DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR

Thompson Education Center

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS) - PHASE 1 AND DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DGEIS) - PHASES 2 & 3

TOWN OF THOMPSON
SULLIVAN COUNTY, NEW YORK

March 3, 2017

Lead Agency:

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Draft Scope Acceptance: T/B/D

Public Scoping Session: T/B/D

Date Comments Due: T/B/D

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INTRODUCTION

This Draft Scoping Document has been prepared for the Town of Thompson Planning Board (hereinafter Planning Board) as Lead Agency for the State Environmental Quality Review of the proposed Thompson Education Center.

The purpose of the Draft Scoping Document is to initially define the environmental issues that will be addressed by the project sponsor during preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on Phase 1 of the project and a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) on Phases 2 and 3.

A Public Scoping Session will be held at 7:00 P.M. on **[Date T/B/D]** at the Thompson Town Hall in Monticello, New York. Additional written comments from members of the public as well as Involved and Interested Agencies will be accepted until **[Date T/B/D]**.

Based on the comments received, a Final Scoping Document will be prepared and adopted by the Planning Board. The Final Scoping Document is intended to serve as the foundation for the identification of all potentially significant adverse environmental impacts pertinent to the proposed action and to recommend appropriate mitigation measures. Its purpose is also intended to eliminate consideration of any impacts that are irrelevant or non-significant.

The proposed action, classified as a Type 1 Action under SEQRA, is the subject of a Resolution issued by the Planning Board on November 13, 2014, in which the Planning Board assumed Lead Agency for the purpose of conducting an environmental review of the Project and issued a positive determination of environmental significance. Potential significant adverse impacts include impacts on land, water, transportation and community services.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Thompson Educational Center ("TEC") is a school of higher education, plus related recreational and other facilities on a 573+/ parcel off Wild Turnpike in the Town of Thompson (s/b/l 26-1-6) and the Town of Fallsburg (s/b/l 65-1-11.59). There will be 2 student union and studio buildings, 2 smaller student studios, 4 classroom buildings, an admission/bursar office, an administrative building, four clubhouse and dining facilities, 3 community and sports center buildings, a library/museum, a school art center, a conference center, and a separate museum. In addition, on campus housing will include 8 student housing dormitories, 6 student group house dormitories with recreational facilities, 26 school faculty boardinghouses with recreational facilities, 80 additional faculty boardinghouses, a founding trustee village for 22 trustees, a president's house, a water tower, a wastewater treatment facility subject to environmental review, and a stand-alone security facility designed as a residential home on TEC land in the Town of Fallsburg. The plan will provide for 732 student dormitories, capable of housing 2,508 students living on campus and faculty housing capable of housing 276 faculty living on campus. The TEC anticipates 250 commuting students and 400 faculty members total.

Most aspects of the project are designed in circular fashion consistent with Chinese culture. The project will be phased. A Master Plan dated 03/01/17 is attached.

Phase 1 will include basic school facilities, student housing, cultural/recreational facilities necessary roads, and water and wastewater facilities. It will involve a gross area of 200 acres of which 170 acres will remain as open space. The remaining 30 acres will be developed for student housing (156 units of 2 and 3-story townhouse style dormitory units and 288 apartment type dormitory units). It will also include eight buildings placed over 2 distinct areas, plus 3 recreational facilities and 3 additional outdoor recreational areas. The road system is integrated with other phases, with primary access from Wild Turnpike and secondary access from Renner Road in the Town of Fallsburg, passing by the security facility.

Phase II will consist of 288 units of student housing (for the students), 52 faculty housing units, a library/museum facility, a cultural/performance facilities area, 22 units of benefactor housing and 13 student center/recreational facilities on 178 acres of land with 153 acres of open space.

