

**2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION COMMENTS AND RESPONSES**

**Comment 2-1 (Letter #1: Clifford H. Schwartz, December 10, 2008 and at the Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** I am concerned that the large scale of the proposed development will have a detrimental effect on my quality of life and on the overall well-being of my community.

**Response 2-1:** *The analysis of potential adverse impacts on community services included in the DEIS/DGEIS was based upon the adopted Scope and disclosed that either no significant adverse impacts on police protection, fire protection, emergency medical services, or schools were anticipated from the then proposed action, or that the impacts would be mitigated.*

*In response to comments received on the DEIS/DGEIS, among other things, the Applicant has chosen to move forward with the As-of-Right, Residential and Convenience Retail Alternative presented in the DEIS/DGEIS. Under this development plan, as indicated in Table 2-1, the commercial component of the project would be reduced from 480,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet (87.5 percent) while the number of residential units would be increased from 1,340 to 1,613 households (20.4 percent). As documented in the Alternatives Chapter of the DEIS/DGEIS, the As-of-Right Residential and Convenience Retail Alternative would result in impacts similar to or less than those that would result from the Proposed Action presented in that document. As indicated in DEIS/DGEIS Table 5-1, reproduced in part below as Table 2-2, the anticipated impacts on community services associated with the As-of-Right Plan would be similar to, or less than, those disclosed in the DEIS/DGEIS for the previously proposed plan.*

Table 2-1 Rock Hill Town Center Development Alternatives					
Alternative	Dwelling Units				Commercial Square Footage
	Single Family	Townhouse Quad	Multifamily	Total	
Previously Proposed Action	448	508	384	1,340	480,000
Currently Proposed As-of-Right Plan	217	1,012	384	1,613	60,000
Source: Tim Miller Associates, Inc., 2009					

**Table 2-2  
Comparison of Alternatives**

	<i>Previously Proposed Action</i>	<i>No Action Alternative</i>	<i>Proposed As-of-Right Alternative</i>	<i>2007 Proposed Plan</i>	<i>Regional/Town Commercial and Residential</i>
Type of Development	Residential with Town Commercial	None	Residential with Convenience Retail	Residential with Town Commercial	Commercial with Residential
Community Facilities and Services	1,340 residential units with estimated population of about 3,000 persons. Some increase in demand on community services but property taxes generated would cover costs.	No Impact	Similar Impacts: Increased population of about 330 persons but reduction in commercial square footage.	Similar Impact: Population about 335 greater with same commercial square footage as proposed action.	Greater Impact: About 200 more persons than under previous proposed action. Greater demands on utilities because of increased commercial development.

Source: Tim Miller Associates, Inc., 2008

*The Applicant notes that the proposed project would be constructed in phases over a fifteen to twenty year period, thereby allowing existing services in the community to gradually adjust to the elements of the project and avoid significant adverse impacts on those services.*

*There were no significant impacts to the community both with regard to visual resources and community services identified in the DEIS/DGEIS with regard to the original Proposed Action. Under the plan presented in this FEIS, this would continue to be true. Refer to Chapter 3.6 Visual Resources and Chapter 3.8 Community Services for additional text relating to these areas of assessment.*

**Comment 2-2 (Letter #1: Clifford H. Schwartz, December 10, 2008 and at the Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):**

As I have studied the DEIS and brought the project to the attention of the Rock Hill community, I have been accused of being obstructionist and anti-development. Rather than focus on the facts brought to light by the process, I have been told that I need to generate popular support in the community for my positions. The issues raised by the DEIS are supposed to prevent the merits of this project from being judged as if they were contestants in some kind of political beauty contest. The facts - or absence of facts - should speak for themselves. I believe this DEIS has left unanswered many questions that should have been addressed before the document went out for public comment.

I believe the members of the Planning Board need to take a critical look at the process that has brought us to this point. For a project of this magnitude and duration, a single public hearing seems to be inadequate for communicating the community's concerns. The absence of our summer residents means that a significant part of our community has not had an opportunity to be heard. The goal here should not just be to meet the legal requirements for involving the community. The goal should be to actively recruit the community's involvement. As a step in that direction, you may wish to consider adding a public comment session to each of your meetings, as is done at the Town Board.

I do not intend to address all the deficiencies of the DEIS, as Robert Geneslaw did in his June 5, 2008 draft Completeness Review. I remain concerned that Mr. Geneslaw's comments may not have reached the individual Planning Board members on a timely basis. I do not believe the individual Board members gave sufficient attention to that review document. It is understandable that a non-expert may feel intimidated by the hundreds of pages in the full DEIS. However, Mr. Geneslaw's memo was only 18 pages long and it was written in non-technical language. It was in effect the mid-term report card on the DEIS and it should have generated a very lively discussion among individual Board members.

You also need to look at the absence of substantive discussion at the meeting in which you certified the completeness of the DEIS. At a bare minimum, reference should have been made to the open points listed in the 15-page Response to Comments, which was submitted by the applicant on September 10. As an outside witness to this process, the absence of discussion about the DEIS made us question whether you as individuals are sufficiently involved in the decisions that are being made about this development, especially after I heard the lively discussions about much smaller projects that occurred at that same meeting.

