

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes, where applicable and significant, the likelihood that the Proposed Project may further development by creating or relocating employment and expanding support facilities (stores, community services, etc.).

The proposed EPT Concord Resort is intended to result in the orderly development of an approximately 1,538-acre property into a new master planned destination resort. It is estimated that the Proposed Project would generate approximately 2,642 FTE jobs and attract an estimated 2.2 million visitors annually to the area¹. Based on the existing average household size for Sullivan County (2.45 persons per household), the 897 residential units proposed to be built as part of the Proposed Project would increase the Town of Thompson's year-round population by approximately 2,400 persons. In addition, there would be 12 second-home/weekender residential units, which would be occupied weekends and in the spring and summer months. The growth that would result from the Proposed Project is consistent with the long-term development goals of the Town and of Sullivan County. In fact, these projections were factored into the adoption PRD law by the Town of Thompson in 2006.

By introducing the proposed EPT Concord Resort, the Proposed Project could produce significantly beneficial growth-inducing effects related to economic development and the transformation of an underperforming property into a world-class destination resort. The beneficial economic growth would come from the anticipated increase in the number of visitors and employees, particularly with respect to their expenditures on food, shopping, overnight stays, housing, and other relevant needs. Expenditures associated with the operations of the resort itself, including new employment opportunities, would also beneficially stimulate the economic climate within the region. Furthermore, the Proposed Project would likely influence the way in which land is used, potentially encouraging economic investment in the area's infrastructure on properties that are not owned by the Applicant.

B. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (DGEIS)

This section of the chapter discusses the potential for growth to be induced outside of the Project Site by the development of the various phases of the Proposed Project.

LOCAL ECONOMY

The development of EPT Concord Resort will be built out in several phases over an approximately 10-year period. The sequence of development will be market driven to ensure that each phase will be absorbed in an orderly fashion. It is anticipated that many of the shopping

¹ See Chapter 14 for details of potential job creation. Visitation numbers provided by the Applicant.

needs of EPT Concord Resort employees and residents would be met by the existing retail uses in the Town of Thompson, as well as the commercial services offered in the region. Locally, however, if retailers perceive some unfilled market demand stemming from the increasing number of visitors or residents in the Town, it is likely that new businesses would be attracted to both the Town and the surrounding area.

Full development of the Proposed Project would result in the presence of new visitors, residents, and employees who would spend money on food, shopping, overnight stays, housing, and other relevant needs. In turn, personal incomes and spending would generate tax revenues for the relevant taxing jurisdictions. Expenditures made by the various components of the resort could also affect economic conditions. In addition to possibly encouraging new development, the Proposed Project could strengthen or boost the sales revenues of existing commercial establishments. This effect would be primarily related to the increase in visitors and residents to the area.

EMPLOYEES

The Proposed Project is expected to generate approximately 2,642 FTE jobs at full build out. Refer to Chapter 14, "Economic Conditions," for calculations and a detailed analysis of calculated project-generated employment. A portion of the 2,642 jobs would be filled by employees who would be new to the County, as they would move to the area as a result of the Proposed Project. Therefore, their spending on housing, food, recreation, and other needs would represent new money spent in the County.

VISITORS

At full build out, the Proposed Project could be expected to attract about 2.2 million visitors annually. As the Proposed Project would have amenities that are attractive to both local and non-local residents, the anticipated visitor population would generally include year-round and seasonal residents of the area, day visitors, and overnight visitors. Many of these visitors would likely stay in lodging available within the resort, though some would be expected to stay in hotels, bed and breakfasts, camping, or other off-site lodging facilities.

Many of the visitors attracted to the Proposed Project would be non-residents, including those who already visit the County each year, as well as entirely new visitors who would not have traveled to the County in the absence of the Proposed Project. Spending by these new visitors would represent new or additional money both on-site, at the various resort components, and off-site. These visitors would generate expenditures that could be captured by existing Sullivan County businesses and possibly encourage the development of new businesses.

ANNUAL OPERATION OF MASTER PLANNED RESORT

Operating expenditures of the various components of the Proposed Project would also fuel economic growth in the area. These expenditures include non-payroll services, such as repairs and maintenance, trash removal, materials and supplies, contractual services, insurance, equipment, and catering. These types of goods and services are currently available in Sullivan County, and the Applicant would make every reasonable effort to utilize local establishments.

LAND USE AND BUILDING TRENDS

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Proposed Project could be expected to trigger some degree of secondary commercial development. As described in Chapter 2, commercial development in the SR, RR-1, and RR-2 districts is generally limited to hotels and motels, bed and breakfasts, mobile home parks, restaurants, and outdoor sales uses. It is expected that additional commercial development in the surrounding area will become more attractive.