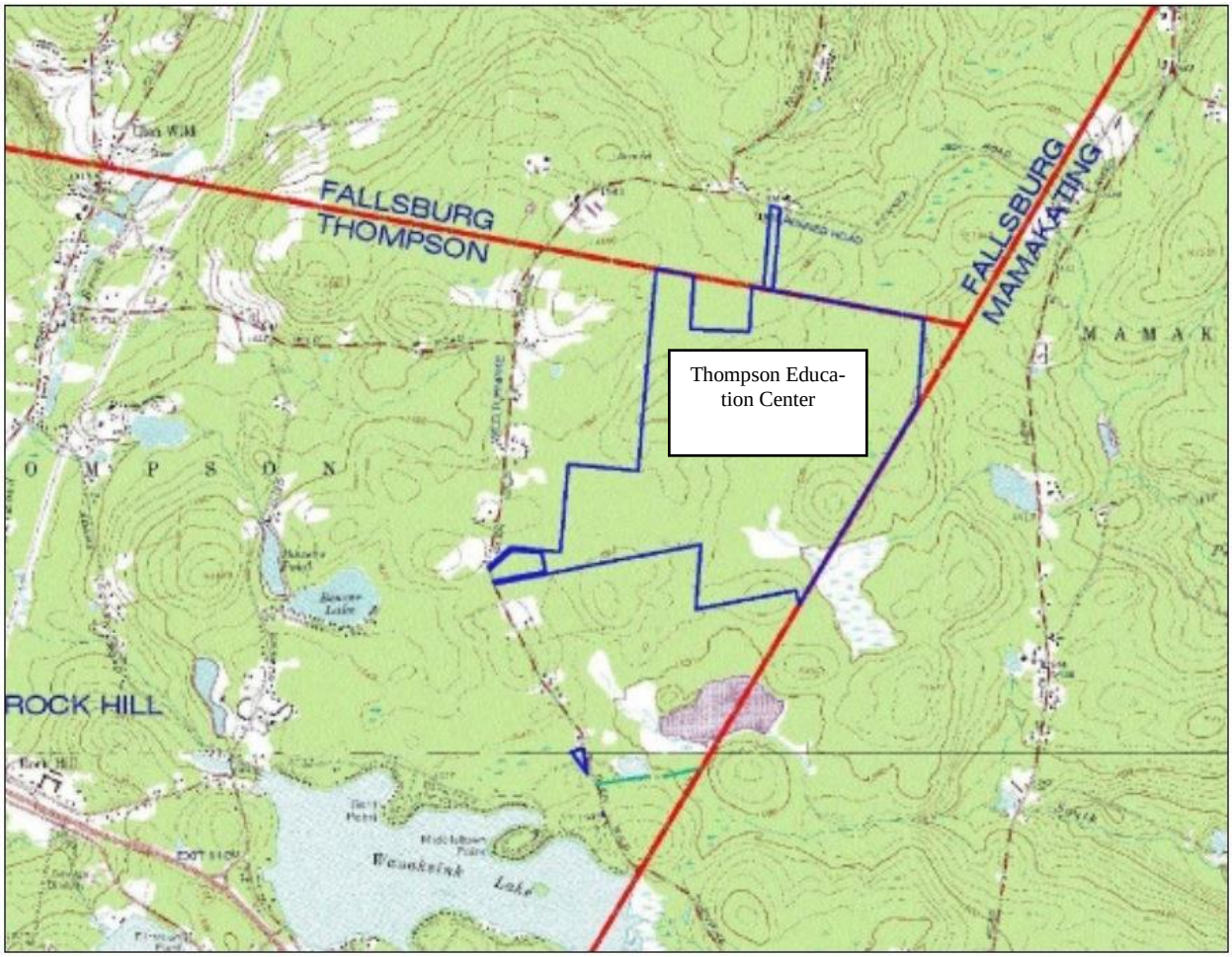
Phase III includes 195 acres of development, 80 units of faculty housing, an inn, school conference center and recreation facilities, leaving 170 acres of open space.

Ultimately, the project will total 80 acres of developed land and 493 acres of open space.

