

## Alternatives (DEIS Section 5.0)

### 5.1 General Alternative Comments

**Comment 5.1-1-34J:** Regarding DEIS page 5-1, [u]nder the no build alternative—I question whether it is appropriate under SEQRA to state that the golf course is operating at a loss and will likely close. Two questions come to mind. We have had numerous discussions in public hearings and meetings to the extent that we can ask or should questions of the Applicant as part of the SEQRA process as to the financial viability of the project. The fact that the course is losing money is not a SEQRA concern. I would strike the sentence that begins “In addition...and ends with “would close”. The previous sentence is quite appropriate and more than adequately encapsulates the concept that other development will likely come over time to the site should the Applicant not be able to pursue some form of re-development of the site. [Dr. Michael W. Klemens, LLC, Letter, March 18, 2008, Comment J, pages 2 and 3]

**Response 5.1-1-34J:** The sentence identified by Dr. Klemens has been removed from the record. See Section 2.0 of this FEIS.

**Comment 5.1-2-34L:** Regarding DEIS Figure 5-2, Traditional Neighborhood Alternative (which is now the Applicant’s preferred alternative). I recommend the elimination/relocation of Single-family Residence Block L based on impact to the very high quality wetlands just down slope of the proposed development. I recommend elimination of the vineyard town homes on the north side of Rte. 44 based on the unsuitability of the soils to support development. On the south side of the proposed development I would request that the emergency access road be constructed of pervious surface, either pavers or gravel and that detail be provided to ensure that it will not become a defacto through road. An emergency access is reserved for that, and all other homeowner and maintenance traffic should respect that designation. There was also discussion in public meetings about constructing a trail way through the southern end of the property to allow public access from the town-owned wetland park to the ridge and Tamarack Preserve. This is an important public amenity which could easily be integrated into the site plan. If the Applicant is concerned about security and safety issues, the access way could be fenced much in the manner that the Rail Trail is fenced just north of the Rte. 343 crossing.

Finally, I remain concerned about the number and spacing of the development on the slopes on the west side of the property. Compacting this development to the north could eliminate Block K and part (if not all of) Block J, which would allow more of the ridge toe habitat to remain intact, would lessen impacts of clearing and earth removal, and create a more compact and pleasing development, while

allowing more ecological connection across the south end of the golf course to adjacent natural areas and wetlands. [Dr. Michael W. Klemens, LLC, Letter, March 18, 2008, Comment L, page 3]

**Response 5.1-2-34L:** With respect to the comment about the single-family homes in Block L, the Applicant has increased the buffer around the headwaters of Wetland J from 50' to 100' and provided a "Response Sketch" that would shift one unit away from the headwaters of Wetland J. This approach was based on meetings and site visits with the town's consultants, Dr. Klemens and Greenplan. (Please see Figure 3.4-2, Reduction of Single Family Homes in Block "L" Area). An additional "Response Plan" has been provided for the Planning Board's consideration. Should the Planning Board select this Response Plan, disturbance to steep slopes along the single-family home road and impacts to Stream J for approximately 800 feet of its length would be reduced; however, impacts to other resources, such as the viewshed, would likely be increased. Based on the Applicant's objectives and capabilities for the project, relocation of single-family homes as shown in Figure 3.1-2 is proposed, but removal of the homes from the building program is not proposed. Refer to Figure 3.1-2, "Response plan – 30% Slopes Alternative" and discussion in Section 3.1.

With respect to the comment about eliminating the vineyard cottages due to soil conditions, the Applicant has provided a Preliminary Geotechnical Interpretive Report dated February 16, 2007 to the town's engineering consultant, Rohde, Soyka and Andrews Consulting Engineers, P.C with a cover letter confirming the suitability of the soils in the vineyard cottages area for development. (This report was also included as Appendix 9.14.2 of the DEIS.) The suitability of soils in this area is described in more detail in Response 3.1-3-34D. Further, eliminating single-family homes or vineyard cottages reduces the viability of the project considering the objectives and capabilities of the Applicant.

With respect to the comment about development on slopes on the west side of the golf course, the area in question has slope conditions in the range of 15% to 20% with contours running north and south. The current layout follows a classical design principle for these conditions of long and thin development paralleling the contour. This arrangement keeps the grade change from cut line (west) to fill line (east) to a minimum, which allows the use of stepped building sections, low walls and terraces to adjust grade back to existing with the least disturbance. If the development is compacted as suggested, dramatically more disturbance will result both in cut and fill to achieve acceptable access and driveway grades. This approach would not minimize grading and clearing impacts to the extent possible and would aggravate the visual impact on the face of the hillside. As stated above, the Applicant has

prepared a “Response Plan” for consideration by the Planning Board, which further reduces steep slope disturbance in this area, but impacts to other resources, such as the viewshed, would likely be increased if the Planning Board selected this Response Plan.

