	utilize or demolish Factory Street warehouses
16	military needs more housing now	keep rural areas rural	Town of LeRay arbitration court
17	have Fort Drum build their own housing	concentrate commercial development on Route 11	improve quality and quantity of low income jobs
18		rezone areas on Route 3	take advantage of Fort Drum
19		simplify developer approval process	preserve old historic buildings
20		strict enforcement of zoning	convert barn building on Route 11 to senior activity place
21		wants small neighborhood feel	availability to town offices
22		Quality of Life	no sense of community anymore
23		town is turning Route 11 into a new Arsenal Street	considers Fort Drum's impacts on life long residents
24		housing lots (100 x 100) are not big enough	does not like suburbia - wants quiet rural life
25		zone out tatoo parlors	cleanup old buildings
26		protect quality of life for residential development through Zoning revisions	advertise the town as destination place
27		more knowledgeable people on the Planning Board	less military discounts/ more taxpayer discounts
28		greater scrutiny of development	support local businesses
29		no night clubs near residential areas	do not cater to businesses
30		don't lose our small town atmosphere	support those who live here
31		think about needs of local residents	jobs needed for young people
32		ban outdoor burning	no more development
33		strict laws on ATV's	don't spend money on studies
34		eliminate burning barrels	want quality educational system (too many cuts being made)
35		don't really have a downtown area to draw residents like old days	don't build anymore Fire Departments
36			senior citizens cannot afford taxes
37			promote local businesses not new ones
38			lack of tourist information center
39			keep wooded areas, build in open areas
40			the government that governs the least, governs the best
41			events to make troops feel more welcome
42			riff raff from bars on Route 3
43			encourage heavier industry to come to the area
44			bring jobs to the area
45			Soldiers should be respectful of local citizens
46			work together to make town a better place to live and work
47			aid to poor and homeless
48			full-time fire protection
49			communication
50			local jobs with healthcare
51			better ways of preventing drug abuse and more rehabilitation centers

## 2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey

	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Transfer Station/Trash</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>
1	need sewer and water in areas that do not have it	bad, want yearly rubbish removal	help for local farmers
2	sewer cost is too high	cost is too high	preserve and help local farmers
3	sewer and water is too high	hard to get out of the site	maintaining agriculture
4	need public water and sewer	want vending machine that gives out trash cards	need to promote agritourism
5	need water and sewer for entire township	want trash pickup outside the Village	
6	free water in Calcium	trash removal outside Village limits	
7	keep water district outside of Calcium	expand landfill hours	
8	don't force us to put in water	townwide trash removal	
9	high electric rates	curbside recycling program	
10	don't force us to pay for water	should accept all plastics for recycling	
11	look at renewable energy	add garbage to town services	
12	need public water and sewer	need to be able to purchase tickets at the site	
13	want DSL and cable service in rural areas	garbage and recycling removal for properties outside town	
14	no cable/DSL in rural areas	include trash and garbage pickup as a town service invest	
15	master plan for infrastructure needs	in transfer station recycling program	
16	public water on Bush Road/Plank Road	it would be nice to have trash service once a month	