Upon site plan approval, TEC will pursue a charter by the New York State Education Department Board of Regents as a college.

PROJECT LOCATION

This site consists of parcel 26-1-6 located on Wild Turnpike, which is accessed from Wurtsboro Mountain Road (County Route 172) and Exit 112 of New York State Route 17 (future I-86) westbound or Exit 110 eastbound.



Project Location Map

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE DEIS/DGEIS

The provisions of 6 NYCRR 617.9 and 617.10 will apply to the content of the DEIS/DGEIS. The DEIS/DGEIS will assemble relevant and material facts and evaluate reasonable alternatives. It will also be concisely written in plain language. Highly technical material will be summarized and, if it must be included in its entirety, referenced in the DEIS/DGEIS and included in an appendix.

Narrative discussions will be accompanied to the greatest extent possible by illustrative tables and charts. The DEIS/DGEIS will group issues identified into separate sections pertaining to Existing Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation to permit more expedient and efficient review. The DEIS/DGEIS may incorporate by reference all or portions of other documents that will be available at the Town of Thompson Town Hall for inspection and available on the Town of Thompson website at this address:

(http://www.townofthompson.com/Public+Documents)

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Executive Summary will be prepared that consists of a brief but precise summary of the DEIS/DGEIS which adequately and accurately summarizes the document. It will include the following:

- Brief description of the proposed action and a listing of all potential environmental impacts and proposed mitigation measures;
- Adverse impacts that cannot be avoided;
- Alternatives considered;
- Permits and approvals;
- List of involved agencies; and
- List of interested agencies.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The description of the proposed action will be a detailed presentation of the proposal with supporting graphic materials, including:

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A narrative description of the project and its history will be prepared as a foundation for other elements of the DEIS/DGEIS. The project acreage is located in the RR-2 zoning district, which allows for all of the proposed uses, including colleges, recreational facilities, inns and single-family housing. The bulk of the project, however, will remain as open space.

B. PURPOSE, NEED AND BENEFIT

The purposes, need and benefits of the Thompson Education Center Project will be articulated in the DEIS/DGEIS, with specific attention to demonstrating how the proposed design will ensure environmental protection, preserve vital natural features and provide economic benefits for the town and region.

C. SITE LOCATION

1. Geographic boundaries of the project site, including regional and local maps.

2. Site acreage, easements affecting the site, and existing access.

3. Discussion of land uses in immediate area and the relationship of the project to those uses.

4. Site description (existing zoning and land use, wetlands, watercourse etc.).

D. USES

1. Discussion of the prior and present uses of the project site.

2. Description of anticipated project demographics.

E. DESIGN AND LAYOUT

1. Total site area, proposed impervious surface area, amount of site disturbance, amount of open space, road improvements and storm water management facilities.

2. Structures, site plans, type of residential units and description of community areas and other amenities.

3. Description of on-site vehicle access and circulation systems.

4. Sewer, water and drainage utility plans.

F. PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED

Permits, reviews and approvals required, including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation – Water supply, sewage and storm water management permits.

2. New York State Department of Health – Approval of water supply.

3. Sullivan County Department of Planning – Review of land use approvals under Section 239 of General Municipal Law.

4. Town of Thompson - Highway access and sewer connection permits.

5. Town of Thompson Planning Board – Subdivision and site plan approval.

6. Delaware River Basin Commission - Groundwater withdrawal review.

7. Town of Fallsburg - Highway access permit for proposed access road.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION

Existing site conditions will be defined for each of the following issues in the DEIS/DGEIS. Potential impacts of the proposed action will be identified and proposed mitigation measures designed to avoid, minimize or offset potential impacts will be discussed.

A. SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

Existing soil and topography conditions will be mapped and analyzed. There will also be a discussion of the erosion control plan, proposed grading plan and any other mitigation required, including a discussion of best management practices that will be employed.

