

5.0 ALTERNATIVES COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Comment 5-1 (Public Hearing, February 9, 2010 - Nick Papas, Yonkers Resident): If occupancy rates don't meet what is expected, I certainly would like to know what the plan is. Has the developer had the opportunity to think about some type of hotel/residential type of building where a portion of it is a downtown Yonkers hotel, you know, a Hyatt, a Marriott, something like that, and other portions of the building would be turned into residential space.

Response 5-1: *The Applicant's two other projects in the City of Yonkers that are in close proximity to the new apartment building are almost fully occupied, i.e., occupancy is 97 percent. The applicant is not proposing a hotel use as it does not meet their objectives.*

Comment 5-2 (Public Hearing, February 9, 2010 - Diedre Rylander, Yonkers Resident): I was disappointed with the fact that the alternatives, none of them proposes a smaller residential structure...smaller than 412 units...I would hope that there would be some flexibility on the number of units that are being proposed so that the plans could be perhaps a bit more creative...it looks like this looming mass over the top of the Trolley Barn and its just very blocky, so maybe there are some other design alternatives that could be explored.

Response 5-2: *The Conventional Site Plan evaluates a building with 120 dwelling units. Refer to Section 5.2 of the DEIS for a discussion of the alternative.*

Comment 5-3 (Letter 14, January 24, 2011, John Pinegar, Yonkers Resident): Unless the developer elects to shorten the height by no less than half, I would be willing to fight against the granting of permits to build this tower on the Teutonia Hall site.

Response 5-3: *Comment noted. The applicant proposes a new apartment building at the height indicated in the DEIS, or a building alternative described in Section 1.0 which would result in a structure with the same building height.*

Comment 5-4 (Letter 15, January 24, 2011, Syrette Dym, AICP, VHB - City Planning Consultant): Conventional Site Plan – For fiscal impacts, indicate the amount of tax revenues that would be generated to the City and the school district.

Response 5-4: *As stated in Section 5.2, an order of magnitude comparison of revenues would result in the conventional site plan resulting in revenues of \$303,000. Approximately 60 percent, or \$182,000 annually, would accrue to the school district.*

Comment 5-5 (Letter 16, January 19, 2011, Philip Grealy, Ph.D, JCE - City Traffic Consultant): The Conventional Plan alternative proposes 119 residential units and with no hydroponic garden and no parking garage. This alternative would result in reduced impacts to the surrounding roadway network since it would generate fewer trips than the proposed action. Therefore, some of the improvements to mitigate the resulting traffic impacts may not be necessary.

Response 5-5: *Comment noted. Given the costs to remediate this brownfield site, this is not a viable alternative for the applicant.*

Comment 5-6 (Letter 16, January 19, 2011, Philip Grealy, Ph.D, JCE - City Traffic Consultant): The Teutonia Hall Alternative proposes preserving the Teutonia Hall in its existing location which would allow for two additional bays for the automated garage. This would reduce

internal queuing and wait times during peak demand periods. All other impacts remain the same as in the proposed action.

***Response 5-6:** Comment noted. To be eligible for tax credits, the automated garage has been situated on the non-brownfield sites. The applicant has indicated that this alternative is not financially viable.*

Comment 5-7 (Letter 16, January 19, 2011, Philip Grealy, Ph.D, JCE - City Traffic Consultant): The Different Building Mass/Location Alternative changes the locations of the buildings and also proposes the construction of a conventional 3 story parking garage rather than the automated garage. The impacts would be similar to the proposed action. It should be noted that under this alternative there would be only one driveway to enter and exit the site and therefore fewer on street parking spaces would have to be eliminated.

***Response 5-7:** The conventional garage alternative would still require an on-street loading zone. The conventional garage would generate more pollution, would be less visually attractive, be more attractive to crime, and more prone to accidents.*

Comment 5-8 (Letter 16, January 19, 2011, Philip Grealy, Ph.D, JCE - City Traffic Consultant): The Alternative Use to Hydroponic Garden Alternative indicates that if the Hydroponic Garden is not built, no other use would be installed atop the garage structure. This alternative would provide a minimal reduction in total trips and truck trips to the site. However, the impacts would still be similar to the Proposed Action.

***Response 5-8:** Comment noted. The reduction in the number total trips and truck are noted on DEIS page 3.5-14.*

Comment 5-9 (Letter 16, January 19, 2011, Philip Grealy, Ph.D, JCE - City Traffic Consultant): The Different No Build Alternative discusses impacts of the proposed project assuming that the SFC project is not constructed prior to the 2014 build year for Buena Vista. For this alternative the comments discussed above for the proposed action still apply.

***Response 5-9:** The comments and the associated responses apply whether or not SFC is constructed.*

Comment 5-10 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): Alternatives. The most significant problem with the project as proposed is that the tower element does not in any way match the character of the rest of the community. It is 10 stories taller than any other building in the downtown area. It does not match the architectural character of the building in its immediate surroundings. In fact, it does not match the character of the other buildings that constitute the rest of the project. It is too bulky, too smooth, too blue. The project sponsors have produced a sleekly modern office building style building for a residential project in a traditional setting. The unornamented blue monolith does not fit into the setting and does not reflect the sky or the buildings around it in a way that pulls the project together with its surroundings. The buildings bulk is unremitting in its plain unornamented starkness. The applicants would do well to look to White Plains to make the contrast between the too blue, too tall, too sleek Ritz Carlton and the more appropriate residential building growing from the base of the City Center project. The more ornamented city center buildings appear to have grown

from the more traditional downtown around them when the Ritz Carlton building seems to have been 'coptered in from mid-town Manhattan and dropped in a small suburban city.

