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**NEW YORK STATE
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT (SEQRA)
WATCHTOWER AUDIO/VIDEO PRODUCTION CENTER
FINDINGS STATEMENT**

10 Pursuant to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act - SEQRA) of the Environmental
11 Conservation Law and 6 NYCRR Part 617, the Town of Ramapo Town Board as the Lead Agency
12 makes the following findings.

13 **Name of Action:** World Headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses Audio/Video
14 Production Center

15 **Project Sponsor:** Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.
16 Attn: Regulatory; 900 Red Mills Road
17 Wallkill, New York 12589

18 **Lead Agency:** Town of Ramapo Town Board
19 Town of Ramapo Town Hall
20 235 Route 59
21 Suffern, NY 10901

22 **SEQRA Classification:** Type I

23
24 **Description of Action:** Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., (“Watchtower”,
25 the “Applicant” or “Project Sponsor”) proposes to build a World Headquarters of Jehovah’s
26 Witnesses Audio/Video Production Center (“A/V Production Center” or the “Proposed Project”)
27 at 155 Sterling Mine Road, in the Town of Ramapo, New York (the “Project Site”). The proposed
28 development is a facility for the creation and production of audio and video/film recordings in an
29 integrated working, living, and worship facility for members of the religious order known as the
30 Worldwide Order of Special Full Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses (the “Order”) and
31 assisting religious volunteers.¹ A new mixed-use MU-3 Zoning District and amendments to the
32 Town of Ramapo Comprehensive Plan are proposed to facilitate the development of this integrated
33 facility (the “Proposed Action”).

34
35 The A/V Production Center will consist of audio and video production studios and facilities to
36 support operations of the world headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses. These support facilities
37 would include offices, maintenance and set production workshops, and a central chilled/hot water
38 plant with geothermal heat recovery system. Accommodations for the resident staff would include
39 645 residential units (545 1-bedroom and 100 studio units), dining/assembly spaces,
40 recreation/wellness/fitness facilities, and a clinic. The project also includes a Visitors Center,
41 which would welcome the public to the campus and offer Bible-related exhibits as well as exhibits
42 on the activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses.
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¹ As used in the FEIS and DEIS, ‘volunteer’ means a worker who does not receive compensation for his or her services. Depending on the context, ‘volunteers’ could mean members of the Order, religious volunteers not in the Order, or both.

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1 **Location:** 155 Sterling Mine Rd, Sloatsburg, NY 10974

Project Site Tax Lots

Town/County	Tax Lot	Existing Zoning Designation	Proposed Zoning Designation	Acres
Town of Ramapo, Rockland County	38.10-1-10 through 60	Specialized Residential (RSH) Housing District	Mixed-Use 3 (MU-3)	242 acres
	38.13-1-2 through 55			
	38.14-1-1 through 76			
	38.14-2-1 through 44			
	38.14-3-1 through 46			
	38.17-1-3 through 11			
	38.18-1-1 through 14			
Town of Tuxedo, Orange County	17-1-19.21	Conservation (C)	Conservation (C)	7 acres
TOTAL				249 acres
Notes: ¹ At the time the DEIS was prepared, the property was zoned Rural Residential (R-2). The Town of Tuxedo adopted a Town-wide zoning update on December 13, 2021.				

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Date Final Environmental Impact Statement Accepted: March 23, 2022

Date Final Environmental Impact Statement Filed: September 14, 2022

Date Findings Adopted:

9 **A. FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS RELIED ON TO SUPPORT THE**
10 **DECISION**

11
12 This Findings Statement has been prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the New York State
13 Environmental Conservation Law (the State Environmental Quality Review Act or “SEQRA”)
14 and its implementing regulations set forth in 6 NYCRR Part 617. It has been prepared by the Town
15 Board of the Town of Ramapo (the “Town Board”), the Lead Agency for the coordinated
16 environmental review of the Proposed Action. This Findings Statement relies on the information
17 and analysis contained in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) accepted as complete
18 on April 28, 2021, and the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) dated .