## 2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey

### Comments for Evans Mills

	Comments	Community Activities
1	convert wetlands behind LeRay Street into a Memorial Park	
2	need stop light at corner in Evans Mills	group Community Activities
3	sound control for Race Track	more entertainment locally
4	plant trees along streets	develop youth club program
5	install sidewalks	there is nothing for youths to do
6	downtown Evans Mills needs something besides bars	need program for youths
7	need a red and green light at the square	want a Chucky Cheese
8	keep parking away from the square	activities for youth
9	Village Police	nice parks for children
10	local Evans Mills bar needs to keep windows and doors shut after 10:00 pm	more community events
11	cigarette butt cans needed outside of bar	things for children to do
12	traffic light at Post Office intersection	skateboard park/recreations site
13	problem with children riding skateboards in the street	provide kids with place to skateboard
14	speed limit sign on Schell Ave	provide place for kids to ride skateboards
15	events to make troops feel more welcome	improvements to ballfield
16	wants a walking trail in Evans Mills similar to trail in Calcium	clean up park in Riverbend
17	restoration of downtown Evans Mills	expand activities for children
18	cleanup old buildings	local community center/YMCA
19	community center	need winter recreation for children
20	winter and summer sports	baseball field has expanded but ice rink has disappeared
21	community pool	a community park or recreation area
22	revitalization of Village prohibiting junk	more equipment at recreation park
23	grocery store in Village of Evans Mills	need skate board place on Noble Street
24	drug stores in Village of Evans Mills	turn old cheese factory into a community center with a skate park
25	police protection	need youth center and skate park
26	traffic has increased in Evans Mills (speeding)	need year round youth services for junior high (11 to 15) age group
27	cracked sidewalks in the Village	safe place for kids to go and things for them to do
28	new sidewalks on Factory Street	family recreation area with playgrounds and skate park
29	build a skateboard park	
30	downtown businesses with family centers	
31	remove old firehall and make a parking lot	
32	four way stop at Public Square	
33	make roadways in Village more pedestrian friendly	
34	improve parking availability for Last Call	
35	enforce speed limits	
36	make the railroad responsible for erosion	
37	assist Village residents with proper water drainage and extension of pipelines	
38	skate park at community park	
39	town to continue to support Jack Williams Park for ice rink	
40	need local police for youths	
41	investment in Village to improve dilapidated buildings	
42	more police patrols	

## 2007 Town of LeRay Community Survey

### Comments for Black River

	Comments	Community Activities
1	downtown coffee shop	group Community Activities
2	get rid of cell tower in Village	more entertainment locally
3	full-time police protection	develop youth club program
4	Village Police	there is nothing for youths to do
5	events to make troops feel more welcome	need program for youths
6	cleanup old buildings	want a Chucky Cheese
7	community center	activities for youth
8	winter and summer sports	nice parks for children
9	community pool	more community events
10	revitalization of village prohibiting junk	things for children to do
11	cracked sidewalks in the Village	skateboard park/recreations site
12	sidewalks are in horrible condition, taxes should cover the cost to repair	provide kids with place to skateboard
13	preserve quality of life in Black River	provide place for kids to ride skateboards
14	widen intersection on Route 3	improvements to ballfield
15	add left hand turn lanes on Route 3 in front of Dollar Shop and Post Office	clean up park in riverbend
16	major multi-community purpose center	expand activities for children
17	road repairs	local community center/YMCA
18	better street lighting in streets off Route 3	need winter recreation for children
19	keep the Village small as is	baseball field has expanded but ice rink has disappeared
20	increase size of Black River Police force	clean up garbage along Route 3
21	enforce speed limits	downtown businesses with family centers
22	better police protection in Black River	people drive too fast on Wendell lane
23	promote expansion of businesses near Black River	adding businesses will not improve the peaceful environment of Black River
24	pave Black River end of walking trail	commend the Black River Village spring and Fall cleanup
25		local grocery stores and restaurants
26		more businesses along Route 3 in Village area
27		need year round youth services for junior high (11 to 15) age group
28		safe place for kids to go and things for them to do
29		family recreation area with playgrounds and skate park

**APPENDIX B**  
**Public Meeting Notes and Summary**



# 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. SelfStorage 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.

# Town of LeRay Comprehensive Plan

## *Summary of Input from 4/23/08 Public Workshop*

Following a presentation, workshop participants broke into groups to answer the following questions:

- 1. What do you like about the ideas presented this evening? Why?**
- 2. Which ideas do you think will make a positive contribution to the future of LeRay?**

*These are ideas and concepts that were presented by the comprehensive plan committee and consultants that were viewed favorably by those in attendance at the workshop:*

Proactive Community Planning

Working together as a town to think about the future

Protection of Ag and Farm Lands, but some concern about financing a Farmland Protection Program

Recognizes farming and agriculture as working landscapes

Improving the existing agri-zoning to make it more difficult for developers to cut out small lots that will disrupt farming

While maps and concepts are close, some minor tweaking of potential conceptual access points within the NYS 342/US 11 Focus Area may be desirable

Providing Connections Between the residential, commercial, and proposed park lands (mentioned several times)

Sidewalks, paths, and trails (mentioned several times)

Improves both vehicle and pedestrian connectivity

The idea of concentrating growth in the vicinity of Fort Drum and in and near villages and hamlets (mentioned several times), leaving the remainder of LeRay as ag lands and open space, in part to reduce traffic and provide connectivity options for travel along Route 11.