B. WATER RESOURCES

1. The location and description of surface water, watersheds, downstream off-site receiving waters, and hydrologic characteristics located on and off the project site or those that may be influenced by the project will be discussed. These include the local South Brook and Primrose Brook watersheds, both of which are part of the sub-regional Upper Basher Kill Watershed, which, in turn, is part of the regional Neversink-Mongaup watershed. Impacts from the proposed development on the ecology of all affected streams within these watersheds will be identified and analyzed. Mitigation measures will be prepared and proposed as necessary.

This analysis will specifically include any impacts on the Basha Kill Wetlands and Bashakill Wildlife Management Area. Consisting of 3,000 acres, the Basha Kill is home to over 200 species of birds, 30 varieties of fish, including the prehistoric bowfin; and many plants, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and insects.

2. Wetlands will be mapped, and proposed uses, if any, will be discussed along with alternatives and mitigation, where required. Particular attention will be given to the Harlin Swamp Wetland Complex.

3. There will be a groundwater analysis including location and description of existing off-site neighboring wells, effects on surrounding wells, projected groundwater withdrawal requirements and rates, estimated aquifer safe yield and potential effects on regional hydrology and mitigation. The hydrogeologic evaluation will include estimates of water demand, geologic mapping, discussion of permit requirements, 72-hour pump tests to demonstrate 6-hour stabilized yields of proposed wells, monitoring of neighboring wells within 2,500 feet, estimates of supply capacities of the aquifer and mitigation measures required, if any.

C. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

An assessment will be made of impacts from future drainage patterns, storm water peak discharges and storm water quality. This will include design of an adequate storm water control system in accordance with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Storm Water Management Design Manual. There will also be an analysis of pollutant loading for pre and post-development conditions with respect to sediment, nutrients and other pollutants that could adversely affect surface waters. This analysis will be made in the context of any SPDES permits involved.

D. EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION

There will also be a discussion of soil erosion and sediment control measures designed in accordance with the NYSDEC New York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sedimentation Control.

E. TERRESTRIAL AND AQUATIC ECOLOGY

A vegetation/habitat assessment will be conducted. It will identify the extent of and classify the various types of vegetation on site including rare, threatened or endangered species as well as common species. The amount of vegetation to be cleared and impacts on habitat will be discussed. There will also be a discussion of any mitigation required, which may include preservation in the form of permanent open space designation, buffers around wetlands or unique habitats or restrictions on clearing.

F. FISH AND WILDLIFE

1. Contact the NYSDEC to identify and evaluate the possible presence of unique, rare and/or endangered, threatened and special concern species.

2. Conduct a field investigation of the project site to identify existing wildlife usage and habitats and the possible presence of unique, rare and/or endangered, threatened and special concern species. Indiana Bat and Bog Turtle studies, in fact, have already been conducted.

3. Evaluate the potential impacts on the resources identified, including an assessment of potential removal or disturbance of existing wildlife and habitat areas, and necessary mitigation measures.

G. TRANSPORTATION

This section will include a summary of the report generated by a NYS licensed professional traffic engineer, which will be included in the appendix of the DEIS. The headings of this section may change to better accommodate the DEIS report but the content outlined will be provided. The methodology for assessing the potential traffic and transportation impacts from traffic generated by different phases of operation of the project will generally follow industry standards. Projected traffic counts will also include additional projects that have been approved and are unbuilt or are in the final approval phases.

1. The study will include an introduction and general description of the proposed project and different construction/operation phases, access, site accommodations, and critical elements related to traffic and transportation.

2. The methodology for assessing the potential traffic and transportation impacts from traffic generated by the project will generally follow the methodology provided by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), the Transportation Research Board (TRB), the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), and industry accepted practices.

3. A description of the roadway network serving the site will be provided including East Glen Wild Road, Renner Road, Wild Turnpike, and Wurtsboro Mountain Road (CR 172).

4. A general inventory of the number of lanes, shoulder widths, grades, adjacent land uses, speed limits, and jurisdictional agency will be provided. The annual average daily traffic volume will be listed for major segments based on the availability of existing data.