19
20 **B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

21
22 Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., (“Watchtower”, the "Applicant" or
23 “Project Sponsor”) proposes to build a World Headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses Audio/Video
24 Production Center (“A/V Production Center” or the “Proposed Project”) at 155 Sterling Mine
25 Road, in the Town of Ramapo, New York (the “Project Site”). The proposed development is a
26 facility for the creation and production of audio and video/film recordings in an integrated
27 working, living, and worship facility for members of the religious order known as the Worldwide
28 Order of Special Full Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses (the “Order”) and assisting religious

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1 volunteers.¹ A new mixed-use MU-3 Zoning District and amendments to the Town of Ramapo
2 Comprehensive Plan are proposed to facilitate the development of this integrated facility (the
3 “Proposed Action”).

4
5 The A/V Production Center will consist of audio and video production studios and facilities to
6 support operations of the world headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses. These support facilities
7 would include offices, maintenance and set production workshops, and a central chilled/hot water
8 plant with geothermal heat recovery system. Accommodations for the resident staff would include
9 645 residential units (545 1-bedroom and 100 studio units), dining/assembly spaces,
10 recreation/wellness/fitness facilities, and a clinic. The project also includes a Visitors Center,
11 which would welcome the public to the campus and offer Bible-related exhibits as well as exhibits
12 on the activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

13
14 The Project Site consists of 249 acres of land, of which 242 acres are located in the Town of
15 Ramapo (Rockland County) and 7 acres are located in the Town of Tuxedo (Orange County). At
16 the request of the Tuxedo Planning Board and the Orange County Department of Public Works,
17 and as part of a separate project, the Project Sponsor has abandoned the existing dirt driveway that
18 provided direct access to the Project Site and has constructed a 4-way intersection with Eagle
19 Valley Road, Sterlington Road, and Sterling Mine Road. Access to the Project Site would be
20 gained via an easement from Sterlington Road, which also provides access to the existing Sisters
21 Servants of Mary Immaculate and St. Joseph’s Adult Care Home. As part of the Proposed Action,
22 the drive would be improved from a dirt/gravel entrance to a paved roadway that would serve as
23 the secondary entrance to the Proposed Action. Development on the portion of the Project Site
24 located in the Town of Tuxedo is limited to these access improvements.²

25
26 The Ramapo portion of the Project Site was previously subdivided into 293 lots for the “Sterling
27 Mine Road Active Adult Community” which was commonly known as the “Lorterdan Project.”
28 However, no lots were conveyed and no physical improvements were made to the property
29 following the subdivision approval, and the Project Sponsor has represented that that subdivision
30 would be abandoned in accordance with Town Law 276(12).

31
32 The Proposed Action requires a Comprehensive Plan amendment, and zoning text and map
33 amendment from the Town of Ramapo Town Board to establish a new mixed-use MU-3 Zoning
34 District, and site plan approval from the Planning Board. In addition, the Proposed Action would
35 merge the existing tax lot lines into a single tax lot in Ramapo.

36
37

² Subsequent to the preparation of this FEIS, Watchtower acquired fee title to the land burdened by the access easement. As a result, the easement was extinguished by operation of law. The proposed improvement from a dirt/gravel entrance to a paved roadway to serve as the secondary site entrance is not affected.

C. SEQRA REVIEW AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (6 NYCRR Part 617) requires that agencies considering discretionary actions, such as the Proposed Action here, assess the potential adverse environmental impacts that could result from a given action.

On July 8, 2020, the Town of Ramapo Town Board declared its intent to serve as Lead Agency for the Proposed Action. Having received no objection from any other Involved Agency, and at the Applicant’s request, on August 12, 2020, the Town Board adopted a Positive Declaration, thereby finding that the Proposed Action may have a significant adverse impact on the environment and requiring that a DEIS must be prepared.

A DEIS was prepared by the Applicant pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) (Article 8 of Environmental Conservation Law) and its implementing regulations (6 NYCRR Part 617), as well as in accordance with the environmental analysis required by the Scoping Document approved by the Town Board acting as Lead Agency on December 10, 2020 (“Adopted Scope”). The DEIS analyzed potential environmental impacts from the Proposed Action. The Town of Ramapo Town Board (acting as Lead Agency) issued a Notice of Completeness for the DEIS on April 28, 2021.

A duly noticed public hearing on the DEIS was held by the Lead Agency on May 26, 2021, for purpose of hearing any public comment on the DEIS. Written comments were accepted for a period of no less than 10 days following the close of the public hearing and ending on July 7, 2021. The DEIS was made accessible on the Town of Ramapo’s website and in hard-copy format in Town Hall and the local public library.