***Response 2-2:*** *The Planning Board as Lead Agency under SEQRA is required, by law, to take a hard look at the Proposed Action to determine the possibility of its development leading to significant impacts to the environment, the community, etc. To that end, the Planning Board has met the obligations set forth by the State of New York from the issuance of a positive declaration, to the development and adoption of a project scope, through the internal and public review of the DEIS/SGEIS prepared for the project.*

*In meeting the "hard look" requirement, the Rock Hill Town Center DEIS was reviewed prior to and discussed at many meetings including those conducted on April 23, 2008, September 10, 2008, September 24, 2008, October 15, 2008, October 22, 2008 and December 10, 2008. Extensive comments from the Town's Consultants (McGoey, Hauser and Edsall Consulting Engineers P.C., Robert Geneslaw Co. and Clough Harbor & Associates) as well as from Planning Board members were presented to and address by the Applicant during the SEQRA environmental review process. Copies of the consultant's letters can be found in Appendix D herein. These comments resulted in changes to both the DEIS and the project plans to address the Town's comments and concerns.*

*Subsequent to the adoption of the DEIS as complete and the public hearing/public comment period on the project, additional meetings were held, both between the Town and the Applicant and with the public involved (formal planning board meetings) at which the project and the SEQRA process were discussed. Additional comments were then provided by the Town on the project related FEIS. These comments can be found in Appendix D of this FEIS.*

*The Planning Board will continue to take its charge seriously and meet all future obligations under the State Law including the development of a Findings Statement for the project.*

*In order to provide the public an additional opportunity to contribute to the ongoing SEQRA environmental review process, the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on this FEIS. At that time, comments from the public will be solicited. Those comments will*

*be carefully considered and needed changes to the project and/or the SEQRA record, if any, will be made as required under SEQRA.*

**Comment 2-3 (Letter #3 Norman B. Gold, Levy & Gold, LLP, December 3, 2008):** My wife and I are new to Rock Hill; it will be four years in January. This is a second home and hope to make it our retirement home in the near future so at that time we will be able to vote for our representation in these matters.

We chose the area for its quite and slow pace of life, along with the uncluttered country appeal.

Since we have been here we have seen some attempted growth but the local area can not and does not support this. It is not a bad thing to try, but these projects or businesses should never have been started.

**Response 2-3:** *Comment noted. The project site has three separate zoning districts Highway Commercial, Suburban Residential and Rural Residential. The proposed project would have developed the property with substantially the same overall mix of commercial and housing allowed under the current zoning, but would have required rezoning to allow the development to occur in a different pattern than the current zoning would require.*

*The As of Right Alternative currently being proposed would not require rezoning but rather would allow development to occur in conformance with the existing zoning. The proposed primarily residential development is envisioned to occur over an extended timeframe which should allow an adequate period for absorption of housing units into the local community. The anticipated market would include employees drawn to the area by the significant new commercial development that is planned in the area.*

**Comment 2-4 (Letter #4 Sheldon Bellovin, December 2, 2008):** A project of this magnitude consisting of almost 1400 homes housing almost 1900 families is so massive in the content that I cannot believe the Town Of Thompson Planning Board could even consider a huge project such as this in our small rural community.

**Response 2-4:** *Refer to Response 2-3.*

**Comment 2-5 (Letter #4 Sheldon Bellovin, December 2, 2008):** I implore you to use your good judgment and protect our community and its residents and preserve our good health and protection of our air and water resources and quality of life in general. The preservation of our valuable and unique habitat is in your hands, this is where you and your families live remember that.

**Response 2-5:** *Comment noted. Refer to Responses 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3.*

**Comment 2-6 (Letter #7 John F. Konefal, President, Wanaksink Lake Club, Inc):** As proposed, the "town center" could have serious immediate and long term effects on Wanaksink Lake, the corporation/club that represents its' members and property owners and our surrounding communities. Those effects are both physical, in terms of potential damage and hazards as a result of this project, and social, in terms of the impact on our Hamlet and our current business district.

**Response 2-6:** *The Proposed Action as presented identifies all potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the residential and smaller commercial segment of the project. Along with the potential impacts, mitigation measures or means to offset those impacts have been identified. Regarding impacts specific to Wanaksink Lake, while stormwater runoff will be conveyed to engineered stormwater management facilities for water quality treatment prior to discharge off-site, Wanaksink Lake is up-gradient of the project site and will not receive any runoff from the project.*

*Regarding potential impacts to the Hamlet and the current business district, the As-of-Right plan includes 60,000 square feet of commercial/retail floor space a reduction of 87.5 percent from the plan presented in the DEIS/DGEIS. Significant impacts to the existing commercial community are not anticipated to result from the introduction of the new retail space. The purpose of the convenience retail portion of the project is to offer shops and services not already available on main street. Introduction of additional retail has the potential to benefit the existing shops and services through drawing customers to the area and making it possible for both existing and new residents to find more of the essentials in close proximity to their homes.*

**Comment 2-7 (Letter #7 John F. Konefal, President, Wanaksink Lake Club, Inc):** The proposed Rock Hill Town Center would threaten our existing town center, create unnecessary environmental hazards, and potentially increase our taxes and the need for additional traffic public services. Please lobby the Town of Thompson Board to deny all zoning changes, reduce the size of the development for the present time allowing for future negotiations regarding further development. Protect the community, protect our lands and deliver a message for all those future developers that are going to follow these investors' footsteps.

