



FORT DRUM REGIONAL LIAISON ORGANIZATION

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FDRLO Releases

Fort Drum Region Transit Needs Assessment and Analysis Report

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Watertown NY, February 2, 2012... The Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO) today released the Fort Drum Region Transit Needs Assessment and Analysis Report. This study was prepared under contract with the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization with financial support from the Office of Economic Adjustment, Department of Defense.

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates Inc., a nationally recognized consultant based in New York that specializes in rural transit and military base-oriented transportation services conducted key project tasks under supervision of FDRLO's Transportation Working Group.

The nine-month study examined the varied forms and patterns of the region's current public transportation services, assessed areas of additional need, and mindful of state and regional budget constraints has identified potential and appropriate cost-effective ways to improve public transportation services in the Tri-County region. The project focused on existing systems in the tri-county area with special emphasis on communities within a 30-mile radius of Fort Drum's North Gate on US 11.

"Getting from place to place without a personal vehicle can be challenging for local residents as well as for military personnel and their families, particularly with the rising cost of food, gasoline and other necessities," commented FDRLO board chair Elizabeth C. Fipps. "Our intention in undertaking the study was to determine the need for and potential options for expanded mobility within the wider Fort Drum community."

"The overriding question that we wanted to answer was quite simple," observed Carl McLaughlin, Executive Director of FDRLO. "How can we make this area more accessible to its own residents? The rural nature of our counties makes the answer much more complex. Our intention is to examine opportunities to match resources with needs, develop a mobility program and coordinate access to the wheels already on the road each day."

The Nelson\Nygaard team reviewed and evaluated existing and potential fixed and non-fixed (on call) route transportation services. Through surveys and focus groups, they examined current latent demand and made projections on future public transit needs.

An analysis of major destinations overlaid with transit routes showed that there are numerous providers in the study area providing a variety of client services.

The report provides recommendations on near term and long term public transit and transportation alternative options that could efficiently meet the needs of Fort Drum and surrounding area communities.

Some of the recommendations to be considered as part of a coordinated regional effort include:

- Expand Citibus beyond City limits
- Develop vanpools / Use Mass Transit Benefit for soldiers
- Maximize use of private long-haul carriers
- Operate on-post shuttle route to transfer point at or beyond Main Gate
- Transfer can be timed with private bus system currently operating on Route 11 corridor
- Develop vanpools from Lewis County to Fort Drum and Watertown
- Extend Lewis County's LOOP Purple Route three days per week
- Open JRC routes to members of the public
- Work with hotels and existing transportation providers to create a shuttle for airport access

As noted in the report's Executive Summary:

This study has resulted in numerous recommendations, many of which can be quickly implemented and have a high return on investment... Whether through a Regional Transit Committee or a mobility manager, the longer-term recommendations requiring greater funding and collaboration can be tackled as monies and partnerships are formed and solidified. (page ES-4)

The next step in the process is to formalize the Transit Task Force's longer term goals and areas of concentration selected from the report recommendations.

The final report is available on FDRLO's website, www.fdrlo.org.