5. A review of existing historical data (latest three years available) on traffic accidents obtained from NYSDOT. A qualitative summary for major segments will be provided.

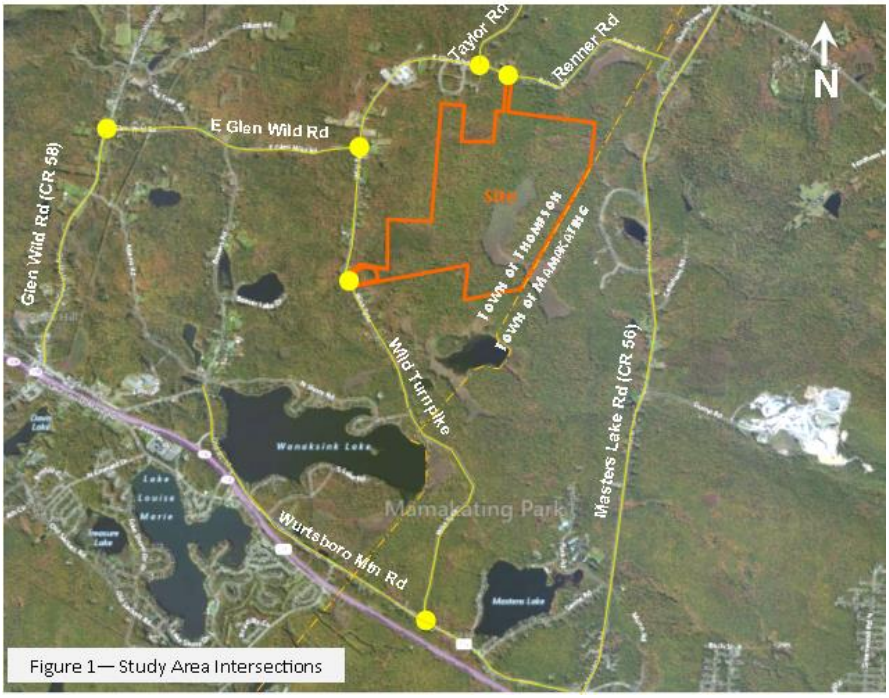


Figure 1— Study Area Intersections

6. The study area for the traffic impact study has been established based upon a qualitative review of the existing transportation network, available traffic volumes, and expected impacts associated with the project. The intersections to be included are as follows (see Figure 1) :

   - Glen Wild Road/East Glen Wild Road
   - East Glen Wild Road/Wild Turnpike
   - Wild Turnpike/West Site Access Road
   - Wild Turnpike/Wurtsboro Mountain Road (CR 172)
   - Taylor Road/Wild Turnpike/Renner Road
   - Renner Road/North Site Access Road

7. Intersection turning movement counts will be conducted on a typical weekday while school is in session (September through May) from 7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. The counts should include passenger vehicles, heavy vehicles, trucks, bicycles, and pedestrians. The peak 60-minute (peak hour) volumes will be summarized on graphs, figures, and/or tables where appropriate.
8. Automatic traffic recorders will be placed on East Glen Wild Road, Wild Turnpike, and Renner Road to record hourly volumes, speeds, and classification for several weekdays and a weekend.

9. Existing traffic volumes will be adjusted to average month conditions based on seasonal adjustment rates provided by NYSDOT.

10. Traffic forecasts will be based on the projected buildout of the site over the several phases including (see Figure 2):

    - Milestone 1 (completion of phases 1 and 2)
    - Milestone 2 (completion of phases 3 and 4)
    - Milestone 3 (completion of phases 5 and 6)

11. No-build traffic volumes will be established based on a review of historical traffic growth and other approved or under-construction projects in the study area that would significantly impact the traffic. The data will be summarized using the appropriate graphics, figures, and/or tables as necessary. Information on other development projects will be requested from the applicable jurisdictions. The design year will be based on the probable completion, occupancy, and operation of the project for each milestone.