**Response 2-7:** *Though the proposed development of 1340 housing units and 480,000 square feet of commercial development would have required zone changes, the overall number of housing units and area of commercial development would have been substantially in conformance with the existing zoning but with a different spatial arrangement of uses. Under this plan the tax impact would have been negligible, but the traffic impact would have been significant. It was anticipated that the existing community center would have benefited due to the traffic passing by en route to the new commercial development thereby exposing potential customers to shopping opportunities at existing businesses.*

*The preferred alternative, the as-of right Residential Alternative, would require no zoning changes. It would have several benefits over the proposed plan. In particular the traffic impact would be significantly reduced corresponding to a significant reduction in commercial development. Since the buildout is projected to be twenty years the increase in traffic and the perceived level of construction activity would be relatively low. Since the development is planned to be phased with construction of separate "neighborhoods", the development will be concentrated in those areas under construction and not spread out over the entire site.*

**Comment 2-8 (Letter #10 Susan Roth, AICP, Hudson Valley Planning and Preservation, December 9, 2008):** The majority of the Association members have indicated general support for new development in the hamlet of Rock Hill; however, they feel that the current configuration

of the project and the proposed density would be harmful to their quality of life in many areas of environmental concern addressed in the DEIS.

**Response 2-8:** *The configuration of the Proposed Action is different from that presented in the DEIS/DGEIS based on comments received on the original plan, among other things. Significant impacts would not result from the As-of-Right development assessed in the DEIS/DGEIS and here in the FEIS. Also refer to Response 2-1.*

**Comment 2-9 (Letter #10 Susan Roth, AICP, Hudson Valley Planning and Preservation,**

**December 9, 2008):** Recommendation 1: The development of the property should be reduced to the as-of-right provided in the code for single family units as a maximum number of units permitted for the site, without regard to the placement of the units. It should be noted that any acreage allocated for commercial development would need to be deducted from the acreage available for residential construction when calculating the residential development allowed as of right.

1. Table 3.4-2 in the DEIS provides an analysis to justify the requested number of units as an as of right calculation." An "as of right" calculation is normally based upon the number of dwelling units that could be permitted without the application of a special use permit, and prior to the application of any requested zoning changes. This analysis does not deduct for land constraints as required by the code, and includes the HC zoning code in the analysis since single family homes are permitted by right at a rate of 1.9 units per acre. This Alternative zoning density analysis would allow for a more acceptable unit count from the Association's perspective.

**Alternate Zoning Density Analysis**

Lot	Gross Acres	Current zoning	As of right du/acre	As of right maximum
24-1-9	50.5	SR	1.9	95.95
24-1-10	0.4	SR	1.9	78.66
24-1-11	60.0	SR	1.9	114.00
24-1-12	25.3	SR	1.9	48.07
25-1-9	50.5	SR	1.9	95.95
25-1-10	48.8	SR	1.9	92.72
25-1-16	17.0	SR	1.9	32.30
25-1-17	4.4	SR	1.9	8.36
25-1-21.2	105.0	RR-1	0.9	94.50
32-1-6	44.8	HC-2	1.9	85.12
32-1-7	49.7	HC-2	1.9	94.43
32-1-10	38.2	HC-2	1.9	72.58
34.9-9.2	25.7	SR	1.9	48.83
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>561.3</b>			<b>961.47</b>

Note: 25-1-24 and 25-1-15.2 were included in the description of the parcels in the beginning of the DEIS but were not included in Table 3.4-2 of the DEIS.

Source: Town of Thompson Zoning Code.

**Response 2-9:** *Net parcel area has been arrived at through the required deductions of steep slopes, watercourses and wetlands from gross parcel area. No areas proposed for commercial development were used to calculate residential density.*

*The mathematical calculation of unit count for single family homes in the SR-1 district and the HC -2 district as required in the code is a simple division of the net parcel area*

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by the allowable maximum density of 1.9 dwelling units per acre. The reason for proposing rezoning HC-2 to SR-1 in the original proposal was to take advantage of the allowable cluster provision with a special permit which would not increase density but simply allow for a more environmentally friendly development. Multiple dwellings, as defined in the code and referenced in the SR-1 Schedule, are calculated as lot area in square feet per bedroom. This is a different density calculation density than that for single family homes.

The as-of-right Residential Alternative does not propose any zone changes. In this plan the development density is based on the existing zones and, as with the original proposal, no commercial development area is used for the residential density calculations.

<b>Table 2-3 2009 As-of-Right Plan Rock Hill Town Center - Zoning Yield Summary</b>	
<b>Commercial</b>	
Allowed	127,469 sf
Proposed	60,000 sf
<b>Residential</b>	
Allowed	1,776 units
Proposed	1,613 units
Source: Tim Miller Associates, 2009.	

<b>Table 2-4 2009 As-of-Right Plan Rock Hill Town Center - Zoning Yield</b>	
<b>HC Zone South West Parcel - Commercial</b>	
Gross Lot Area	424,896 sf
Wetland Deduction	0 sf
Steep Slope Deduction	0 sf
Net Lot Area square feet	424,896 sf
Allowed Lot Coverage (30 percent)	127,469 sf
Proposed Lot Coverage	60,000 sf
<b>HC Zone South West Parcel - Residential</b>	
Gross Lot Area	3,808,603 sf
Wetland Deduction	90,490 sf
Steep Slope Deduction	66,795 sf
Net Lot Area square feet	3,651,318 sf
Net Lot Area acres	83.8 acres
Zoning Density	1.9 units/acre
Allowed Units	159 units
Proposed Units	117 units
<b>HC Zone South Central Parcel - Residential</b>	
Gross Lot Area	1,730,102 sf
Wetland Deduction	85,870 sf
Steep Slope Deduction	30,130 sf
Net Lot Area square feet	1,614,102 sf
Net Lot Area acres	37.05 acres
Zoning Density	1.9 units/acre
Allowed Units	70 units
Proposed Units	46 units
<b>RR-1 Parcel - Residential</b>	
Gross Lot Area	2,489,526 sf
Wetland Deduction	113,300 sf
Steep Slope Deduction	0 sf
Net Lot Area square feet	2,376,226 sf
Net Lot Area acres	54.55 acres
Zoning Density	0.9 units/acre
Allowed Units	49 units
Proposed Units	49 units
<b>SR Parcels - Residential Multifamily</b>	
Gross Lot Area	12,040,065 sf
Wetland Deduction	326,980 sf
Steep Slope Deduction	950,650 sf
Net Lot Area square feet	10,762,435 sf
250-28-6 (1) MF 2 BR Unit Lot area per DU; 5,400 sf/unit x 384 units	2,073,600 sf
250-28-6 (1) MF 3 BR Unit Lot area per DU; 7,200 sf/unit x 1072 units	7,718,400 sf
Total Lot area needed	9,792,000 sf
Balance Net Lot area	970,435 sf
<b>SR Parcels - Residential Single Family</b>	
Net Parcel Area	10,762,435 sf
Multifamily Area required	9,792,000 sf
Balance Net Lot Area square feet	970,435 sf
Net Lot Area acres	22.28 acres
Zoning Density	1.9 units/acre
Allowed Units	42 units
Proposed Units	5 units
Source: Tim Miller Associates, 2009.	