The FEIS, which responded to all substantive comments on the DEIS, was accepted by the Lead Agency on March 23, 2022, and distributed to all Involved and Interested Agencies and posted to the Town’s website on September 16, 2022.

Table 1
SEQRA Process

Date	Action
July 8, 2020	Ramapo Town Board declared Intent to be Lead Agency
July 13, 2020	Ramapo Town Board Notice of Intent to seek Lead Agency Status was circulated
August 12, 2020	Adoption of Positive Declaration
October 14, 2020	Period to receive written comments on Draft Scope closed
December 9, 2020	Adoption of Final Scope by Ramapo Town Board
April 28, 2021	DEIS accepted as complete by Ramapo Town Board
May 26, 2021	Public Hearing on DEIS
July 7, 2021	Period to receive written comments on DEIS closed
March 23, 2022	FEIS accepted as complete by Ramapo Town Board
September 16, 2022	FEIS revised, filed and circulated, posted on Town website

30

1 **D. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS, PROPOSED MITIGATION AND**
2 **SPECIFIC FINDINGS**

3
4 The following describes the anticipated impacts and benefits resulting from the Proposed Action
5 as identified in the DEIS and FEIS, and the proposed mitigation measures that the Town Board
6 has identified and will require to be incorporated into the Proposed Action, and the findings of the
7 Ramapo Town Board based on the record before it.

8
9 **1. LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY**

10
11 The Proposed Action's potential effects on land use, zoning, and public policy were evaluated.
12 Specifically, the compatibility of the Proposed Action with existing and future land uses within a
13 1/4-mile of the Project Site and consistency with applicable zoning ordinances and other public
14 policy documents such as the Town of Ramapo Comprehensive Plan (January 2004) were
15 assessed.

16
17 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

18
19 *Land Use*

20
21 As described in the DEIS, the Proposed Action would be consistent with surrounding land uses.
22 Construction of the World Headquarters A/V Production Center would add a new religious
23 institutional live/work use to the Project Site, which is currently vacant land. However, this use is
24 consistent with all surrounding land uses, most notably the religious institutional uses to the
25 immediate west of the Project Site. The Applicant has stated that Proposed Action is an integral
26 component of their religious institution and represents a substantial long-term investment in the
27 Project Site. The Applicant intends to utilize the Project Site for its proposed purpose for the
28 foreseeable future with no intention of sale or transfer. The proposed live/work development
29 concept, which requires that the development be planned and designed to function as one
30 integrated mixed-use development that avoids, minimizes or mitigates environmental impacts, is
31 very specific to the needs of the Project Sponsor and could not be easily adapted for use by others.

32
33 *Zoning*

34
35 The Proposed Action initially included a zoning text and map amendment to rezone the portion of
36 the Project Site within the Town of Ramapo to a new MU-3 Zoning District, which would allow
37 a mixed-use development, subject to site development plan approval, wherein the residential,
38 office, institutional, and accessory uses would be integrated in a campus setting comprising one
39 or several adjacent tax lots under common ownership. The DEIS studied and analyzed a
40 conceptual development consistent with that zoning.

41
42 In response to comments from the Town Board, the Town's planning consultants, the Rockland
43 County Planning Department and the public, the proposed MU-3 Zoning District regulations were
44 revised and those revisions are discussed in the FEIS.

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1 Town Board Conceptual Development Special Permit

2
3 The proposed MU-3 Zoning District has been revised to establish special permit requirements for
4 the use. To ensure that the site plan conforms with the design, build-program, and required
5 mitigation outlined in the FEIS, all buildings and related uses of land within the MU-3 Zoning
6 District would be subject to both Conceptual Development Special Permit (CDSP) approval from
7 the Town Board and site development plan approval by the Planning Board. The site plan reviewed
8 by the Planning Board would be required to comply with the CDSP approved by the Town Board.
9 The proposed zoning sets forth the following CDSP approvals process:

