

## **5.0 ALTERNATIVES**

The New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requires project sponsors to describe and evaluate reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action that are feasible, considering the objectives and capabilities of the project sponsor. The Proposed Action is presented in detail in the Project Description of this DEIS, and assessed in detail in various other sections. Following is an assessment of alternatives to the proposed Waters Edge at Dobbs Ferry action that were included in the adopted scope of the Co-lead Agencies.

### **5.1 No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative is the scenario that would occur if no development were to take place on the project site. The site is currently developed with one single family home that is not currently occupied. The home is situated near the northerly property line at the end of a driveway that is effectively an extension of Constance Avenue.

The existing residence located on the site does not take full advantage of the site as the 4.4 acre lot is significantly larger than the minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet allowed in the OF-6 zone in which the parcel is located. An alternative to not further develop the site is not an economical or practical alternative for the project sponsor. A summary of impacts of this alternative, as compared to the Proposed Action, is presented below.

A summary of the anticipated impacts of this alternative as compared to the Proposed Action is discussed below. Table 5.1 presents a comparison of several primary impacts that are readily quantifiable.

<b>Table 5-1 No Action Alternative Impacts</b>		
<b>Impact</b>	<b>No Action Alternative</b>	<b>Proposed Plan</b>
Land Use	1 Home	11 Homes
Peak Trips	1	16
Population	4	40
School Children	1	10

*Geology, Soils, Topography:* No further development of the site under the No Action Alternative would mean there would be no direct disturbance to on site geology, soils and topography. However due to the fact that there is an existing outlet to municipal stormwater in the on site ravine, and the No Action Alternative would not correct this situation, this alternative would effectively mean ongoing future erosion and sedimentation affecting the ravine, the Metro North Railroad property and the Hudson River.

As previously noted, a Subsurface Soil and Foundation Investigation was commissioned and reviewed. The investigation concluded that the site's existing condition was at risk for potential surface slides [slope failures]. Such a failure could result from a sudden rise in the groundwater elevation due to heavy rainfall, broken water lines, or an adverse change in the surface drainage that saturated the slope. "The existing slope, if left untreated, could potentially slide in the event of heavy rainfall or a adverse change in the surface drainage. This could result in

damage to any house in close proximity to the top of the slope as well as the adjacent railroad<sup>1</sup>. No Action Alternative would not correct this situation.

*Surface Water:* Existing Municipal stormwater discharged into the ravine located on site would not be changed under this alternative. In the Proposed Action, municipal stormwater discharge would be piped.

*Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecology:* The No Action Alternative will have no impacts on terrestrial ecology, while the Proposed Action would have impacts on plants and animals resulting from the disturbance and development associated with the proposal. The site will be landscaped following construction thereby mitigating the initial disturbance of the proposed plan.

*Aesthetics and Cultural Resources:* The No Action Alternative would have no impact on the status quo of the project site, while the proposed plan would result in the subdivision of the property into eleven (11) lots and the construction of eleven (11) future homes.

*Critical Environmental Areas:* The No Action Alternative would maintain the status quo with regard to the Westchester County Hudson River Critical Environmental Area and the Village of Dobbs Ferry Waterfront Revitalization Program. The proposed development would result in removal of existing vegetation and construction of new homes. There will be some increased views of the Hudson River and of the site from the Hudson River with the proposed plan. However, increased views of the Hudson River and Palisades is envisioned in the Village of Dobbs Ferry Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

*Transportation:* There would be no traffic increase with the No Action Alternative.

*Energy:* There would be no increase in energy use with the No Action Alternative.

*Noise:* There would be no increase in noise with the No Action Alternative.

*Fiscal:* There would be no change to fiscal revenues or expenses under the No Action Alternative.

*Community Character:* There would be no change in the community character resulting from the No Action Alternative. As previously mentioned, the proposed plan would continue the residential development character in the Fairmead neighborhood to extend over the project site.

The No Action Alternative is not a viable alternative given the development potential of this site under the existing zoning regulations of the Village of Dobbs Ferry.

## **5.2 Conventional Subdivision (Maximum Lot Count Subdivision) Alternative**

The proposed plan is a conventional subdivision, but it is not built out to the full lot count that the zoning would allow. The maximum lot count that a conventional subdivision would yield is, conservatively, 17 lots. Therefore the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision would have six (6) more lots than the proposed subdivision.