**Comment 2-10 (Letter #10 Susan Roth, AICP, Hudson Valley Planning and Preservation, December 9, 2008 and at the Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** On page 3.4-14, the DEIS indicates that the site was designed with the goal of increasing the walkability of the site, and creating pedestrian opportunities from multiple family residences to the new residential community centers or the new shopping center. The residential development is over a mile from the existing Rock Hill business area. As currently shown, it is over a half a mile from the majority of the new homes to the stores within the new development. The Association would prefer a plan that better integrates residential and commercial development with the existing community, and provides new residents with opportunities to support the existing businesses on Rock Hill Drive.

***Response 2-10:*** *The Proposed Action has also been designed as a walkable community. It should be noted that the residents will decide whether or not its is worth walking or driving to their destination; that is and will remain a personal choice. The intent of the sidewalks is to allow those residents interested in walking to do so.*

*Unlike the development proposed in the DEIS/DGEIS, the As-of-Right plan lacks the retail center, This plan therefore significantly reduces potential competition between the existing and new shops. By eliminating 420,000 square feet of retail floor space and introducing new residents, it is expected that these new residents will have opportunities to support the existing businesses on Rock Hill Drive.*

**Comment 2-11 (Letter #12 Martin & Fran Kotler, December 16, 2008):** We have been told about a large new housing project in Rock Hill. We recently built a new house at 5 Brighton Lane in emerald green (not a ronstein house). This expensive house was put up to enjoy the small time feeling we get in Rock Hill. We have been paying high taxes to enjoy this community.. please do not approve this project.

***Response 2-11:*** *Comment noted.*

**Comment 2-12 (Letter #13 Arlene Shapiro, December 19, 2008):** Now that I have moved to Rock Hill, living in Sullivan County has been blissful. The hamlet of Rock Hill is what living in the country should be, and I tell everyone I know what a delightful experience it is. I have always believed that if it is not broken, don't fix it. And now Rock Hill will be reconfigured, traffic lights, two lanes, and who do you think is coming up to Sullivan County to BUY homes. My guess is no one.

***Response 2-12:*** *Comment noted.*

**Comment 2-13 (Letter #13 Arlene Shapiro, December 19, 2008):** Tell me about the Concord. There is absolutely no guarantee that the Concord will ever be rebuilt, and if it is, wonderful, but wait and see. There are plenty of homes to be bought in Sullivan County for the staff of the Concord without blasting Rock Hill and building 1,500 homes, along with stores. Wait and see if there is a need. Right now half of Emerald Green is for sale and from what I can see, there are no sales, nor are there sales anywhere, unless the price is ridiculously low. In these economic times, to approve this project is a major mistake. Very few people have an interest in buying year round homes in Sullivan County, and to say this is for the Concord when at this time there is no Concord is a major mistake.

**Response 2-13:** *The developers of the Concord project would be the best source of information with respect to the status of that proposed development. The current restrained development atmosphere will, as history has demonstrated time and again, yield to a subsequent economic upturn in the future. It is anticipated that in the time required for completion of review and approvals of this project, that the housing market will rebound.*

*The project is proposed in phases with full build out not planned for up to 20 years from now. Over this time, it is expected that the housing market will continue to strengthen. The population of the area is expected to continue to grow in response to demand for second homes and to the projected increase in the job market from private development and public sector development, particularly, for instance, in the expansion of Stewart International Airport.*

**Comment 2-14 (Letter #13 Arlene Shapiro, December 19, 2008):** Rock Hill residents don't need commercial building, as we live in the country, and we are more than happy to get into our cars and drive to Middletown or Monticello. The commercial property is just fine in Rock Hill, just the way it is.

**Response 2-14:** *Comment noted. The Applicant has reduced the size of the commercial development by 420,000 square feet (87.5 percent). The remaining commercial space of 60,000 square feet is intended to be used for providers of locally consumed goods.*

**Comment 2-15 (Letter #13 Arlene Shapiro, December 19, 2008):** And to state that we need homes here for doctors is absurd, as there is a huge selection of homes in Sullivan County for doctors to choose from. The new CEO of Harris Hospital recently moved to Emerald Green. We have doctors living in Emerald Green, very happily, and we welcome them with open arms.