Regarding the comment about the emergency access road, the Applicant will commit to the emergency access not being utilized by homeowner car traffic and has no intent to allow this to become a *de facto* through road. The Applicant does see the opportunity to have this emergency access be combined with the golf cart path needs in this area. Maintenance vehicles often use golf cart paths for travel within the site so the Applicant cannot commit to prohibiting maintenance vehicles on this path. Although the golf cart path specifications have not been fully developed, it is anticipated that a portion of the paths would be constructed of pervious surfaces and this area as suggested may lend itself to this.

With respect to the comment about trail connections, the Applicant is not proposing to connect on-site trails to off-site trails. The Tamarack Preserve is a private facility. With regard to elimination of single-family units, please see Response 2.2-2-PHT.

**Comment 5.1-3-34O:** Regarding Figure 5-19 Reduced Scale Alternative. The reduced scale accomplishes several important ecological goals. Wetland J is protected by the elimination of the houses just upslope, and a lot of the disturbance to the toe of the west facing slope is eliminated, reducing clearing and earth movement and leaving a broad ecological connection across the southern end of the site. The vineyard town homes are still part of this alternative, situated on soils that are by the Applicant’s own data unsuitable for development. Public access across the south end of the site is not provided, and the wetland edges remain inadequately restored. [Dr. Michael W. Klemens, LLC, Letter, March 18, 2008, Comment O, page 4]

**Response 5.1-3-34O:** Please see Response 3.1-3-34D regarding suitability of soils in the vineyard area. According to the Applicant, the Reduced Scale Alternative does not meet the objectives of the Applicant.

**Comment 5.1-4-25C:** It is essential that the FEIS be written so that it is absolutely clear that the Planning Board decision applies only to the TNA. For this reason I would also request tables that compare unit numbers, occupancy, usage and land coverage of the various alternatives, making clear that the TNA is the preferred option. [Mark Doyle, Letter, March 24, 2008, Comment C, page 1]

**Response 5.1-4-25C:** The FEIS has been written in accordance with the requirements under SEQRA.

**Comment 5.1-5-25C:** Is there any possibility that the developers would consider a modified community plan with a smaller amount of residences as their secondary plan? [Patty O'Neil, November 17, 2007 Public Hearing Transcript, page 29]

**Response 5.1-5-25C:** The Alternatives section of the DEIS analyzes a "Reduced Scale Alternative" with significantly fewer residential units. However, this alternative is not feasible from the Applicant's perspective and does not meet the Applicant's objectives for the project. Since the conclusion of the DEIS public comment period, the Applicant has reduced the number of residential units proposed from 359 to 338. The number of lock-off units within the hotel has also been reduced, from 93 (393 keys) to 67 (367 keys).

**Comment 5.1-6-34K:** Regarding DEIS page 5-5, Table 5:1. Again, the merging of natural ecologically resonant protected areas with the manicured golf course and the lawns and other managed amenities of the site creates a confusing metric of open space. As repeatedly requested, the Applicant needs to create two metrics of open space to account for the very different values and functions of truly natural conserved areas versus managed areas of lawn and turf grass. [Dr. Michael W. Klemens, LLC, Letter, March 18, 2008, Comment K, page 3]

**Response 5.1-6-34K:** Please see Response 3.12-3-PHT.

## 5.2 Preferred Alternative Fiscal Issues

**Comment 5.2-1-4C:** Section 5 of the DEIS discusses the alternatives to the project. In my opinion, if approval is your decision, then the Traditional Neighborhood Development scenario would appear to be compatible with the town's Master Plan. However, considering the fact that the figures for revenue for the town from this project seem to be predicated on it being fully developed, it may be a scenario that never really plays out, especially as we compete with other similar developments being planned for Eastern Dutchess. Then what? [Arlene Iuliano, Letter, March 18, 2008, Comment C]

**Response 5.2-1-4C:** Comment noted. The Applicant intends to build the complete project and has done market research which indicates support for such a development in the market. See Appendix D for the marketing study. Also see Response m-11-29A.

**Comment 5.2-2-GP1:** The applicant has presented the Planning Board with another version of the preferred plan at the March 27th workshop meeting and our understanding is that a formal submission will be made shortly. We would ask, for purposes of clarity in identifying the proposed changes and in terms of conducting a review, that the applicant provide "blue-line" drawing which shows the new plan