How to make hamlets and villages more attractive to investment and desirable as places to live and work.

Providing mixed use options for residents

Providing settings that will encourage interaction

Neighborhoods

Parks

Community Facilities

Providing a balance of housing types for residents, regardless of age or income

Provision for frontage and access roads along Route 11 (mentioned several times)

“Green” concepts

Recreation Options (mentioned several times)

Active recreational options such as leagues

Passive recreation

Close to neighborhoods

How should the town organize this, since this is not currently a town function?

Places for younger residents to go and have fun

Provision for green spaces "Provide as much as possible"

Greenbelt areas

Protection of the Indiana Bat

Fosters land conservation

Small ways to make buildings attractive (Design Guidelines)

Retention of existing forest land and more trees in some places to mitigate the "heat island" effect

The possibility of a Farmers Market located in LeRay

Outreach and understanding of the current and future Amish population

Agritourism, including mazes, wineries, honey production, cheese production, farm tours, petting zoo, etc

Working with Fort Drum to minimize light pollution into LeRay

Increase outreach, communications, and connections between LeRay and Fort Drum and vice-versa

Work to obtain grants to mitigate some costs of this vision

Realization that the region is a vacation area (pools and places to encourage year-round use)

### **3) Any concerns about the ideas presented this evening?**

*These are issue areas that residents felt some measure of concern about during the group discussions:*

Parks and recreation - concern about addressing possible liability issues for developers and landowners, especially smaller scale landowners, who may be asked to provide public access for recreational purposes.

Recognize Local Businesses - make it possible for them to succeed - question of fairness. Some of this is perceived as unfriendly to local business, since plans may inhibit their right to develop in some fashion.

Homebuilders

Self-Storage businesses

Car Dealerships

How does the existing moratorium for self-storage units play into this?

How to make this happen, is there the financial and political will to make this vision real, since the devil is in the details

Taxes, since growth raises demands for services which raises taxes -

Can other funding sources make this work, whether it be Fort Drum, NYS, Federal funding, working to get YMCA in LeRay, etc?

Who will pay for these projects, including farmland protection?

Heavy vehicles (large trucks) should be restricted to major roads - this is an issue on some county roads that are primarily residential. As traffic grows on major roads (Route 11), trucks look for shortcuts.

How can the town tell a farmer that they can't sell their property to a developer?

Will this require zoning changes?

Will new roads be designed in a way not to serve as shortcuts?

Costs and financing for new facilities for town residents

Need to work with local and state governments to regulate speed limits, since the growth has come, but speed limits are same as when roads were very rural in nature

How to introduce ped/bike access along the Route 11 corridor

Are provisions for Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV's), Segways', Golf carts, or other small electric vehicle, similar to Celebration or in The Villages (both in Florida) reasonable?

How can villages/hamlets position themselves to benefit from potential growth?

Limitations to existing sewer/water systems in village areas

Look to future extensions of both sewer and water

City of Watertown

Town of LeRay/Fort Drum

What are the trigger points for capacity improvements along local roads, including NYS Route 342?

#### **4. Issues we missed**

*These were issues that were not discussed earlier in the evening that residents felt should be addressed in the creation of the Comprehensive Plan:*

Property Maintenance

Are there any plans for addressing transit in this process, both internally, and as part of a county-wide system, whether it be park and ride, paratransit, commuter buses to Watertown, or ridesharing systems (vans or otherwise)