12. Trip generation and mode split of the proposed higher education center will be based on industry accepted references (ITE's *Trip Generation*) and analyzed for all three milestones phases. Probable origin/destinations of traffic and future Build traffic volumes (after the project is complete) will be estimated and summarized using the appropriate graphics, figures, and/or tables necessary.

13. Intersection capacity and level of service (LOS) analyses will be conducted based on the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual (published by TRB) for the existing, No-Build, and Build traffic volumes conditions for the AM and PM peak hours and summarized using the appropriate graphics, figures, and/or tables necessary.

14. Traffic impacts at the study area intersections will be identified and the appropriate mitigation measures determined to accommodate vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle movements.

15. Intersection sight distances will be measured at each of the site driveways and compared to AASHTO standards based on the speeds measured near each location. Mitigation to meet recommended sight distance guidelines will be provided if necessary.

16. An air quality analysis will be conducted based on the standards followed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) as outlined in NYSDOT's *The Environmental Manual* (TEM). The air quality assessment will focus on the off-site air quality related to traffic generated by the project site. A microscale air quality screening at the study area intersections outlined in Section 3.5.4 will be conducted, and where deemed necessary according to the TEM, a detailed microscale, mesoscale, and particulate matter analysis will be conducted.

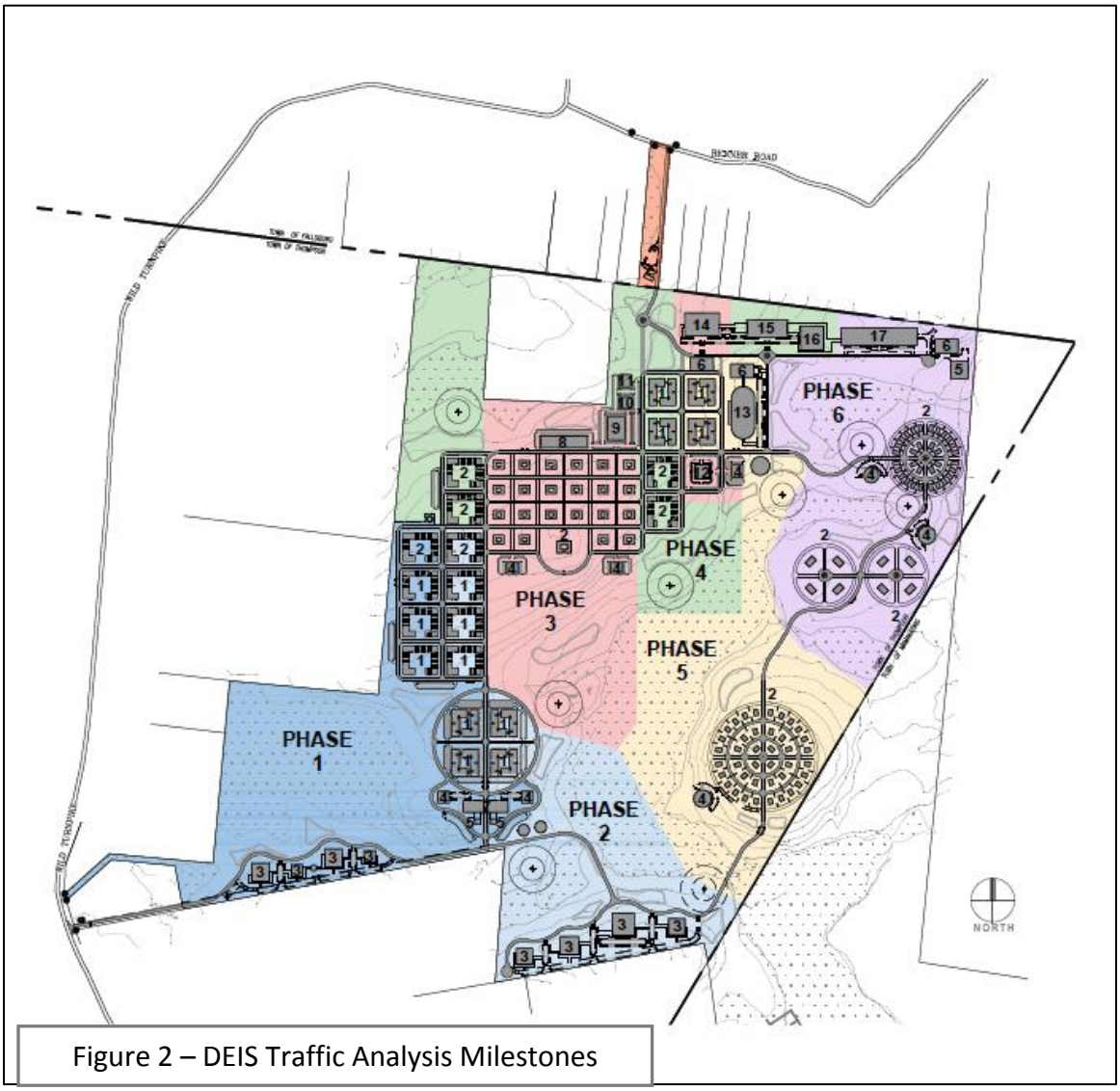


Figure 2 – DEIS Traffic Analysis Milestones

H. LAND USE, ZONING AND POLICY

1. Land use

   a. Describe existing land uses of the project site and the surrounding area.

   b. Discuss the compatibility of the proposed project with the character and development trends of the surrounding area.

   c. Discuss potential impacts on adjacent land uses and if necessary, appropriate mitigation for the action.

2. Zoning

    a. Describe zoning for the project site and immediate vicinity.

    b. Discuss the project's compliance with all zoning, subdivision and site plan regulations and other criteria set forth by the Town of Thompson Code.

    c. Mitigation measures required or proposed will be discussed, including any covenants or restrictions that may apply to the project.

3. Policy analysis