To a large extent, project-generated demand for goods and services would be captured by existing commercial development in the County before new businesses are established. Many existing businesses would simply experience increased sales resulting in higher profits and/or wages. Others may be encouraged to change the way they operate. Some businesses may stay open later or hire an additional employee as a result of new sales activity. Other businesses may respond to the new demand by increasing inventory, modifying their product lines to cater to different consumer tastes, adding nominal amounts of area to existing structures, or by upgrading their storefronts, etc. In addition, existing commercial or residential structures could be converted into new businesses established to complement the services offered by the Proposed Project. These effects would not be expected to change overall land use and building trends, but they would improve economic conditions.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demand for housing in Sullivan County would rise as a result of the Proposed Project. This demand would be a function of new employment opportunities attracting new residents to the area. The existing housing stock would be expected to absorb the initial demand for housing. As the development of the Proposed Project proceeds towards build out, additional housing demand would be met by the construction of a variety of housing products proposed for the EPT Concord Resort. This would include 365 units of workforce housing targeted specifically to local residents and employees.

By expanding the recreational and entertainment offerings within the County, the Proposed Project would make the area more attractive to year-round and second-home buyers. Most of this demand would be met by housing proposed to be developed as part of the Proposed Project. If the residential offerings of the Proposed Project are not sufficient to meet the demand for new housing generated by the project, new housing development would be expected to accommodate the demand.

With respect to farmland conversion to residential and other non-farm uses, the Proposed Project is not likely to accelerate such trends in the vicinity of the Project Site. In general, land use regulations and policies of each Town and the County, including the County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, would need to be invoked to address potential growth-inducing effects of the Proposed Project. Local comprehensive planning and zoning, and enforcement of such governmental controls are critical to not only minimize the potential secondary effects of the Proposed Project, but also to contain cumulative development that continues to transform the County's rural landscape, particularly those developments that do not require detailed environmental review.

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The Proposed Project would upgrade existing roadways to serve the project (see Figures 1-23 and 1-24). During Phase 1 of the development, Joyland Road would be widened from Exit 106 of Route 17 to Thompsonville Road. As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," this would serve as the main entrance to the resort. Also as part of Phase 1, Thompsonville Road would be improved from the intersection of Joyland Road, west to the edge of Parcel 1.

Later phases of the Proposed Project would improve the remaining length of Thompsonville Road within the Project Site, as well as Chalet Road, from Thompsonville north to Kiamesha Lake Road.

These roadway improvements would not likely induce growth beyond that needed to meet the needs of the Proposed Project. (Project-related trips are studied in Chapter 11, "Traffic and Transportation.")

C. SITE-SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT OF PHASE 1 (DEIS)

This section of the chapter discusses the potential for growth to be induced outside of the Project Site by the development of Phase 1. Development within the Project Site is analyzed within this environmental impact statement.

LOCAL ECONOMY

Economic growth would be triggered by the development of Phase 1, as described in detail in Chapter 14, "Economic Conditions." This growth would stem from the presence of new visitors, residents, and employees who would spend money on food, shopping, overnight stays, housing, and other relevant needs. In turn, personal incomes and spending would generate tax revenues for the relevant taxing jurisdictions. Expenditures made by the various components of the resort could also affect economic conditions. In addition to possibly encouraging new development, Phase 1 could strengthen or boost the sales revenues of existing commercial establishments. This effect would be primarily related to the increase in visitors and residents to the area.

EMPLOYEES

In 2014 with the completion of Phase 1, the golf course program and select components of the Entertainment Village at the Resort Core, it is anticipated that 1,143 new FTE jobs would be created. The development program components mentioned above that are in addition to Phase 1 are anticipated to be completed concurrent with Phase 1 and will be subject to site-specific environmental review as required by SEQRA.

A portion of these employees would be new to the County, as they would move to the area as a result of the Proposed Project. Therefore, their spending on housing, food, recreation, and other needs would represent new money spent in the County.

VISITORS

As Phase 1 would have amenities that are attractive to both local and non-local residents, the anticipated visitor population would generally include year-round and seasonal residents of the area, day-trippers, and overnight visitors. Many of these visitors would likely stay in lodging available within Phase 1, though some would be expected to stay in hotels, bed and breakfasts, camping, or other off-site lodging facilities.

Many of visitors attracted to Phase 1 would be non-residents, including those who already visit the County each year and entirely new visitors who would not have traveled to the County in the absence of the Phase 1 development. Spending by these new visitors would represent new or additional money both on-site and off-site.

