

Response to Public Hearing Comments:

The comments presented at the Public Hearing on May 6th and May 26th have been summarized and categorized to combine like comments. A spreadsheet of each comment has been provided in addition to the response to each question.

The primary comments/issues have been grouped into nine categories as follows:

1. Location
2. Traffic
3. Noise
4. Water
5. Wetlands
6. Fireworks
7. Financial
8. Emergency Response
9. Miscellaneous/Other

Location Comments: Four people spoke in favor of the project at this location. No further response is necessary for these four comments. Two comments questioned the location of the ball field adjacent to the Fire Training Facility particularly due to the sensitivity to the secure nature of the emergency response control center. Two comments asked why Rockland Community College or Torne Valley could not be used for the ball park. Three comments were received by residential neighbors from Lori Court who are concerned with the impacts of a ball field on their neighborhood. One comment questioned the impact of this facility to the burn schedule of the fire training center.

The response to these comments includes the following:

Wherever a secure location is placed within general public knowledge, there is some loss of security. The most important concerns are access to and from the site during emergency events that might occur during the peak ball field traffic. Meetings with Mr. Gordon Wren, Director of the Facility to review the ongoing classes, training and access have confirmed that the roadway improvements proposed are adequate to insure safe and efficient ingress and egress to the facility even during peak hour arrivals and departures from the ball field. The primary reasons behind this determination are;

- Use of Opticon devices to override the traffic signals for emergency responses
- The ability to stop the flow of traffic in or out of the ball field if required either manually or through intervention of the devices with the proposed signals
- The ability to route the emergency vehicles through the ball field if necessary
- Traffic modeling that demonstrates adequate access to and from the Fire Training Facility (FTC) - even during peak hours. The FTC indicated that all of their classes in the evening are scheduled from 7PM to 10 PM. The ball field schedule is similarly scheduled with games to start at 7PM and finish usually by 10:30PM

- Burns scheduled for home games will continue as scheduled unless wind conditions indicate a wind direction from the north. The prevailing winds are from the southwest which takes the smoke further north.
- An emergency access traffic management plan is to be formalized in conjunction with Fire Training Center personnel. For further information reviewers are directed to the interim and final response to the comment letter from both the Fire Training Center and Rockland County Highway Department.

Traffic Comments: Six comments were made regarding traffic related issues. The first comment was in regard to access during emergencies. One additional comment noted that traffic is an issue – particularly impacting the residential neighborhoods. Another noted a problem with the traffic volumes projected and the ability to flow efficiently in and out as well as noting that there no kiss and ride facilities were identified. Three comments mentioned the need for bus facilities, coordination with Transit of Rockland schedules and bus parking areas. One comment addressed the need for sidewalks and another requested bicycle lanes to the ball park and parking for bicycles at the field.

The response to these comments includes the following:

Emergency access to the Fire Training Center has been reviewed with Director Gordon Wren and an emergency access traffic management plan will be formalized shortly.

Traffic within residential neighborhoods should not be impacted and if necessary, no parking signs will be placed in the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Town will monitor this situation as the ball field operations begin, but the wealth of parking available directly on site should not force patrons to park in residential neighborhoods. Ticket pricing that includes parking fees will be considered as another measure to prevent neighborhood parking intrusions. In terms of impacting residential traffic on Pomona Road, the traffic models indicate that most of the traffic will arrive and depart after the normal peak hours in the evenings. The traffic flow will be facilitated by the coordination of the existing and new traffic signals providing better throughput for residents and patrons of the ball field.

A kiss and ride facility is not planned although there are drop off areas in front of the entrance gates. Bus drop off and parking has been added to the revised plans. Discussions will begin with Transport of Rockland to determine whether existing bus routes will be re-routed to service the ball field. If so, bus shelters will be provided at a location agreeable to TOR and the Town of Ramapo for both entering and departing traffic. Sidewalks to and from the ball park are shown on the plans. A six foot accessible sidewalk has been provided on the north side of Pomona Road from Route 45 around Station Road and on the west side of Firemen’s Memorial Drive from the Fire Training Center to Pomona Road.

In terms of bicycle access, the improvements to Firemen’s Memorial Drive include a five foot shoulder which would provide bike access. Barrier separated bike access is not anticipated. A bike storage/lock area will be provided in the concourse area.

Noise Comment: Other than fireworks (fireworks are treated separately) there was only one comment regarding the noise measurements and testing.

Response: The comment was reviewed with the noise consultant who confirmed that the testing was completed in accordance with accepted procedures and that the testing accurately reflects the existing noise levels. It should be noted that noise levels are weighted averages and that a peak noise level may exceed the weighted average or limit.

Water Comment: There was one comment regarding the need to protect United Water Well in the park.

Response: The need to protect wells is noted and with the assistance of the Rockland County Department of Health, the soil remediation plan will encapsulate all contaminants on site which will prevent movement of contaminants off site. Testing will be completed to insure that airborne contaminants are also restricted to the site by watering the surfaces as necessary. In addition, the water quality and detention basins are designed to treat surface water runoff prior to discharge.

Wetland and Water Resource Comments: There were six comments related to streams wetlands, loss of trees, and climate change. The comments included protection of contaminants from moving into the County Park, wetlands interference/disturbance prior to the hearing, impacts to wetlands from the drainage and a question related to a tributary to the stream on site.