**Response 2-15:** *Comment noted.*

**Comment 2-16 (Ellen Hoffman, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** I'm here as a resident of Rock Hill. And I want to make it known that I used to be the MRDD, mental retardation coordinator for Sullivan County. And I've known about the plans to build a YMCA in Sullivan County since they were first a twinkle in this gentleman's eyes, and was really excited to hear that there was going to be a Y in Rock Hill. However, I think the cost of putting a Y in Rock Hill in terms of quality of life has become incredibly unreasonable.

**Response 2-16:** *Comment noted.*

**Comment 2-17 (Ellen Hoffman, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** This looks to me like an updated version of Levittown. The townhouses that we have in Emerald Green now cannot be sold. They're being rented. They look like a not very good version of garden apartments because that's how they're maintained. They looked very nice when they were put, but they cannot be sold. They can be rented to people that are commuting from Orange County. They're not people that are working or contributing to Sullivan. I'm really concerned that we're going to have either a lot of houses standing empty or bringing in people from outside the community to use this as a bedroom community, live here, cause traffic jams.

**Response 2-17:** *The visual appeal and maintenance of the Emerald Green development does not fall under the review of this project.*

*Regarding housing concerns, the homes to be sold as part of this project are expected to range in price from \$179,000 to \$269,000. The 2007 median value of a house or condo unit in the Town of Thompson was \$168,689. While the current market downturn has limited the number of home sales across the nation, it is expected that the economy, and with it the housing market, will recover resulting in a rebound in housing sales.*

*Significant traffic impacts are not expected as a result of the Proposed Action. Refer to Chapter 3.5 Transportation for details on the updated traffic analysis performed for the development presented in this FEIS/FGEIS and associated mitigation measures.*

**Comment 2-18 (Ellen Hoffman, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** They're looking to lease the Frontier building. We think now we're going to fill 48,000 square feet of another building, 80,000, whatever it is?

**Response 2-18:** *The DEIS/DGEIS plan included 480,000 square feet of retail space. The As-of-Right plan presented in the DEIS/DGEIS as an alternative proposes 60,000 square feet, a reduction of 87.5 percent.*

*While the current economy has resulted in corporate down-sizing and the closing of businesses, it is expected that the economy will adjust with subsequent growth in the commercial sector. With the construction of the retail facilities years away, it is the Applicant's opinion that new retail space will be filled as population growth continues to occur in the region. While the market will drive the development schedule for the commercial component of this project, it is expected that construction of these facilities will be completed towards the end of Phase 1.*

**Comment 2-19 (Ellen Hoffman, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** Our president says we're in a recession and it's going to be years before we're out of it. Where are we going to get the money to build such a thing? And then where are the loans going to come from for people to buy these things and how are people going to be able to maintain them? We're the poorest county in the Hudson Valley, we've got the highest unemployment rate. Our property taxes are going up seven percent, our weather is terrible. And we think that people are going to come because it looks pretty on paper? I'm sorry, I've been living here for 25 years. You know, it's not build it, they will come. There's a seven-story building sitting in Monticello waiting, painted pink, because somebody thinks that's what Monticello looks like, and I'm waiting to see who's moving in. Thank you for your consideration.

**Response 2-19:** *The build out period for this project is 15 to 20 years. It is expected that the country will climb out the recession and if not the start of construction may be postponed accordingly. The housing market is expected to recover as population growth and immigration continues to occur in the region. It is important to note that, even though the housing market has been in a slump, homes continue to be bought and sold.*

*As always, money for the purchase of homes, including those proposed as part of this project, will come from a variety of sources including personal savings, investments, loans from banks, family members and other as well as income. Upkeep will be the*

*responsibility of the Home Owner's Association and the residents. Fees associated with maintenance are known to the buyer up front so that they can budget this expense. The money to build the project will come from the owners; this is not a public project for which federal, state or local funding will be required.*

*Sullivan County is not within the Hudson Valley. The unemployment rate for the county, while higher than some in the State, should have no bearing on the development of private property.*

*Regarding the success of other projects, the availability of stores and land along Route 42, or anywhere for that matter, may be the result of numerous factors that may include the economic downturn, location, the asking rental, sale or lease price, etc. As the details regarding these locations as well as the Apollo Plaza are unknown, a comparison, however direct or indirect, can not be made to the proposed development.*

**Comment 2-20 (Judy Cutler, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** I feel the scale of the proposed Rock Hill Town Center Development will have impacts on the area and the environment that have been sorely underestimated. The traffic congestion, assault on the aesthetics, the impact on natural habitats, the pollution of all kinds are far greater than what has been presented.

***Response 2-20:*** Comment noted.

**Comment 2-21 (Judy Cutler, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** There is nothing about the town center project that will perpetuate this history and reputation of Sullivan County and the Catskills. It's just too much, it's just too big to conform to the integrity of the existing neighborhood and will have too great an impact on the overall quality of life.

***Response 2-21:*** Comment noted. The Proposed Action should not impact the history or reputation of Sullivan County or the Catskills.