- 10
11 1. An application for CDSP approval shall be submitted to the Town Board and shall include
12 the following:
13
14 a. A statement of the objectives to be achieved by the proposed project.
15
16 b. A legal description of the property(ies) involved, together with a survey signed and
17 sealed by a licensed New York State surveyor. Such survey shall include property
18 lines and measurements, tax lot designation(s), street designations, easements,
19 existing structures, locations of utility lines and connection points, curb cuts, site
20 topography, and a north arrow, and such other features as the Town Board deems
21 appropriate to an understanding of existing conditions on the site
22
23 c. A zoning compliance table showing the zoning criteria required for the site and the
24 proposal's compliance with such criteria and/or the need for, and magnitude of,
25 variances from such criteria.¹
26
27 d. Conceptual site plan drawings, which shall be deemed to meet the requirement of a
28 site development plan for purposes of Section 376-161, including:
29
30 i. The location and dimensions (length, width, and height in feet) of proposed
31 structures.
32
33 ii. Conceptual architectural renderings of proposed buildings.
34
35 iii. Proposed vehicular circulation.
36
37 iv. A conceptual landscape plan.
38
39 e. An analysis of the existing water and sanitary sewer infrastructure and a statement by
40 a qualified professional of the capacity of that infrastructure to support the proposed
41 CDSP, and a description of any infrastructure improvements that may be necessary to
42 do.

¹ As proposed, the Proposed Action would not require any variances.

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- 1 f. A stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) that complies with the
2 requirements of the DEC General Permit for Discharge of Stormwater from
3 Construction Activities and Chapter 237 of the Ramapo Code. The Applicant
4 shall provide a narrative that describes any waivers from those requirements
5 that are proposed as part of the SWPPP.
6
- 7 g. A tree clearing and grading plan which shall also be addressed in the proposed
8 SWPPP.
9
- 10 h. An open space preservation plan, which shall include a narrative explaining
11 how the plan will protect environmentally sensitive areas and preserve
12 contiguous areas of habitat on the project site to the maximum extent feasible.
13
- 14 i. A traffic impact study.
15
- 16 j. Identification of where on the Project Site that rock blasting may or will occur. The
17 Project Sponsor has represented that the scope of work to be included as part of the
18 CDSP application may include blasting. A blasting plan does not need to be developed
19 and/or submitted for review to the Town as part of the CDSP review and approval
20 process. A blasting plan shall be provided to the Town for review and approval as part
21 of any subsequent land use applications where blasting is deemed necessary to
22 execute the improvements identified within the land use application made to the
23 Town.
24

25 No application for CDSP approval would be deemed complete until the SEQRA Lead Agency for
26 the overall SEQRA Action under SEQRA has issued a negative declaration or accepted a DEIS
27 for public comment that includes the activities that are the subject of the proposed CDSP.
28

29 As part of its CDSP approval, the Town Board would be permitted to authorize tree clearing
30 within the limits of disturbance of the approved CDSP prior to approval of the site development
31 plan by the Planning Board, where it finds doing so would allow the coordination of site
32 development activities in a manner that would avoid, minimize or mitigate any associated
33 environmental impact and allow the site to be developed in a coordinated manner that would
34 reduce the duration or extent of construction activities on the site. In particular, where the applicant
35 demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Town Board and the Town's consulting engineer that
36 restrictions on the period of time when tree clearing would be permitted would otherwise prevent
37 the overall site from being developed in a coordinated and efficient manner, the Town Board could
38 permit tree clearing in advance of site plan approval by the Planning Board. Prior to conducting
39 any tree clearing activities the Applicant would be required to obtain coverage for those activities
40 under the NYSDEC General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities and
41 enter into a performance agreement and provide a restoration bond in such amount as the Town
42 Board deems necessary to ensure that all disturbed areas will be promptly stabilized and restored
43 in the event the Applicant fails to do so.
44

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1 Under the proposed regulations, the Town Board would, after public hearing, approve a CDSP,
2 subject to subsequent site development plan approval by the Planning Board. Any site
3 development plan approved by the Planning Board must be consistent with the approved CDSP.
4 The Planning Board's review of a site development plan based on an approved CDSP would thus
5 be limited to implementing those details and elements of the site development plan not specifically
6 addressed in the approved CDSP. To the extent that a site development plan includes project
7 modifications, changed circumstances or new information about relevant environmental impacts
8 not addressed or inadequately addressed in the record before the Planning Board, it would be
9 required to review the changes in accordance with SEQRA.

10
11 In response to public comments, the maximum as-of-right building height was reduced to 45 feet.
12 Under the revised MU-3 zoning, the Town Board, as part of CDSP approval, may permit
13 additional building height where it finds that such additional height, in the context of the
14 development of a project site pursuant to site-specific building envelope controls, furthers
15 the Town's interests in reducing impacts on the environment, including, but not limited to
16 environmentally sensitive areas, and (1) reduces development coverage, and (2) mitigates
17 visual impacts of the proposed development on surrounding properties and viewsheds to
18 a greater extent than a plan restricted to the conforming building height.