Response: Questions regarding activities within and around streams and wetlands are being addressed with the United States Army Corp of Engineers and with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The previous wetland boundary determination was performed in 2003 and 2004. This boundary is now out of date and must be re-evaluated to be current. Both agencies listed above have recently requested an up to date wetland boundary determination which is underway. This surveyed wetland delineation and the new/revised boundaries will be submitted to each agency for approval. If the freshwater wetland boundaries are found to have been violated in some instances, mitigation or creation of new wetland areas to compensate for this disturbance will be designed and submitted for approval for construction of the required wetlands.

In terms of loss of trees and climate change, one third of the site will remain undisturbed. The ball field is being designed to be green to reduce its carbon footprint as mitigation. The “green” features of the field include no water urinals, lower than standard flush toilets, recycled roof leader runoff for watering, approximately 25% grassed parking spaces, bioretention storm water elements, zero net runoff, recycled building materials, field drainage recapture for watering, low energy consumption lighting for the field, scoreboard, facility lighting and parking lot lighting as well as partial content recycled materials for construction.

For protection of the wetlands, please see the previous response regarding the soil remediation and storm water management plans.

Fireworks Comments: There were two comments regarding fireworks, one in favor and one against.

Response: The negative fireworks comment is understandably from a resident nearby. Since there is no way to mitigate the display of light and noise from fireworks, the only way to provide mitigation is to limit the number of events and the duration of the display. The EIS has limited the number of fireworks events to follow eight ball games over the baseball season. The duration will not exceed 30 minutes and will probably be shorter.

Financial Comments: Seven comments were made regarding the financial viability of the project with three favorable comments noting quality entertainment at affordable prices, investments for the future, and the positive impetus to spur growth. The other comments expressed concern over the financial viability of the league and the ball field operations.

Response: While the comments regarding the financial feasibility of the stadium are important, they are not issues to be considered in the evaluation of the environmental impacts. While a case could be made that the failure of the ball field would have environmental impacts, the impacts would certainly be more economic rather than environmental. Furthermore, the economic impacts were not included in the approved scope of work for this project. The impact on public services has been evaluated, but not the economic feasibility of the project.

Miscellaneous Comments: The following miscellaneous comments were made which did not fit the general categories above. The positive comments below do not require a response including:

- Advantages of affordable baseball locally
- Favors spillover effects of
- Supports remediation efforts and Town pride
- Heroes and idols for the youth
- Family entertainment

The remaining comments and concerns provide responses following each comment.

Comment: What was the purpose of the Torne Valley Purchase

Response: Although not germane to the ball field, there are multiple purposes for Torne Valley (land) purchases including preserving open spaces and habitat, safeguarding well head areas, recreational development, potential affordable housing, land control to restrict inappropriate developments.

Comment: What are the plans for the Town owned land south of the ball field and Pomona Road?

Response: The Town has no plans for that parcel at this time.

Comment: A suggestion was made to consider the ball field for a Veladrome (circular bike track)

Response: The ball field will be a multi use facility, and there is nothing to prevent this use provided there is appropriate support to justify its use at some point in the future. The focus of activity for now is the ball field.

Comment: Commenter would like a Referendum on Stadium

Response: The Town has already purchased this property and a referendum is not required.

Comment: The air quality study was wrong.

Response: The air quality study was conducted in full accordance with the guidelines and the consultant's response included in the correspondence section confirms this. The text is provided below to facilitate review which notes:

“The assessment of potential project air quality impacts was performed in compliance with the NYSDOT-EPM requirements. The EPM screening method assessing the potential for traffic-related air quality impacts of the project determined that detailed microscale modeling was not warranted at any of the critical intersections affected by the project traffic due to the small increase in local traffic associated with the project. Particulate (PM) emissions are clearly a more region-wide pollution problem and the small number of buses generated by the project would represent a negligible increase in comparison to existing County-wide indirect source (mobile) emissions. If you consider the more significant component of total PM emissions from direct (non-mobile) sources such as major industrial emissions, that makes stadium project bus PM emissions even more negligible. PM emissions in the area will only be slightly affected by bus traffic generated during stadium events and the effect of this single project is expected to be extremely negligible on the more regional scale of County-wide or state-wide total emissions generally analyzed for PM. The change in CO levels that was analyzed at the critical intersection for all site-generated traffic resulted in a negligible or no increase in existing pollution levels at receptors adjacent to the critical access road intersection. The incremental change in PM emissions would be proportionally similar to the CO levels but with even less of an impact when averaged over the 24-hour period applicable to particulate standards. As a result, the EPM screening method determined that detailed microscale CO modeling was not warranted at any critical intersections affected by the project and the same conclusion would extend for particulate emissions from any project generated bus traffic.”

Comment: A comment was made that the Urban Renewal designation was fraudulent.

Response: The high levels of hazardous materials and the soil remediation plan required by the Rockland offer ample evidence of the contamination as stated in the Urban Renewal Plan. While the contamination is not visible to the observer because it is in the soils, it posed a threat to human health and was a significant development constraint.

Comment: Why were no archaeological artifacts found on this site when they were found on the adjacent golf course site?

Response: The archaeological study was conducted by an approved New York State Archaeologist, Tracker Associates who searched diligently and extensively. One possible explanation is that this site was not the site of former habitation as no foundations were identified other than a cider mill in the wetlands near Pomona Road. Also, since the upland areas were farmed or cultivated as orchards, there is little doubt of the lack of residence activity contrary to what existed for years on the golf course site.

Comment: One commenter asked when the answers to the questions would be available.

Response: With publication of the Final EIS scheduled for June 1, 2010.