As documented in the DEIS/DGEIS:

*"Construction of the project would increase the built density in the portion of the Town of Thompson in which the site is located, but is not expected to impact the land uses surrounding the project site. Vacant, wooded land would be replaced by an attractive, medium-density mixed use development with housing and commercial uses. The overall project is compatible with the existing land uses in the vicinity of Glen Wild Road and Rock Hill Drive. These uses include commercial and residential development. There are no uses located within one half mile which would conflict with the proposed residential or commercial uses. The proposed action would create shopping opportunities for its residents and those within in the surrounding area. The proposed project is not expected to significantly alter the character or local economies of its surrounding hamlet areas, or significantly alter the character of the Town of Thompson. In the Applicant's opinion, the location of the proposed project -- being located at the crossroads of a major interstate highway, would serve to minimize its effects, and may result in attracting additional shoppers to nearby areas as a spin-off benefit to existing businesses. Additionally, This development will be largely screened from area roads due to the preservation of significant stands of*

*deciduous and evergreen trees. Visual resources are addressed in Section 3.6 of this document.”*

*Refer also to Response 2-1.*

**Comment 2-22 (Judy Cutler, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** Unfortunately, I think we can, I think we must all envision a scenario similar to this as a result of the Rock Hill Town Center. It is just too much, it is just too big. Even when considering the first two phases which I believe had been called 1-A and 1 rather than 1 and 2, as you referred to it, Steve, it is just too much, it's just too big. This development will have a negative impact on every property owner in the Town of Thompson and all of Sullivan County, not just Rock Hill.

**Response 2-22:** *Based on the analysis contained in the SEQRA record, the Proposed Action will not result in significant environmental impacts to all property owners in Sullivan County or in the Town of Thompson. As documented throughout the DEIS/DGEIS and elsewhere in this document, significant adverse impacts are either not projected to occur or would be offset through mitigation.*

**Comment 2-23 (Jim Gollner, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** And the other thing I want to mention is as far as the development itself, I came up from a heavily populated area in Westchester, and part of the reason that I like this area is, and I've been saying this since I moved up here two years ago, I see Sullivan County as the next place. It's gorgeous, you have a lot to offer. But I feel that if -- and these developers, they're not evil guys. I mean they want to do something that's very presentable and they want to do something that's obviously successful. That being said, they probably want to get the most out of a particular land area that they can. But I just feel that if we just grant developers free reign whenever they ask for it, that this area will become kind of a hodgepodge and just you're going to lose the natural beauty.

**Response 2-23:** *The Planning Board acknowledges that the proposed development is in accordance with the current zoning laws of the Town. “Free reign” has not been granted the Applicant as is evidenced by the changes to the plans that resulted from the Town’s numerous comments on the project as well as those modifications to the project made in response to comments from the Interested and Involved Agencies and those from the Public.*

*It is important to note that, the intent of the SEQRA process is to balance decisions regarding development projects between environmental, economic and social factors. As documented in Section 617.1(d) of the State Code:*

*“It was the intention of the Legislature that the protection and enhancement of the environment, human and community resources should be given appropriate weight with social and economic considerations in determining public policy, and that those factors be considered together in reaching decisions on proposed activities. Accordingly, it is the intention of this Part that a suitable balance of social, economic and environmental factors be incorporated into the planning and decision-making processes of state, regional and local agencies. It is not the intention of SEQRA that environmental factors be the sole consideration in decision-making.”*

*Also refer to Response 2-3.*

**Comment 2-24 (Susan Roth, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** And basically what the majority of the, what I've learned, that the majority of the board members, or the association members have indicated that they're really not, they're really generally supportive of development in Rock Hill. And the purpose of this memo here isn't to say that they are not supporting development, but that they have concerns about the current configuration of the project and the proposed density of the project, and they feel it would be harmful to their quality of life in their little hamlet. But rather than just to provide a list of comments to address in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the Association wanted me to prepare a memo that actually has recommendations that would lead to a better plan from the Association's point of view. So I'm not going to go through every single detail in this letter because it's seven pages long, but I'm going to read all the recommendations that they've had. And they're supported with facts in the DEIS. The first recommendation is the development of the property should be reduced to the as-of-right provided in the code for single-family units without regard to placement of the units. And it should be noted that the acreage allocated for the commercial development would need to be deducted from the acreage available for residential construction when calculating the residential development allowed as of right. I have an alternate zoning analysis presented as part of Comment 1. And it indicates that they feel that -- this one has about 961 units. Still, that's a lot of units.

***Response 2-24:** The Proposed Action presented in the FEIS/FGEIS is the As-of-Right Alternative of the DEIS/DGEIS. This plan complies with all Town Code requirements.*

*Regarding the quality of life concern, refer to Response 2-1.*

**Comment 2-25 (Susan Roth, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** As a way to furthermore minimize the impact on community services and traffic, the developer should create an after 55 adult community as part of the unit mix. The impact of such development on volunteer ambulance corps services should also be addressed at that time. They realize that the DEIS indicates that there's 49 active adult units as it is now. But they feel that this should be a larger component of the development so that you would have the critical mass necessary to make it a distinct community with amenities that those residents, those type of residents deserve. And they think that that would be a way to be able to effectively address some of the school impacts that are concerns of several of the residents, and the traffic impact, as well.

***Response 2-25:** Both the proposed plan and the as-of-right contemplate senior housing at ten percent of the unit mix. No decision has been made at this point in time regarding whether this population will be segregated from the balance of the population, and we recognize that there are advocates of different approaches. The provision of clubhouses and pools as well as sidewalks will serve seniors well whether or not they are grouped together.*

**Comment 2-26 (Susan Roth, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** The project should set aside units for workforce housing to benefit local volunteers and service personnel in their community. Although there's no discussion in the DEIS for this particular issue, several members noticed that, noted an increasing importance of providing housing in Rock Hill that would be affordable to current volunteers or service providers such as school personnel, ambulance corps workers, firefighters and police officers. And there is also a need for housing to accommodate recent local high school and college graduates who wish to stay and work in the community.