**APPENDIX C**  
**Additional Transportation Information**



## ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS.

<b>ROAD CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>RURAL LOCAL ROAD (FC 09)</b>	Rural Local Roads primarily provide access to adjacent land and service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors or other highway systems. Roads within town that have this designation include CR 16, CR 17, CR 18, CR 46, CR 50, CR 129 and CR 138
<b>URBAN PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL - OTHER (NO CONTROL OF ACCESS) (FC 14)</b>	This road type serves the major centers of activity of a metropolitan area, the highest traffic volume corridors. Urban principal arterials carry a high proportion of the total urban area travel on a minimum mileage. The principal arterial system should carry the major portion of trips entering and leaving the urban area, as well as the majority of through movements desiring to bypass the central city. Almost all fully and partially controlled access facilities will be part of this functional system. U.S. US Route 11 in the town carries this classification.
<b>URBAN MINOR ARTERIAL (FC 16)</b>	This type of road interconnects with and augments the urban principal arterial system and provides service to trips of moderate length at somewhat lower of travel mobility than principal arterials. Ideally, urban minor arterials should not penetrate identifiable neighborhoods. The spacing of minor arterial streets should normally be not more than 1 mile in fully developed areas. Roads within town that have this designation include NYS Routes 342, 37, 283, 26, 3 and 971Q.
<b>URBAN COLLECTOR (FC 17)</b>	Provides both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas. An urban collector may penetrate residential neighborhoods, distributing trips from the arterials through the area to the ultimate destination. The collector street also collects traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channels it into the arterial system. In the central business district, and in other areas of like development and traffic density, the collector system may include the street grid which forms a logical entity for traffic circulation. NYS Route 971V in the town carries this classification.

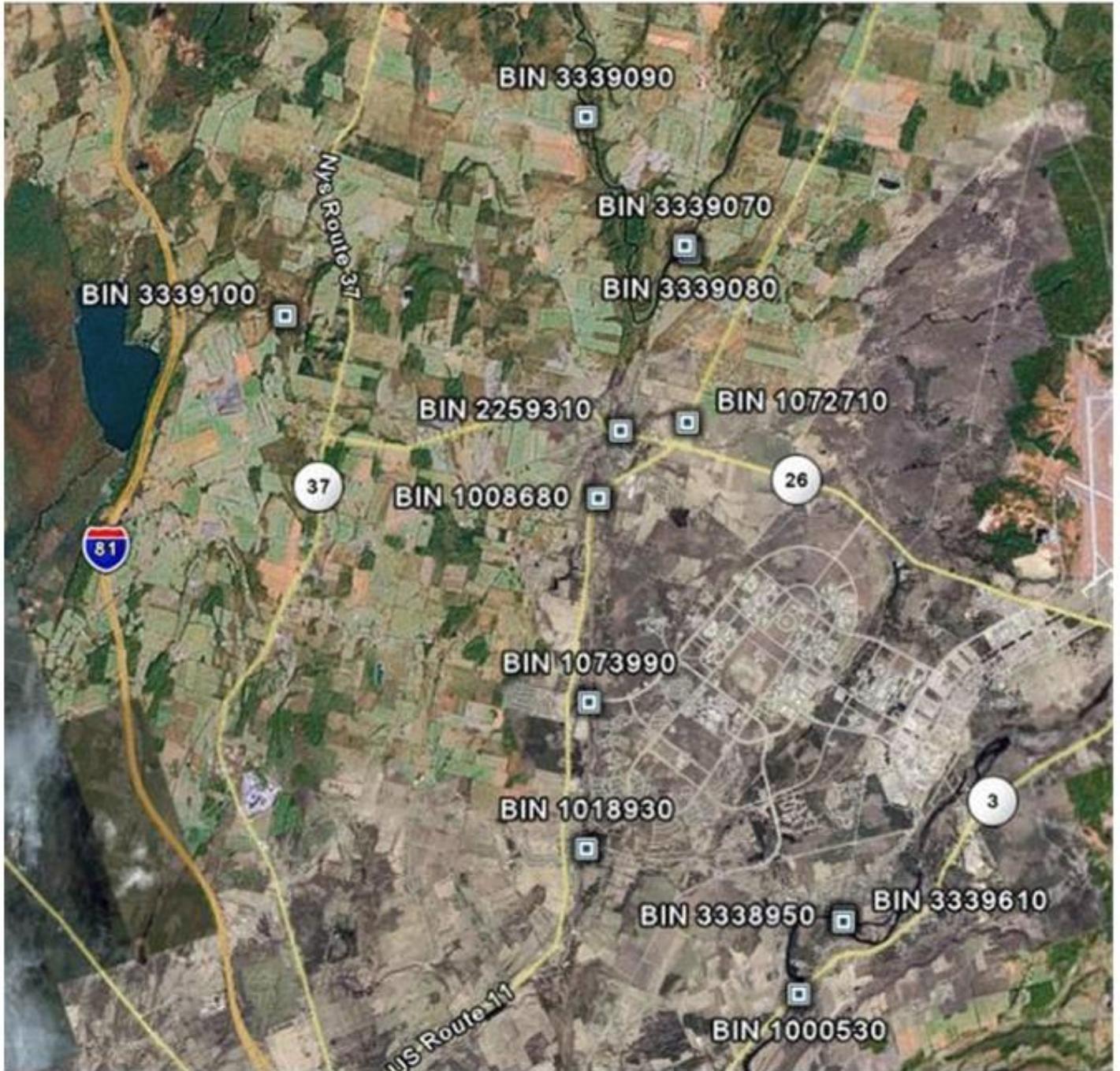
Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) for State highways in LeRay.