ANNUAL OPERATION OF PHASE 1

Operating expenditures of the Casino Resort could also fuel economic growth in the area. As discussed above, the various components of Phase 1 are expected to spend approximately \$117 million annually. These expenditures include non-payroll services, such as repairs and maintenance, trash removal, materials and supplies, contractual services, insurance, equipment, and catering. These types of goods and services are currently available in Sullivan County, and the Applicant would make every reasonable effort to utilize local establishments.

LAND USE AND BUILDING TRENDS

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The development of Phase 1 could be expected to trigger some degree of secondary commercial development. As described in Chapter 2, commercial development in the SR, RR-1, and RR-2 districts is generally limited to hotels and motels, bed and breakfasts, mobile home parks, restaurants, and outdoor sales uses. Each of these uses is subject to site plan approval by the Planning Board. In considering site plan applications, the Planning Board is required to “take into consideration the public health, safety and welfare and the comfort and convenience of the public in general and the residents of the immediate neighborhood in particular.”¹ Specifically, the Planning Board will examine each proposed new development with regards to traffic access, circulation and parking, landscaping screening, fire and police protection, and the harmony of the development with surrounding uses. The HC-1 and HC-2 districts allow for a wider variety of commercial uses than the primarily residential districts discussed above. However, these uses are also subject to site plan approval by the Planning Board. Therefore, any secondary commercial development that is potentially triggered by the development of Phase 1 would be controlled by the Town and examined individually for its potential environmental effects.

To a large extent, project-generated demand for goods and services would be captured by existing commercial development in the County before new businesses are established. Many existing businesses would simply experience increased sales resulting in higher profits and/or wages. Others may be encouraged to change the way they operate. Some businesses may stay open later or hire an additional employee as a result of new sales activity. Other businesses may respond to the new demand by increasing inventory, modifying their product lines to cater to different consumer tastes, adding nominal amounts of area to existing structures, or by upgrading their storefronts, etc. In addition, existing commercial or residential structures could be converted into new businesses established to complement the services offered by the Phase 1 development. These effects would not be expected to change overall land use and building trends, but they would improve economic conditions.

¹ Town of Thompson Zoning Code. §250.50(B)

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Housing demand in Sullivan County could rise as a result of the Phase 1 development, as some of the new jobs would be filled by those who would move to the County as a result of the Proposed Project. However, most of the employment generated by Phase 1 would be drawn from the local labor force. It is likely that any new housing demand generated by the development of Phase 1 would first be absorbed by the existing housing stock.

With respect to farmland conversion to residential and other non-farm uses, the Phase 1 development is not likely to accelerate such trends in the vicinity of the Project Site. In general, land use regulations and policies of each Town and the County, including the County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, would need to be invoked to address potential growth-inducing effects of the Phase 1 development. Local comprehensive planning and zoning, and enforcement of such governmental controls are critical for not only minimizing the potential secondary effects of the Phase 1 development, but also for cumulative development that continues to transform the County's rural landscape, particularly those developments that do not require detailed environmental review.

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

During Phase 1 of the development, Joyland Road would be widened from Exit 106 of Route 17 to Thompsonville Road. As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," this will serve as the main entrance to the resort. The new Joyland Road will be widened to an approximately 120-foot right of way (ROW) and will include four lanes of vehicular traffic, a planted median, and bioswales, as well as bike lanes. Also as part of Phase 1, Thompsonville Road will be improved from the intersection of Joyland Road, west to the edge of Parcel 1. It will remain a two-lane road, but will be widened to an approximately 36-foot ROW.

The improvement of Thompsonville Road is exclusively within the Project Site and will only serve the Phase 1 development. It is unlikely, therefore, that those improvements will induce growth outside of the Project Site boundaries. Joyland Road will be widened from Exit 106 to Thompsonville Road as described above. As described in Chapter 1, to accomplish this widening, the Applicant will be responsible for acquiring necessary properties west of Joyland Road from its southern end to the Project Site boundary that are currently not part of the PRD zoning district. At some future date, the Applicant, or subsequent owner of those properties, may submit a request to the Town to develop those parcels in accordance with the existing zoning regulations. Likewise, the owners of the parcels on the east side of Joyland Road may also submit requests to develop their property in accordance with existing zoning regulations. The widening of Joyland Road may make the development of these properties more appealing, owing to the enhanced accessibility and aesthetics of the properties' access. However, neither the Phase 1 development nor the Proposed Project contemplates rezoning these areas. They will remain zoned RR-1, which, as described in Chapter 2, limits the allowable uses and densities of any future development. Therefore, any future development induced by the improvements to Joyland Road will be limited both in the use and density, as well as subject to site plan approval for any uses other than a single-family home. *