

3.12 Recreation, Open Space Resources, and Tourism

This section describes the existing recreational facilities and open space resources in the Town of Amenia, evaluates the proposed project's potential direct and indirect impacts to these facilities, and provides recommended mitigation measures where necessary. If applicable, the project's consistency with existing local and regional recreation plans is also evaluated.

3.12.1 Existing Conditions

The Town of Amenia operates two recreational facilities for public use, including Beekman Park and Borden Park. There are also regionally and privately operated facilities in the Town, in addition to the existing golf course at Silo Ridge. The existing municipal resources are summarized in Table 3.12-1 below.

Beekman Park

Beekman Park is a 47.8±-acre recreational area bordering the western edge of downtown Amenia. The Town currently maintains a baseball field, two softball fields, a concession stand, and bleachers at Beekman Park.⁴⁸

Borden Park

Borden Park is a 2±-acre park that was donated to the Town of Amenia by the Borden Milk Company. The park is located in the hamlet of Wassaic and includes a ballfield and playground.⁴⁹

Amenia Elementary School

There are two tennis courts and a basketball court open for public use at the Amenia Elementary School, which is located along Route 22 north of the Hamlet of Amenia.

Harlem Valley Rail Trail

East of the project site is the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, which lies in the footprint of the former Conrail railroad system. The Rail Trail runs in a southwest to northeast direction through the Town of Amenia. The area has been converted into a 43-mile trail that extends from Wassaic in Southern Dutchess County to Chatham in Columbia County, offering an opportunity to enjoy walking, jogging, rollerblading, and biking.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Amenia Recreation Master Plan*, 2006. <http://www.ameniany.com/>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ <http://www.hvrt.org/>

Wassaic State Multiple Use Area

The Wassaic State Multiple Use Area is a 488±-acre park and open space area, a portion of which is located in Amenia. It is operated and maintained by the NYSDEC Bureau of Public Land, and provides camping facilities, cross-country skiing, fishing, hunting, and hiking, horseback riding, and nature trails that traverse a vast area of undeveloped forested land and open fields.⁵¹

Table 3.12-1 Existing Municipal Parks and Recreational Facilities

Facility	NRPA Type*	Location	Approximate Acreage
Beekman Park	Local Park	Adjacent to town center off Rt. 22 and Rt. 44.	47.8
Borden Park	Local Park	Near railroad tracks in the hamlet of Wassaic.	2
Amenia Elementary School	Local Park	North of town center on Rt. 22/44.	.5
Subtotal of Local Parkland			50.3
Wassaic State Multiple Use Area	Regional Park	South of hamlet of Wassaic on Rt. 22.	488
Harlem Valley Rail Trail	Regional Park	Extending from town center northeast through Millerton.	64.78
Subtotal of Regional Parkland			552.78
TOTAL			603.08
Source: 1) <i>Amenia Recreation Master Plan</i> , 2006. http://www.ameniany.com/ , 2) The Town of Amenia Master Plan, 1991, and 3) www.dutchessny.gov . *National Recreation and Parks Association.			

Privately Owned Recreational Facilities

In addition to public recreational facilities, the Town of Amenia also offers recreational opportunities available through private facilities, including the Silo Ridge Country Club and the Troutbeck Inn and Conference Center.

Silo Ridge Country Club

The existing Silo Ridge Golf Course will be upgraded and improved as a part of the Proposed Action. Current amenities include a pro shop, on-site restaurants, clinics, camps, tee schools, and individual lessons.⁵²

⁵¹ <http://www.dutchesstourism.com/multipleuse.asp>.

⁵² <http://www.siloridge.com>, site visited on March 7, 2006.

As part of the Proposed Action, the existing golf course and driving range will be upgraded and improved. A scenic overlook and observation deck will be provided along US Route 44 on DeLavernne Hill, and the forested area and hiking/nature trails along the ridgeline in the western section of the project area will be preserved. The hotel and spa will offer a pool, tennis courts, and garden area, including an outdoor banquet area. As the Resort Community will offer ample recreational opportunities for projected occupants, there will be no need to partner with other private recreational facilities and the project will have no impact on public recreational facilities.

There are no formal proposals at this time for creating conservation easements or for the formal dedication of onsite open space; however, the Applicant is committed to protecting the site's natural resources and recreational opportunities.

Troutbeck Inn and Conference Center

Troutbeck is a 430± acre resort located off Leedsville Road in the northeast section of the Town of Amenia. In addition to guest rooms, suites, and dining facilities, Troutbeck also offers recreational opportunities consisting of an outdoor pool, tennis courts, and exercise room, hiking, fly fishing, and bird watching.

Future Plans

As discussed in below Section 3.12.2, the Town of Amenia exceeds National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards set for the amount of parks, recreation, and open space to adequately provide for the recreational needs of its residents. The Town also commissioned a Recreation Master Plan to formulate a vision for the future of recreational services and activities provided by the Town of Amenia.

