

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

The following “Town-Wide Principals” summarize the town’s policies and priorities at a town-wide 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 thorough 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**