    a. An analysis of the project's compatibility with the goals and policies set forth in the Town of Thompson Comprehensive Plan.

I. VISUAL RESOURCES

1. There will be an inventory and description of existing visual and scenic resources at the project site and mitigation as may be required.

2. Description of proposed outdoor lighting for the proposed project including detailed site plan. Potential impacts will be evaluated and mitigation discussed if necessary.

J. NOISE AND AIR RESOURCES

1. The DEIS/DGEIS will describe the existing ambient daytime and nighttime sound levels at the site, including site conditions that would affect sound propagation such as terrain and wind direction. Existing air conditions of the project site will be described.

2. The proposed development's day and nighttime sound level generation will be described and analyzed during and post construction for potential for adverse impacts on the local residential community and surrounding area. An air quality analyses will be conducted during the construction and operation of the proposed project.

3. Conformance with the Town's noise standards will also be discussed along with methods to avoid or reduce adverse noise and air quality effects during and after construction.

K. PUBLIC SEWER SERVICES

There will be a comprehensive analysis of options available for providing sewage collection and treatment services to the project, including capacities of existing public systems, the feasibility of connecting to the same and the nature of the arrangements and permitting involved as well as the financial arrangements for construction and maintenance of the system and impact on other users.

L. OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES

The proposed project may create the need for additional community services (beyond sewer, storm water and water services) including police and fire protection, emergency services, schools, social services and healthcare, solid waste disposal, recreational facilities and highway infrastructure. Each service area will be quantitatively described as to its existing capacity.

The potential impact of the proposed project on each service area will be estimated, according to generally accepted practices, using the Sullivan County Costs of Community Services as a guide.

Impacts on schools and their capacities will be analyzed including an estimate of the expected number of school children that would be added to the Monticello Central School District. It is not anticipated the project will generate significant numbers, however, and the Monticello School District is facing declining enrollments.

M. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Sites having potential significant cultural or historical value will be identified. Archeological resources will also be inventoried and analyzed for any impacts. Measures to mitigate impacts on these resources, if required, will also be discussed.

N. OPEN SPACE

The impact of protecting or eliminating open spaces will be addressed by evaluate the site's contribution to open space and studying the potential effects of the project on existing open spaces of value to the community. These analyses will include:

1. Discussion of the open space plan for the proposed project.

2. Discussion of how proposed open space areas are to be protected and maintained. If restrictions on future development are proposed, there will be a discussion also of the legal mechanisms (such as deed restrictions or conservation easements) that will be put into place to ensure perpetual preservation of open space.

3. Identification of off-site and on-site open space resources. The potential for connections of on-site open space to off-site open spaces and how this could be implemented and maintained will be discussed.

4. Evaluation of the impacts of the project on other open space resources of the Town, County and State.

O. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Potential socio-economic impacts of the project will be analyzed in detail. The analysis will, at a minimum:

1. Project employment generation for the construction and operational phases of the project, including indirect or induced employment and potential income changes within the area.

2. Evaluate the tax base contributions of the project compared to costs of community services.

3. Evaluate the impacts of the student community on the larger community, including use of public and private health care facilities, commerce and use of public services.

P. CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

The individual and cumulative impacts of each construction phase will be evaluated. The DEIS/DGEIS will describe the general construction process. The description of proposed construction sequencing will include a flowchart for the maximum anticipated duration, including start and completion for key milestone tasks such as site clearing, grading and fill placement, infrastructure, off-site improvements and site amenities.

This will include analysis of clearing and lumbering impacts as well as a description of measures to store soil on site and avoid either import or export of earth.

Mitigation measures to be employed during construction will also be fully described. The DEIS/DGEIS will also describe any construction activities expected to be on-going after any part of the project is sold out and how these will be addressed so as to offer the same protections. Finally, the economic impacts of the project during and after contraction, including projected jobs will be reviewed and analyzed.

IV. ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

The DEIS/DGEIS will identify those adverse environmental effects in Section III that can be expected to occur regardless of the mitigation measures considered.

V. ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives to the proposed project that may minimize or avoid adverse environmental impacts will be identified and analyzed. Discussion of each alternative will be at a level of detail sufficient to permit a comparative assessment of costs, benefits, densities and environmental risks of each alternative. These alternatives will include, at a minimum, the following.

A. SUMMER CAMP

This alternative will involve approximately 700 seasonal housing units developed pursuant to §250-34 of the Town of Thompson Zoning Law relating to Bungalow Colonies, plus recreational facilities, cultural and religious facilities, dining and other services typically provided in conjunction with Catskill summer camps.

B. CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISION

This alternative consists simply of a conventional subdivision of 211 single family detached dwellings (RR-2 Density units/acre: 0.5, and exclusive of wetlands) on lots that are a minimum of two acres each in size.

C. CLUSTER SUBDIVISION

This alternative consists simply of a cluster subdivision of a minimum of 211 single family detached dwellings (RR-2 Density units/acre: 0.5, and exclusive of wetlands) on lots that are a minimum of 7,500 square feet each in size.

D. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

This alternative consists simply of taking no action with respect to further subdivision of the project site.

VI. IRREVERSIBLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The DEIS/DGEIS will identify any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that can be expected to occur as a result of this project.

VII. EFFECTS ON ENERGY RESOURCES

The DEIS/DGEIS will identify the energy sources to be used, anticipated levels of consumption and ways to reduce energy consumption.

VIII. GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Growth induced by the project, by the creation of the new employment centers involved and by the provision of new utility services, if any, will be identified and analyzed.

IX. APPENDICES

The DEIS/DGEIS will include the following Appendices:

A. List of underlying studies, reports and information used to prepare DEIS/DGEIS.

B. List of agencies, organizations or consultants consulted in preparing DEIS/DGEIS.

C. Technical studies and exhibits.

D. Final Scoping Document.