The Plan includes a list of recreational goals and objectives for Amenia, an inventory of existing recreation facilities and programs, and a plan for upgrades to recreation facilities. Proposed improvements to Beekman Park include new playground equipment, additional parking spaces, a sand play area, new basketball court, pavilion, and canopy at the concession counter. Proposed improvements to Borden Park include new playground equipment, a basketball court, picnic tables, and expanded parking and landscaping.⁵³

Tourism

Amenia's tourist attractions include the existing public and private recreation facilities as discussed above, including the existing Silo Ridge Country Club. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail and the Wassaic Multiple Use area also provide a tourism

⁵³ *Amenia Recreation Master Plan*, 2006. <http://www.ameniany.com/>.

resource by offering opportunities for hiking, jogging, biking, rollerblading, camping, cross-country skiing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding through vast trails and areas of forested land.

Fall foliage tours and wineries in Amenia and the surrounding area also supplement the area's tourism economy.

3.12.2 Potential Impacts

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

The NRPA has developed a set of standards for parks, recreation, and open space to help communities plan adequately for their recreational needs. These standards address the goals to be achieved and are intended to be used as a guide, since each municipality has unique needs and requirements.

The total amount of park and recreational land recommended by the NRPA is 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 people for "local parkland" and 15 to 20 acres per 1,000 people for "regional space." Based on information provided in Table 3.12-1, the Town has a total of 50± acres of local parkland and 553± acres of regional space to serve its 4,080 residents.⁵⁴ Therefore, the Town of Amenia exceeds NRPA standards with approximately 12.3± acres of local parkland and approximately 135.5± acres of regional space per 1,000 residents. In addition, if the acreages of the recreational facilities at the privately run and school district facilities were considered, the amount of park and recreation land per 1,000 residents would be even higher.

It is estimated that the Proposed Action will generate a maximum of 1,079 new residents, although as noted in Section 2.0, the majority of project occupants are expected to be seasonal rather than full-time residents.⁵⁵ Despite the introduction of these new residents, the demographic ratio of residents to existing parkland will not be significantly altered. The amount of local parkland per 1,000 residents will only decrease from approximately 12.3± to 9.7± acres per 1,000 residents, which is still within the NRPA guidelines. The amount of regional parkland per 1,000 residents will only decrease from approximately 135.5± to 107± acres per 1,000 residents; this is also well above NRPA guidelines.

Town of Amenia

The Town will continue to meet the NRPA criteria for recreational needs of its citizens even with the addition of a maximum of 1,079 new residents from the Silo Ridge Resort Community. In accordance with Section 105-23(D), Parks and Open

⁵⁴ <http://www.ameniany.org/>, site visited on March 3, 2006.

⁵⁵ Based on multipliers provided in *The 1994 Urban Land Institute Development Impact Handbook* Exhibit II.1 Regional and National Demographic Multipliers for common configurations of standard housing types for total household size.

Space of the Town Code, Silo Ridge will preserve approximately 75% of the site (500 acres) as open space, including the existing hiking trails and golf course. In addition, the Applicant proposes to upgrade the existing golf course and driving range and provide on-site recreational opportunities for Silo Ridge occupants.

Comparable Resort Communities

An evaluation of several comparable golf-course oriented condominium hotel developments located both in the Northeast as well as throughout the Country is presented below to represent true condominium hotel offerings that draw from a relatively large market area.

The Appalachian at Mountain Creek Resort

Mountain Creek is a mixed-use resort village development located approximately 45 miles northwest of New York City in Vernon, New Jersey (Sussex County). Developed by Intrawest, the four-season resort community is based around a 46-trail ski mountain, six area golf courses, a water park, and various hiking trails. In total, the master-planned community will be comprised of more than 1,700 residences, the Grand Resort Hotel and conference center, and over 65,000 square feet of retail space dispersed throughout the pedestrian village (including a day spa). The Appalachian is a two-phased condominium hotel component of Mountain Creek Resort. The first phase is comprised of 100 hotel units and will be ready for occupancy in July 2006. The second phase will include an additional 77 units and is currently under construction. Both phases are completely sold-out, with the second phase reportedly selling out in a single day. The Appalachian has a mix of studio to three bedroom condominium hotel units. The condo-hotel units include fully equipped gourmet kitchens, outdoor space in the form of terraces or balconies, and private ski lockers for visitors.

Grand Cascades Lodge at Crystal Springs

The Grand Cascades Lodge is 212-unit condominium hotel located approximately 50 miles west of New York City in Hamburg, New Jersey (and approximately five miles from the Mountain Creek Resort). The condo-hotel project is the latest development at Crystal Springs, which is a 750-unit community that is anchored by the five area golf courses, the Mineral Hotel and Elements Spa, and the Crystal Springs Country Club, a 53,000 square foot clubhouse adjacent to the Grand Cascades Lodge which includes two restaurants, multiple outdoor swimming pools, a fitness center, and a 1,500 square foot pro-shop. For sale residences throughout the Crystal Springs community have been constructed by a variety of developers over the past 15 years and thus far have been comprised of condominium units, townhomes, and estate homes. The Grand Cascades Lodge, which is being developed by Crystal Spring Developers, is expected to be completed in 2007. The project is currently more than 90% sold-out and has a mix of one, two, and three bedroom units. The condo-hotel

units include a fully equipped gourmet kitchen, outdoor balconies, gas fireplaces and Jacuzzi tubs in the master bathrooms.