<b>AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC</b>		
<b>STATE HIGHWAYS</b>		
<b>Highway</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Annual Traffic Volume (Year)</b>
NYS Route 342	Town line to US Route 11	12,389 (2005)
	US Route 11 to NYS Route 283	6,390 (2004)
	NYS Route 283 to NYS Route 3	5,433 (2004)
US Route 11	NYS Route 37 to NYS Route 342	8,882 (2004)
	NYS Route 342 to NYS Route 971Q	28,617 (2004)
	NYS Route 971Q to NYS Route 26	9,887 (2005)
	NYS Route 26 to CR 29 Philadelphia	7,257 (2004)
NYS Route 37	NYS Route 342 to CR 136	2,905 (2004)
NYS Route 283	Watertown City line to NYS Route 342	5,810 (2004)
NYS Route 26	US Route 11 to CR 37	4,815 (2004)
	CR 37 to NYS Route 3	7,903 (2005)
NYS Route 3	Watertown City line to NYS Route 342	8,637 (2005)
	NYS Route 342 to Main Street Black River	7,292 (2005)
NYS Route 971Q	US Route 11 to end of NYS Route 971Q	15,480 (2004)
NYS Route 971V	Gate #1 Fort Drum to Gate #2 Fort Drum	3,964 (2005)
	Gate #2 Fort Drum to NYS Route 3	3,330 (2004)

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) for County maintained highways in LeRay.

<b>AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC (3 day count)</b>		
<b>COUNTY ROADS</b>		
Highway	Location	AADT
County Road 16	NYS Route 37 (east)	800
	Evans Mills Village	1,200
County Road 17	NYS Route 37 (west)	300
	NYS Route 37 (east)	200
	Beckwith Road (north)	360
	CR 46	370
County Road 18	CR 46	1,420
	NYS Route 37	1,360
County Road 46	US Route 11	1,620
	Evans Mills Village	2,030
	CR 18 (south)	490
	Silver Street (north)	430
County Road 50	NYS Route 283	1,180
	Black River Village	1,000
County Road 129	Black River Village	690
	NYS Route 342	840
County Road 138	US Route 11	1,030
	NYS Route 342	890