The Maximum Lot Count Subdivision, aside from having more lots, would be characterized by smaller lots and generally smaller residences. This development scheme would impact more of the natural environment as the proposed subdivision as there would be more driveways and

<sup>1</sup> Source: Subsurface Soil and Foundation Investigation, Carlin - Simpson and Associates, November 17, 2006.

other features associated with the additional homes than there would be with fewer units. Therefore, offsetting the larger home sizes of the fewer unit proposal.

A summary of the anticipated impacts of this alternative as compared to the Proposed Action is discussed below. Table 5.2 presents a comparison of several primary impacts that are readily quantifiable.

<b>Table 5-2 Maximum Lot Count Subdivision Alternative Impacts</b>		
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Maximum Lot Count Alternative</b>	<b>Proposed Plan</b>
Land Use	17 Homes	11 Homes
Peak Trips	22	16
Population	62	40
School Children	15	10

*Geology, Soils, Topography:* The development of 17 single family homes under the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision will have a higher level of site disturbance, and therefore a higher level of disturbance to on site geology, soils and topography, as the Proposed Action. The onset ravine would be filled in this alternative as in the Proposed Action.

*Surface Water:* Both the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision and the Proposed Action would pipe the existing surface stormwater discharge into the ravine. The ravine is proposed to be fill in each scenario.

*Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecology:* The development of 17 single family homes under the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision will have a higher level of site disturbance as the Proposed Action, and therefore a higher level of disturbance on terrestrial ecology.

*Aesthetics and Cultural Resources:* The development of an additional six (6) homes under the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision would have a higher amount of land disturbed and therefore the overall size of the impact on aesthetic and cultural resources will be higher. However there will be a difference in impact from 17 mostly smaller homes as compared to 11 mostly larger homes. The site will appear more cluttered with the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision as there will be more driveways, garages and various other appurtenances associated with more homes.

*Critical Environmental Areas:* The impact on the Westchester County Hudson River Critical Environmental Area and the Village of Dobbs Ferry Waterfront Revitalization Program will essentially be the same from the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision and the Proposed Plan. The development under either scenario will result in removal of existing vegetation and construction of new homes. There will be some increased views of the Hudson River and of the site from the Hudson River under either scenario. However the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision will result in a more cluttered development appearance due to the increased number of residences and associated driveways and other appurtenances.

*Transportation:* Traffic would increase with the additional six (6) residences under the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision.

*Energy:* There would be an increase in energy use with the development of six (6) additional homes under the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision.

*Noise:* There would be some increase in noise on completion of the development of six (6) additional homes under the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision, but it would be typical of residential neighborhood noise levels.

*Fiscal:* There would likely be a similar fiscal impact with the development of six (6) additional homes under the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision as the revenues per home would be lower but this would be offset by having more homes. It is possible that the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision would have greater impacts as the additional homes would likely generate more persons needing more services.

*Community Character:* Both the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision and the Proposed Action would reflect a continued buildout of the existing neighborhood single family residential character. There would be some increase in community resources associated with an additional six (6) residences in the Maximum Lot Count Subdivision, since there would also be an increase in overall population, school age children and traffic for example.

### **5.3 Ravine Preservation Alternative (with the use of cul de sacs)**

The Ravine Preservation Alternative would have fourteen (14) homes placed on lots on a street layout designed specifically to avoid crossing and filling the existing ravine located on the subject property. This alternative would entail a northerly cul de sac terminus to Constance Avenue, and a through connection at the southerly side of the site for Fairlawn Avenue.

Since the street system would not be rectilinear and the objective would be preservation of the ravine, this design would result in varied and irregular lot configurations. Homes would face in a variety of directions and would be less predictable in placement than found in a typical rectilinear street system development.

The Constance Avenue cul de sac would allow nine (9) new lots to be sited along this street. Two of lots would be deep through lots to the Metro North Railroad, one lot would be a flag lot, and six of the lots would be shallower but conforming lots. The Fairlawn Avenue through street would have a turnaround on the northern side on which five lots would front. Two (2) additional lots would front on the south side of the street.

While there would be some impact on the edge of the ravine from three (3) lots where house footprints would break over the 80 foot contour, the impact is very minimal and may be mitigated on at least two (2) lots by using custom home footprints.

A summary of the anticipated impacts of this alternative as compared to the Proposed Action is discussed below. Table 5.3 presents a comparison of several primary impacts that are readily quantifiable.