Jackson Gore at Okemo Mountain

Jackson Gore Inn is a condominium hotel development located at the base of Okemo Mountain in Ludlow, Vermont. Okemo is already considered one of the premier ski resorts in the Northeast. In an attempt to brand itself as a four-season destination location, the Jackson Gore development will also include the creation of two new golf courses (to complement the existing course), a fitness and aquatic center and outdoor skating rink. The slope-side residential plan will also include two condominium buildings, Bixby and Coolidge, to be located adjacent to the condo-hotel property. Bixby and Coolidge will be comprised of 30 and 35 residential units, respectively, and are both expected to be completed in Winter 2007/08. The first phase of Jackson Gore Inn, which was constructed in 2005 and is completely sold out, is comprised of 117 condominium hotel units. The residences range in size from studio units to three bedroom units. Jackson Gore Inn is a quarter-share fractional ownership structure, where owners are entitled to 13 weeks per year (or approximately once a month) on a rotational basis. A second, smaller building is currently in pre-construction and is expected to be completed for the Winter 2007/08. The second phase, which is named Adams House, will be comprised of 39 units and has a mix of one, two and three bedroom hotel residences.

La Costa Resort and Spa

Situated 40 miles north of San Diego in Carlsbad, California, La Costa is considered one of the premiere golf course resort destinations in the United States. The 400-acre resort includes a 511-room guest hotel and spa to accompany two 18-hole championship guest courses. La Costa is currently the host of the Accenture Match Play Championship. In addition to its current hotel and spa facility, La Costa is constructing a multi-phased condominium hotel development at the resort called La Costa Resort Villas. The sold-out first phase, which was completed in January 2006, is comprised of 21 condo hotel suites. The second phase, which includes 18 suites in two separate buildings, is currently under construction and is approximately 50% sold-out. Building Two is expected to be ready for occupancy in July 2006 and Building Three several months later in October 2006. The villas include a mix of one, two, and three bedrooms units.

Tourism

It is anticipated that proposed expansions and upgrades at the Silo Ridge Golf Course site will provide further stimulus to tourism by offering additional recreational and dining opportunities, and the addition of guest rooms in Amenia will encourage more tourists to visit, shop, and eat in Amenia.

According to the USDA Rural Information Center,⁵⁶ tourism provides income and diversification to rural communities and most of the dollars generated from outside visitors stay within the local economy. According to a 2002 study by Marist College Bureau of Economic Research, out of region visitors within a ten county region (including Dutchess County) spend an average of \$108 on meals/food, \$45 on transportation/gas, and \$81 on shopping (on retail goods other than souvenirs and books) per trip. These figures are good estimates of tourism spending for the region. As applied to future visitors to Silo Ridge, assuming an average hotel occupancy of 50% and an average length of stay of three nights, Silo Ridge hotel guests are projected to spend approximately \$2 million on meals and food, \$800,000 on transportation and gas, and \$1.5 million on retail goods annually, much of which is expected to occur locally and within the region. This is a significant positive economic impact for the Town and the region.

In addition to gains from direct sales to visitors, many indirect benefits are realized as well. For example, visitors contribute to the tax revenues collected and can influence the quality of life by financing community facilities such as swimming pools, parkland, restaurants, and shopping facilities. Community events intended for tourists also attract local residents, and the need to provide services to tourists creates new jobs in the community. Although they may not be high paying employment opportunities, these jobs satisfy the need of students and dual-earning families for part-time or seasonal employment.

3.12.3 Proposed Mitigation Measures

As discussed above, the Town of Amenia exceeds NRPA standards set for the amount of parks, recreation, and open space to adequately provide for the recreational needs of its residents. The Town will continue to exceed NRPA standards after the introduction of a maximum of 1,079 new residents⁵⁷ from the proposed Silo Ridge Resort Community. In addition, the Applicant proposes upgrades to the existing golf course and driving range and to provide on-site recreational opportunities for Silo Ridge occupants. The Proposed Action also preserves approximately 500± acres of the site as open space.

Therefore, as there will be no impacts to recreational and open space resources in the Town of Amenia as a result of the Proposed Action, no mitigation measures are necessary. Further, as previously stated, it is anticipated that Silo Ridge Resort Community will enhance the local and regional tourism economy by providing additional guest rooms, dining opportunities, and recreational resources (see Section 3.17 for more details).

⁵⁶ Promoting Tourism in Rural America, USDA, National Agricultural Library.
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/tourism.html>.

⁵⁷ Burchell, Robert W., Listoken, David, et al. Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research, Residential Demographic Multipliers - Estimates of Occupants of New Housing (New York State), June 2006.

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