***Response 5-10:** Concerns with regard to the building facade have been addressed by the applicant through introduction of a building alternative which is discussed in Section 1.0 of the FEIS. The applicant is willing to pursue this building alternative.*

Comment 5-11 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): The reconstruction of the Teutonia Hall facade and the construction and design of the clean tech garage is thoughtful and its scale, massing and materials fit well with the existing streetscape and with the historic Trolley Barn, however, the base of the 25 story tower and the glass tower itself do not have the same attributes. The tower appears to be misplaced from some 1970s location in a major downtown. The glass base and tower are not appropriate for the existing context and the mirror like glass may be harmful to birds, or may cause sun concentration damage to nearby property and is therefore not recommended as a finish material.

***Response 5-11:** The building alternative presented in Section 1.0 proposes the introduction of brick to be compatible with the adjoining Trolley barn facade. The base of the tower has been redesigned to mimic the scale and rhythm of openings on the Trolley Barn building. Reflective glass is no longer proposed.*

Comment 5-12 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): Putting aside the height, massing and material of the tower for a moment, how does the base of the tower relate to the street?

***Response 5-12:** A building alternative has been presented in Section 1.0 to address this comment. The base now reflects the rhythm of openings applicable to buildings in the surrounding area, including the Trolley Barn building.*

Comment 5-13 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): How does the base of the tower's fenestrations relate to the existing street facade fenestrations?

***Response 5-13:** A building alternative has been presented in Section 1.0 to address this comment. The base now reflects the rhythm of openings applicable to buildings in the surrounding area, including the Trolley Barn building.*

Comment 5-14 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): Why introduce new materials to the street when the facades of the Trolley Barn and the new garage are brick?

***Response 5-14:** The DEIS examined a modern building which would have a building facade that would contrast with the existing historic structures. A building alternative has been developed and presented in Section 1.0 of the FEIS which would incorporate brick.*

Comment 5-15 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): Massing - the buildings sheer vertical shape without any street setbacks does not fit contextually within the narrowest of the block and street. It would seem more appropriate for there to be a building setback at the street equal to the height of the Trolley barn of 10'-15' and

then another 15' setback again, say 15 stories, which is approximately the next height currently prevalent in the downtown.

Response 5-15: *Comment noted. The building alternative presented in Section 1.0 of the FEIS would result in the new apartment building being set back from the property line/sidewalk on Buena Vista Avenue.*

Comment 5-16 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): The character of the building also does not fit contextually. The building should express what its function is. It reads as if it is an office building and not a place where people live. The buildings' fenestration and form should reflect that this is a residential building. With the wonderful location why is there not balconies and/or groupings of windows to indicate vistas and views from the building?

Response 5-16: *Comment noted. Refer to Section 1.0 of the FEIS which presents an alternative that is responsive to this comment.*

Comment 5-17 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): There is a rhythm in the existing building facades of Teutonia Hall and the Trolley Barn that should somehow be incorporated into the rhythm of the new residential building.

Response 5-17: *Comment noted. Refer to Section 1.0 of the FEIS which presents an alternative that is responsive to this comment.*

Comment 5-18 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): This alternative does not identify any adverse impacts from developing a smaller building with fewer units other than less revenue would be produced from fewer units (120 units verses 412). Has a market analysis been performed? What is the expected absorption rate to fill 412 units in this economy? Has the developer factored into their absorption rate the possibility of Palisades Point coming on line at the same time (another 436 units on the water with a better location and with all approvals in place)?

Response 5-18: *Given the costs to remediate this brownfields site, a conventional site plan is not a financially viable alternative for the applicant. A market study has not been prepared - based on the applicant's experience and analysis, the absorption rate will be approximately 35 units per month. According to an article that appeared in the Westchester Business Journal in March 2010, Marc Berson of the Fidelco Group indicated said SFC is focused first on its mixed-use River Park Center development off Getty Square rather than Palisades Point, a high-rise luxury condo development that would rise on the waterfront south of City Pier. "I think Palisades Point, though the waterfront is phenomenal and the residential is the future of that area, the for-sale residential market is softening dramatically," he stated in the article. The Applicant proposes a rental building, not a condominium building and its absorption rate will not be affected by Palisades Point given the above. The markets are not comparable.*

Comment 5-19 (Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development): **Alternative with a standard parking garage, no roof garden.** What would stop the developer from switching to this alternative after approvals are in place since the impacts and building footprints are almost the same? Site plan approval should condition the approval to include the roof garden, training classroom, community space, wider sidewalks, etc.

Response 5-19: *The Applicant's special use permit application specifically proposes the hydroponic garden, training classroom space, etc. The building alternative in Section 1.0 includes a widened sidewalk in front of the PUR properties on the west side of Buena Vista Avenue. Although the applicant is not proposing changes such as those described in the comment, changes such as those noted above would necessitate an amendment to the special use permit.*

Comment 5-20 Letter 18, April 22, 2011, Yonkers Dept. of Planning & Development):
Financing structure: Construction cost estimated at \$131,000,000. Total development costs including clean up 1.3 times the construction cost or \$170,300,000. Are there lenders out there to fund such a large project in this market?

Response 5-20: *This is not a SEQRA substantive comment. Regardless, the Applicant indicates that financing is available and in place to construct the project.*