19
20 The applicant must demonstrate to the Town Board that the following performance criteria
21 are met:

- 22
23 1. Compared to the Base Height Plan, there is no increase in Floor Area Ratio.
- 24
25 2. The maximum increase in permitted height for a building within the building
26 envelope allowed in the CDSP will be no more than one foot for every three feet
27 separating the nearest point of the building and the nearest lot line, and in any
28 event may not exceed 75 feet.
- 29
30 3. The increased building height does not violate the MU-3 ridgeline protection
31 requirements.
- 32
33 4. The highest rooftop elevation allowed by the Additional Building Height Plan will
34 not be higher than the highest rooftop elevation of the Base Height Plan.
- 35
36 5. The overall development coverage to be achieved by increasing height must be at
37 least 10% less than the Base Height Plan. The project shall maintain a minimum
38 of 50% of the gross lot area of the subject property as deed restricted open space,
39 which the Town Board may, to the extent feasible, require to be consolidated
40 during the CDSP process, to protect environmentally sensitive areas and to provide
41 contiguous areas of habitat.
- 42

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- 1 6. All buildings benefiting from increased height must contain at least one level, but
2 not more than two levels, of interior parking within the footprint of the respective
3 building; provided, however, that this parking level requirement shall not apply to
4 any building consisting of a single level with uninterrupted interior volume.
5
6 7. A minimum setback of 200 feet shall be provided between structures greater than
7 45 feet and the front property line.
8
9 8. The Applicant demonstrates to the Town Board, by means of a visual impact
10 analysis or other means acceptable to the Town Board, that the siting of the
11 increased height buildings mitigates visual impacts of the proposed development
12 on surrounding properties and viewsheds to a greater extent than a plan restricted
13 to the conforming building height.
14
15 9. The Town Board shall also consider the potential visual and shadow impacts of
16 any increased height building on nearby offsite structures.

17
18 The proposed MU-3 zoning maintains the ridgeline protection and other environmentally sensitive
19 restrictions described in the DEIS. As proposed, buildings and structures would not be permitted
20 within the defined ridgeline protection area, which would minimize potential visibility of the
21 Proposed Action from off-site locations by concentrating the development on the lower elevations
22 of the Project Site. Ridgeline areas would be defined as the vertical feet of a hill or mountain above
23 a minimum elevation of 800 feet above mean sea level. The ridgeline on the Project Site reaches
24 a peak of 860 feet above mean sea level, and the top of the tallest building is proposed at 779 feet
25 above mean sea level.

26
27 Lot area

28
29 The proposed MU-3 Zoning District has been revised to utilize “net lot area” in accordance with
30 the special bulk requirements under § 376-42A of the Town of Ramapo Zoning Code for the
31 purposes of FAR and development coverage calculations.

32
33 Minimum lot size

34
35 The minimum lot size, which is proposed at 200 acres, would continue to be based on gross lot
36 area.

37
38 Dwelling units

39
40 The gross floor area dedicated to residence use shall have a minimum FAR of 0.05 and a maximum
41 FAR of 0.125. The Conceptual Development Plan will show the area proposed to be dedicated to
42 residential use, the number of studio and one-bedroom dwelling units proposed, and the approved
43 CDSP will specifically state the approved residential FAR and the total number of dwelling units.
44 The remaining floor area would be dedicated to office, including media production and

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1 distribution facilities, and accessory uses. All campus uses and facilities would be held in common
2 ownership.

3
4 **FAR and Development Coverage**

5
6 The Project Sponsor initially asked that the proposed bulk regulations for the MU-3 Zoning
7 District be revised to increase the allowable FAR from 0.25 FAR to 0.30 FAR, and the maximum
8 development coverage from 25% to 30%, in order to reflect the use of net lot area to calculate
9 FAR and development coverage.

10
11 On review and consideration of the Project Sponsor's revised zoning and the proposed conceptual
12 development plan, as well as the recommendations of the County Planning Department and its
13 consulting planners, the Town Board concludes that the proposed changes are not necessary to
14 accommodate the plan of development proposed by the Project Sponsor. Therefore, the proposed
15 bulk regulations will retain the 0.25 FAR and 25% maximum development coverage restrictions.