<b>Table 5-3 Ravine Preservation Alternative Impacts</b>		
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Ravine Preservation Alternative</b>	<b>Proposed Plan</b>
Land Use	14 Homes	11 Homes
Traffic	19	16
Population	51	40
School Children	12	10

*Geology, Soils, Topography:* The most significant difference between development of 14 single family homes under the Ravine Preservation Alternative and the Proposed Plan is that this alternative will not entail filling the ravine or otherwise altering it except to the extent that work is required to pipe the existing surface stormwater channel. On the balance of the site there will be a similar level of site disturbance as with the Proposed Action.

*Surface Water:* Both the Ravine Preservation Alternative and the Proposed Action would pipe the existing surface stormwater discharge into the ravine.

*Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecology:* This alternative would reduce the impact on terrestrial ecology as the development of 14 single family homes under the Ravine Preservation Alternative would not involve filling the ravine. While the existing trees and other vegetation in the ravine would generally remain, there would still be some disturbance in the ravine with this alternative as the surface stormwater feature would be piped in the ravine. The impacts of this alternative and the Proposed Plan would be similar in other areas of the site.

*Aesthetics and Cultural Resources:* Since the development of the Ravine Preservation Alternative will have a reduced impact on the amount of land disturbed, it will have less impact on the current aesthetics and cultural resources of the site for vantage points to the west. However since there are three (3) more units in this proposal, there will be some increase in impacts from certain angles where the site will be visible, particularly from the east, south and north, mostly the public roads within the Fairmead neighborhood. There will also be a difference in impact as the homes in the Ravine Preservation Alternative are mostly smaller homes as compared to 11 mostly larger homes in the Proposed Plan.

*Critical Environmental Areas:* The impact on the Westchester County Hudson River Critical Environmental Area and the Village of Dobbs Ferry Local Waterfront Revitalization Program would be reduced due to the preservation of the ravine feature at least in the view of the site from points west. However the neighborhood impact would be similar to the Proposed Plan as the view from this vantage point would be similar. Also, under the Proposed Plan there will be increased views of the Hudson River for the neighborhood and others in the community, due to the removal of more vegetation, especially in the ravine.

*Transportation:* Traffic would increase slightly with the additional three (3) units under the Ravine Preservation Alternative.

*Energy:* There would be an increase in energy use with the development of three (3) additional homes under the Ravine Preservation Alternative.

*Noise:* There would be some increase in noise on completion of the development of three (3) additional homes under the Ravine Preservation Alternative, but it would be negligible.

*Fiscal:* There would likely be a similar fiscal impact with the development of three (3) additional homes under the Ravine Preservation Alternative as the revenues per home would be lower, but this would be offset by having more homes. The Ravine Preservation Alternative would likely have greater fiscal impacts as the additional homes would likely generate more persons needing more services.

*Community Character:* Both the Ravine Preservation Alternative and the Proposed Plan would reflect a continued buildout of the existing neighborhood single family residential character.

#### **5.4 Ravine Preservation Alternative Without a Cul de Sac**

The Ravine Preservation Alternative without the use of at least one cul de sac is not feasible. Since the ravine intrudes into the center of the site, the only practical way to avoid impacting it is to develop a cul de sac on the north side and provide a separate road on the south side. The effect of looping a road through the property is unavoidably to fill or cross the ravine with a section of road. The Proposed Plan clearly shows the loop road crossing the ravine. It would require filling at least half the ravine for a road at grade. Spanning the ravine with a bridge structure would be very costly and ultimately would involve a significant amount of disturbance in footings at either end and clearing trees for the span itself. In short, a loop road system will inevitably impact the ravine. Therefore, this alternative has not been further explored.

#### **5.5 Subdivision Showing Maximum Number of Lots Without New Roads**

This alternative is essentially the same alternative as the Ravine Preservation Alternative which closely, though not exactly, follows the previously mapped Constance Avenue and Fairlawn Avenue extensions, and the current travel ways in those locations. The Ravine Preservation Alternative terminates the Constance Avenue extension in a cul de sac. When it was shown as a mapped street it simply dead ended at the St. Christopher School property line. The Fairlawn Avenue connection in the Ravine Preservation Alternative is also similar to the previously mapped street except that it is more curvilinear and has a bump out for lot frontages off the travel way.