Bridge Locations in the Town of LeRay



Bridge Locations in the Town of LeRay

<b>Bridge Identification Number</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Last Inspection</b>	<b>Condition Rating</b>
2259310	Village of Evans Mills	North Main Street over Pleasant Creek	Village of Evans Mills	1930	08/28/06	3.318*
1000530	Town of LeRay	Route 3 over Power Canal	NYSDOT	1948	01/08/06	4.507
1008680	Town of LeRay	US Route 11 over CSX Trans	NYSDOT	1963	11/15/05	6.730
1072710	Town of LeRay	US Route 11 over Pleasant Creek	NYSDOT	1963	04/25/06	4.737
1018930	Town of LeRay	NYS Route 342 over CSX Trans	NYSDOT	2004	09/19/06	6.771
1073990	Town of LeRay	971Q over CSX Trans	NYSDOT	1988	10/18/06	5.659
3339080	Town of LeRay	Anstead Road over Trout Brook	Jefferson County	1942	09/20/06	4.673
3339100	Town of LeRay	County Road 17 over Lowell Creek	Jefferson County	2002	09/21/06	6.561
3339070	Town of LeRay	Elm Ridge Road over Indian River	Jefferson County	1962	10/05/05	6.492
3339090	Town of LeRay	Joachim Road over Indian River	Jefferson County	1931	09/20/06	4.772
3338950	Village of Black River	Main Street over Black River	Jefferson County	2005	11/09/05	7.000
3339610	Village of Black River	South Main Street over NiMo Power Canal	Jefferson County	2005	11/08/05	7.000

Source: New York State Department of Transportation

Data current as of 8/29/2007

\*BIN 2259310, North Main Street over Pleasant Creek is listed as Structurally Deficient

## Notes

The bridge condition ratings shown in the table above are current as of August 2007. NYSDOT Bridge General Recommendations rating is an assessment of the bridge's overall condition. Bridges are rated on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the best. Items considered in the ratings include evaluations of the bridge's abutments, wingwalls, deck, superstructure, and pier.

The narrative descriptions for condition ratings in this range are as follows:

3. Considerable deterioration of some or all bridge components. The bridge may no longer be able to support original design loads. Load posting may be needed. There may be considerable section loss on primary and secondary members. Concrete components are spalled with rebar exposure over a large portion of the areas. Extensive footing undermining may have occurred.
4. Moderate deterioration of primaries, secondaries, and substructures has occurred, but bridge load capacity is not substantially reduced. Considerable reconditioning of secondary members, substructures, and other components may be needed. Primary members do not yet need extensive reconditioning. There may be some minor substructure undermining.
5. Primary members and substructures are in good condition and do not need major repairs. Bridge load capacity is not reduced, but other parts of the bridge (such as deck elements) may need extensive repairs. The bridge may require repainting because of corrosion starting on steel members. Scour may have exposed, but not undermined footings.
6. Only minor deterioration is present. Touch-up painting may be required or other minor repairs to secondary items. Minor bearing readjustments may be needed. There may be minor cracks or spalls in the substructures.
7. The bridge is in new condition, without deterioration except perhaps minor flaking of the top coat of paint. No work is needed other than routine maintenance.

As shown in the table, all of the bridges within the Town have condition ratings above 4, with the exception of North Main Street over Pleasant Creek in the Village of Evans Mills which has a condition rating of 3.318.

APPENDIX D  
Listing of Endangered and Threatened  
Species in the Town of LeRay



**Appendix D: Listing of Endangered and Threatened Species in the Town of LeRay**

<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Last Date</b>	<b>Elem. Group</b>	<b>NY Listed</b>	<b>US Listed</b>
Emys blandingii	Blanding's Turtle	1980-07	Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	
Successional northern sandplain grassland	Successional Northern Sandplain Grassland	1992-09-09	Community	Unlisted	
Circus cyaneus	Northern Harrier	1992-06-07	Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	
Boechera stricta	Drummond's Rock-cress	2001-07-17	Vascular Plant	Endangered	
Cyperus schweinitzii	Schweinitz's Flatsedge	1993-07-28	Vascular Plant	Rare	
Cistothorus platensis	Sedge Wren	2000-07-16	Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	
Bartramia longicauda	Upland Sandpiper	2000-07	Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	
Ixobrychus exilis	Least Bittern	2000-07	Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	
Chlidonias niger	Black Tern	2004-06-21	Vertebrate Animal	Endangered	
Bartramia longicauda	Upland Sandpiper	2005-06-30	Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	
Ammodramus henslowii	Henslow's Sparrow	2005-07-14	Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	
Cistothorus platensis	Sedge Wren	2005-07-11	Vertebrate Animal	Threatened	
Myotis sodalis	Indiana Bat	2006-08-20	Vertebrate Animal	Endangered	Endangered

Source: NYSDEC Natural Heritage Program - September 2007