

**Organization** River Area Council of Governments

**Board** Retail Development

**Date and Time** Wednesday, February 12 2003 at 7:00 PM

**Place** Town of Champion Offices Board Room (rear of building) 10 N Broad St, West Carthage NY

**Contact** [Chris Vargulick](#) Town Clerk Phone (315) 493-3240 Fax(315) 493-2900

## Minutes

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### RACOG Regional Retail Committee Meeting

Date: February 12, 2002

Location: Town of Champion Municipal Building

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Attendees: Pat Kehoe, John Peck, Rick Novy, Dave Zembiec, Ron Blinebry, & Kathy Riches-Amyot.

Absent: Rebecca Vary, Herb Kraft, Ray Powers, Bruce Armstrong, Frank Koster, Tim Wright & Scott Burto

As facilitator, Kathy opened the second meeting with a brief overview and summary of key points and next steps, previously identified. The guidelines and recommendations identified in the "Downtown Revitalization Plan for the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage" and the "Retail Analysis Plan for Downtown Carthage and West Carthage" served as tools to assist members of the committee in advancing their role. Emphasis was once again placed upon the role of each member to maintain a flow of communication between the activities of the committee and the entity they represent.

Members of the committee listed several retail attractions significant to the region, listing the proximity of Fort Drum as the first attraction and the potential to market retail services and products to military personnel. Complementary community support services were also identified as retail attractions to the area due to an increased flow of vehicular traffic from visitors seeking services from the Carthage Area Hospital, Carthage Central School District, and existing retail businesses. Also identified as scenic and recreational attractions supporting retail development within the villages are the Black River and the Olympic Trail Scenic Byway, providing entrepreneurs and investors with outdoor sports marketing opportunities around boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, snowmobiling, and hotel/motel services to accommodate overnight visitors.

In addition, attendees identified the dense population of the two villages as a key attraction to retailers as well as rural populace in surrounding communities within a 20-mile radius and supported by its crossroads position of the villages along Routes 26/126, 3/3A, & 3/26, resulting in flows of traffic into and through the villages. Other attractions listed include public infrastructure; Roadrunner and DSL (to accommodate high-speed internet access); available retail space; Carthage Furniture Store Project; municipal support initiatives i.e. the "Fa?ade and Public Improvement Program," Planning Board Guidance," "Regional Retail Development Committee;" and the Greater Area Chamber of Commerce.

Local and regional incentives identified to leverage and support retail investment include 485-B Tax Breaks & PILOT's, "Fa?ade Improvement Grants" along "Main Street" and assistance through low-interest loans from Economic Development Corporation of Carthage (EDCC)/Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency (JCIDA)/Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Three local banking institutions also provide more traditional forms of funding to further attract retail investors.

Ron Blinebry stated the need to identify action steps as key to successfully attracting retail development into the RACOG area, suggesting one action step includes strengthening the existing economy as retail business investors are attracted to an area that reflects a thriving economy. Action steps are listed as follows:

1. Reach out to the Fort Drum market;
2. Market and promote the RACOG area;
3. Increase directional signage to assist flows of traffic in and out of commercial areas;
4. Street scape enhancements;
5. Build and expand recreational resources and services and other amenities;
6. Identify and reach out to potential partners;
7. Revise planning guidelines and zoning enforcement to support appropriate retail development;
8. Identify retail opportunities;

Attendees identified the need to package and promote the areas retail opportunities as a way to attract additional retail development. In preparing for the next meeting, they agreed to explore the interest of potential partners in funding a promotion and marketing campaign. Partners may include the EDCC, Greater Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and RACOG.

Due to conflicting schedules, the **next meeting** is scheduled for Thursday, **March 20, 2003 at 6:00 P.M. at the Village of West Carthage Board Room.**