**Response 2-26:** *Comment noted. The project sponsor has agreed to pursue affordable housing to help meet the needs of local volunteers, service personnel, and recent high school and college graduates.*

**Comment 2-27 (Susan Roth, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** The consistency with the plan really hasn't been demonstrated in the DEIS which says that the retail development should occur, be of neighborhood scale for Rock Hill. The size of the buildings are big box size, and those buildings would then, in turn, increase traffic trips in the village, inside the hamlet of Rock Hill, and without necessarily bringing new business to Rock Hill because those would be single destination trips.

**Response 2-27:** *The plan presented in this FEIS/FGEIS reduces commercial square footage by 87.5 percent over the action proposed in the DEIS/DGEIS. It is unlikely that the reduced size of the commercial space will be conducive to big-box development. A new traffic analysis for this alternative plan is presented in Chapter 3.5, transportation. The conclusion derived from the information and data presented in the updated analysis is that the mitigation proposed will offset any potential impacts resulting from the increase in traffic on the local roadway network.*

**Comment 2-28 (Melinda Ketchham, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** I live in Rock Hill because of the pristine beauty of the surrounding environment and the charming community character the town has to offer. I want to see Rock Hill, and Sullivan County as a whole, continue to grow in a manner that does not jeopardize our economic environmental health. We need development in our area that will promote economic growth while protecting the environment around us. However, you, as the Planning Board, must and have the opportunity to provide myself and other residents with proper development that will foster a balanced mix between residential, commercial and open spaces. You, as the Planning Department, have the opportunity under New York State Town Law to require changes in site plans and environmental impact statements that will be beneficial to both the community and its residents.

The Planning Department also has the ability to shape the outcome of development so that it will promote smart growth within our community. And you, as the Planning Department, have the responsibility to adequately address the negative impacts the Rock Hill Town Center, in it's present state, will have on the residents and businesses of Rock Hill.

**Response 2-28:** *Refer to Response 2-2.*

**Comment 2-29 (Melinda Ketchham, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** The DEIS for the Rock Hill Town Center has not fully taken into consideration the impacts that a development of such a large size will have on our community and our environment.

**Response 2-29:** *Refer to Responses 2-1. The impacts associated with the Proposed Action have been accurately assessed using appropriate methods and data.*

**Comment 2-30 (Melinda Ketchham, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** The present community character is what attracts many of us to live and work in Rock Hill. A development with a magnitude of Rock Hill Town Center will certainly alter this character. I'm asking the Planning Department to fully consider the impacts the proposed development will have on our community and to require the developer to downsize the project to a manageable level that will not negatively impact the economic and environmental well-being of our residents. I ask you,

the Planning Department, to deem the DEIS as insufficient and to require the developer to redo the DEIS, the DGEIS, so that the impacts to our roadways, public services, schools, commercial center, sewage and water system and unique environmental areas are fully considered and are compared to the commutative impact for other proposed development. Finally, I ask you to exercise your authority to require development to take the shape of the community and not to approve developments that would destroy our community.

**Response 2-30:** *Comment noted. Refer to response 2-1 regarding the implementation of an alternative development plan. Refer to Response 2-2 regarding the Planning Board's charge to take a hard look at all potential impacts resulting from the Proposed Action.*

**Comment 2-31 (Paul Walsh, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** I've been in Rock Hill my entire adult life. I live on Rock Drive. Some of you people live in Rock Hill. You've moved to Rock Hill because we have a gem. And we want it to grow in the right direction, as it always has. It's succeeded where other communities have failed. We have our children are growing up here. It's one of the communities where our children are staying. They are finding employment, they're growing their own families. You have the tools to allow and continue to grow at maybe a slow rate, but the right rate. Big box stores, things like that, and Steve, I don't know where we are, you said something to me tonight. You said this is business. Rock Hill is not business. We're a community. We look out for each other. You're welcome here, but come to fit into what we have, not reinvent Rock Hill.

Please, you have the tools. You guys live here. Paula, you know. I mean I promote Rock Hill every day. This is where I live and I hope to die here. I need you guys to do what you have to do for Rock Hill to continue to grow at the right rate.

**Response 2-31:** *Refer to Response 2-2 for text regarding the Planning Board's responsibility under State Law.*

**Comment 2-32 (Paul Walsh, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** And I know the YMCA is here. And you know, that's a great -- what you do is a great thing. But personally, and this is not -- I'm not speaking for Rock Hill personally, I think you're needed more in Monticello than in Rock Hill. We all have cars, we'll get there.

**Response 2-32:** *Comment noted.*

**Comment 2-33 (Janet Newberg, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** I may be repeating some of the information here, but as Planning Board members, your job is to be stewards of the environment. You just approved the Concord Entertainment City with 625,000 square feet of commercial space. What about Route 42, that corridor, with Home Depot and Walmart and room for more? The new Sullivan's project is beautiful, but they still cannot fill the stores. Why do we need more massive commercial space? To satisfy some developers that don't live here.

**Response 2-33:** *The As-of-Right Alternative presented herein represents a reduction in the proposed commercial square footage of the project from 480,000 under the DEIS/DGEIS to 60,000 square feet. This space will serve as convenience retail for new and existing residents and should support the existing main street retail by expanding the range of goods and services available to patrons in the downtown area.*

*With regard to other development and the Planning Board's responsibilities, the availability of stores and land along Route 42, or anywhere for that matter, may be the result of numerous factors that may include the economic downturn, location, the asking rental, sale or lease price, etc. As the details regarding these locations as well as the Apollo Plaza are unknown, a comparison, however direct or indirect, can not be made to the proposed development.*

*The Town of Thompson Planning Board must adhere to the rules and regulations set forth in the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act under which the DEIS/DGEIS and this FEIS/FGEIS are being prepared and reviewed. The Planning Board members must also abide by the laws set forth in the Town of Thompson Code.*

*When an action is presented to the Planning Board and is consistent with SEQRA and conforms to the Town's zoning regulations, the Planning Board has an administrative mandate to act on it in accordance with local and state rules. Proper conditions to the approval, including performance and maintenance bonds, empower the town to guarantee that appropriate improvements take place consistent with good land development practices.*

**Comment 2-34 (Janet Newberg, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** In the town, in the Hamlet of Rock Hill there was a street survey, street scape survey. I don't know if many of you filled this out, you know about it. I'd like to review just the maintenance of character.