#### **5.6 Conservation Subdivision Alternative**

This alternative would require the use of Zoning Code provisions found in Article XVIII, Grouped or Clustered Housing. This section of the code specifically references "...promote the conservation of the remaining open space, preserve and enhance natural beauty and resources and permit reasonable development of large plots of land that are not topographically suitable for the construction of a conventional one-family-home subdivision." The Grouped or Clustered Housing code is designed to mitigate potential adverse impacts for parcels of twenty (20) acres or more, clearly larger than the subject parcel, though the Village Board may reduce the minimum parcel size for applying these provisions.

This section of the code goes on to describe various forms of allowable housing as attached, semidetached, detached, grouped or clustered. To be effective on a site as small as the subject site, this section of the code would require a cluster design on lots that would not appear

harmonious with the existing neighborhood, and would be unattractive in their own right, or would result in the development of townhouse or other multifamily format which would also be out of character with the existing single family neighborhood. Also the number of units in this development alternative would be based on the maximum allowable lots from a conventional subdivision and would therefore be 17 units.

Since this type of development would be inconsistent with the single family detached home character of the existing neighborhood, and is not a housing type that the project sponsor is considering for the site, this alternative has not been further developed.

**5.7 Summary of Alternative Impacts**

A summary chart, Table 5-4, of Alternative Impact Comparisons is provided for convenient comparison between the alternatives above. Except for the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Plan has the fewest homes, least traffic and lowest overall and school age populations. The Maximum Lot Count Plan has six more homes with approximately 22 more persons total, while the Ravine Preservation Plan has three more homes with approximately 11 more persons. A commensurate increase in traffic and school age children is also found with the Maximum Lot Count Plan and Ravine Preservation Plan.

Table 5-4 Alternative Impact Comparisons				
Impact	<i>No Action</i>	<i>Maximum Lot Count Plan</i>	<i>Ravine Preservation Plan</i>	<i>Proposed Plan</i>
Homes	1	17	14	11
Traffic	1	22	19	16
Population	4	62	51	40
School Children	1	15	12	10
Source: Tim Miller Associates, Inc. Note: Population is total, and includes school children, Four bedroom units were assumed for all impacts, and for all alternatives.				

**6.0 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES**

The proposed plan will commit the project site to residential use. Once committed to this use, the site will be unavailable for other uses for the foreseeable future.

Development of the project will result in the loss of vegetation and wildlife habitat. The wildlife habitat located on the project is suitable only for those species that are most adaptable to human presence, as noted in Section 3.3, Terrestrial and Aquatic Resources. Landscaped portions of the developed area will provide additional habitat for species adaptable to areas of residential land use.

The finite resources that will be irretrievably committed by implementation of the Proposed Action are the materials and energy required for construction and for maintenance of the development afterward. Construction will involve the commitment of a variety of natural resources. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, concrete, asphalt, steel, lumber, paint products, and other building materials. However, it should be noted that many of the materials utilized for construction may at some time be recycled or reused. The operation of construction equipment will result in consumption of fossil fuels and other finite energy sources.

When completed, the new residences will require the consumption of fossil fuels either directly as heating fuel or indirectly as electricity. The regional electrical grid is also supplied in part by nuclear generating stations as well as generating stations utilizing renewable energy such as hydroelectric and wind power resources. There will also be solid waste disposal requirements associated with the project, however, a significant portion of the total solid waste stream (30%) can be expected to be recycled.

The proposed residences are projected to have a total market value of approximately \$13,200,000. Construction of the project will require a commitment of person hours of labor, which can be viewed as beneficial to the community, the local economy, and the construction industry. It is anticipated that a portion of the construction-related workers at the site will come from the Village of Dobbs Ferry, Town of Greenburgh, and other surrounding Westchester County towns. The construction trade workers would have a short term positive impact on existing local businesses that provide goods and services such as food, convenience shopping, machinery lubricants, repairs and fuels.



**7.0 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

As indicated in previous sections of the document, the proposed project will add a projected 40 persons to the population of the Village of Dobbs Ferry.

The project site's environs are served by municipal water supply and sewer services. Public water and sewer services will be extended into the project site as part of the proposed activities. However, the project is not expected to result in the creation of infrastructure that could induce future growth since the surrounding area is presently developed.

The project will promote increased construction employment in the short term and, on a cumulative basis, an increased long term demand for residential goods and services that will have a steady multiplier effect in the project area's retail markets.

No significant adverse effects on the area's utilities, community services, or facilities are expected. No adverse effects on area commercial services are expected as a result of the proposed development.