One: Rock Hill is a lovely small business area. hope we can keep it this way. Growth is good, but only if Rock Hill stays a small, friendly hamlet. Two: We know tourism is growing in Sullivan County but we like our small town the way it is. Three: Let's stop trying to turn Rock Hill into another city like Middletown. It's a small hamlet so let's keep it that way. Next: Please, leave Rock Hill alone. Next: Limit house building permits to attempt and maintain country setting, one of the reasons, and the main reason for moving here in the first place. Next: Moved to Rock Hill for the atmosphere. If we wanted traffic congestion and to be in the center of a business district we would have moved to such an area. Next: Please leave Rock Hill the way it is. Next, these are answers to the survey: Control development and quality of life central, not money. We like the town the way it is. Next: We don't want it to go into disarray. Keep the old town charm without turning it into a Monticello or Middletown. Next: Please keep Rock Hill rural. Next: What makes Rock Hill great and attractive to people is its hometown feel. As we grow as a community we cannot lose sight of the very thing the people live here for and move here for. Big chain stores would kill this appeal, bringing a multitude of other undesirable impacts to the community. Once you move forward in haste with a project, it is almost impossible to stop or change the momentum. This is from the Rock Hill survey. This was July, 2006. Also, what kind of businesses would you like to see in Rock Hill? 77.6 percent said small scale, service related. And I'll submit this to you.

**Response 2-34:** *Comment noted. All concerns expressed by the public during the environmental review process are considered by the Planning Board in weighing the benefits and the impacts of the Proposed Action.*

**Comment 2-35 (Myrna Ginsberg, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** I've sat it this room. I watched Home Depot almost walk out the door. I've watched our new Shop Rite almost walk out the door. I've watched everything that wants to come here get chased. I've watched the water park leave this area twice already in the last five years. It seems to me that people here in

Sullivan County have a difficult adjustment to change, and I can understand that. There are people here who have some legitimate concerns. And I trust that we have the Zoning Board and I trust that we have people that are going to watch over the project. Traffic, nobody wanted Frontier. That was going to be horrendous, and somehow we deal with it. I watched the medical building that was so badly needed here, and I don't see that causing a traffic congestion. I have only watched the people's children leave the area, go off to school and never come back because there's nothing to come back to. Maybe with growth, and I don't say we should have 21 million houses, but I think that I'm so happy, these guys don't look like they like to lose money. I don't think that they're here because they don't think these houses are going to sell. I know that when my grandchildren come back from college I'd like them to have a place to live.

Not everybody wants to live in Emerald Green, and I've spent 20 years selling houses there. There are kids that come here, there are teachers, there are doctors. I don't have a place. I'm doing real estate for 20 years. I don't have a place to put these doctors. I don't have a place to put teachers that come to the area. I have one bedroom in Davos where they can go. There are no townhouses. Let's not talk about a small amount of townhouses in Emerald Green. Whether they're built beautifully or not built beautifully, not everybody wants to live there. It would be so wonderful. Maybe we'll have a cleaning store, maybe we'll have a bakery. I'm not looking for Macy's, but maybe we all don't have to go to Middletown for everything we buy. Maybe we'll have a shoe store again. We certainly don't have it in Monticello. And the Y, the Y doesn't belong in Monticello. The Y belongs in Rock Hill so we can all use it. We all know that Monticello needs a lot of changes. And if the Y is in Monticello, I'm not going there at night to the Y. I think we will have rehab here for the seniors, something that we don't have in anyplace. Everyplace I go, the seniors can go to a swimming pool and have rehabilitation. Won't that be wonderful to have that here in Rock Hill, to have good day care.

I think that they will look over everything that's happening. And I watch people here fight everything. Great Wolf Lodge is a wonderful water park. They've left here twice, and that's too bad. And I know that many of you that are here don't even know that these places come. And by the time you get through with them in this room, they'll go to Pennsylvania. They'll go anyplace but to Sullivan County.

And I love the highway and I don't think that those homes are going to affect the changing of the leaves. And traffic, I don't think that the medical building is affecting the traffic. I think you need to oversee your legitimate concerns, but I don't think that we need to chase everybody that comes into this town out of here.

**Response 2-35:** *Comment noted.*

**Comment 2-36 (Joe Henle, Public Hearing, December 10, 2008):** My concern is the fact is that I know that this is going to take a long time, this development. I don't expect you guys to sell these houses in five years. But I'm concerned that they're going to leave and there's going to be undeveloped roads where now the Town is going to have to provide bonding like they did years ago. My concern is that, you know, if it's possible, that this group, consider them to bond, put a bond up for the roads. That's what my concern is.

**Response 2-36:** *Comment noted. The applicant will comply with the town standard for bonding of public improvements including those for the local roads in order to assure that the needed improvements are completed. Refer to pages 1-12 and 1-13 herein for*

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*additional information on milestones/thresholds, assessments and monitoring of traffic in the project vicinity.*