16
17 *Public Policy*

18
19 As described in the DEIS, the Proposed Action would amend the 2004 Town of Ramapo
20 Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the Proposed Action would remove references to the former
21 Lorterdan development. The Proposed Action is not consistent with the previous Lorterdan
22 development and the zoning recommendations that would have implemented that development.
23 The 2004 Town of Ramapo Comprehensive Plan identified this property as appropriate for
24 individual planning treatment and the proposed amendment carries forward that justification. The
25 following text and map changes are proposed.

26
27 The following text on Page B-18 would be deleted:

28
29 *The "Lorterdan" property, which is located in the western portion of the Town along Sterling*
30 *Mine Road, is recommended for development as an age-restricted community. The Town*
31 *received a request to rezone this property to a zone that would allow an age-restricted (55*
32 *and over) planned community. The zoning proposed for this district would restrict maximum*
33 *development coverage (i.e., the area covered to building and pavement) to no more than 25%*
34 *of the total site area. In addition, a minimum of 50% of the site area will be required to be*
35 *open space lands. The Planning Board would be able to designate a portion of these lands*
36 *including existing sensitive environmental features such as wetlands, stream corridors or*
37 *steep slopes as conservation easement lands or preserve them through other appropriate*
38 *means. Development of this property for the purposes of constructing an age-restricted*
39 *community as currently proposed (i.e., including the maximum development coverage and*
40 *minimum open space requirements described above) should be done at a density of no greater*
41 *than 1 unit per gross area. Reflective of this density, the property is indicated within the "Low*
42 *Density Residential" land use classification on the Land Use Plan. However, if this property*
43 *is not developed as an age-restricted community according to the parameters currently*
44 *proposed (e.g., if it is proposed to be subdivided in the standard manner), such development*
45 *should be subject to the property's existing RR-80 zoning designation. (Page B-18)*
46

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1 On Page C-17, the italicized text below, which follows the first sentence of Paragraph b.(1) on
2 that page, would be deleted:

3
4 The “Natural Resources and Open Space” section recommends a number of approaches to
5 address public water supply issues. *These include: ... Rezoning of the Sterling Mine Road*
6 *Property to a New Zoning Classification to Permit the Creation of an Age-Restricted (over*
7 *55) Active Adult Community; (Page C-17)*
8

9 On page D-5, the following italicized text would be deleted:

10
11 *The “Lorterdan” property, located in the western portion of the Town along Sterling Mine*
12 *Road, and which is recommended for development as an age-restricted (55 and over) planned*
13 *community is indicated within the “Low Density Residential” land use classification on the*
14 *Land Use Plan. The zoning proposed for this district would restrict maximum development*
15 *coverage (i.e., the area covered to building and pavement) to no more than 25% of the total*
16 *site area. In addition, a minimum of 50% of the site area will be required to be open space*
17 *lands. Further, the Planning Board would be able to designate a portion of these lands*
18 *including existing sensitive environmental features such as wetlands, stream corridors or*
19 *steep slopes as conservation easement lands or preserve them through other appropriate*
20 *means. Development of this property for the purposes of constructing an age-restricted*
21 *community as currently proposed (i.e., including the maximum development coverage and*
22 *minimum open space requirements described above) should be done at a density of no greater*
23 *than 1 unit per gross area. Reflective of this density, the property is indicated within the “Low*
24 *Density Residential” land use classification on the Land Use Plan. However, if this property*
25 *is not developed as an age-restricted community according to the parameters currently*
26 *proposed (e.g., if it is proposed to be subdivided in the standard manner or proposed for*
27 *development as a non-age-restricted development), such development should be subject to the*
28 *property’s existing RR-80 zoning designation. (Page D-5)*
29

30 The following text would be added to the “Mixed-Use Development” section of the 2004
31 Comprehensive Plan, which begins on Page D-14. This section identifies several areas within the
32 Town where the provision of mixed-use zoning districts to permit or encourage a well-designed
33 mixture of commercial and residential development in a planned development would be
34 appropriate. The proposed text specifically notes that each of these areas differ significantly from
35 one another, thus different approaches should be applied.

36
37 *Sterling Mine Road (former Lorterdan Property)*
38

39 *The 242 acre former Lorterdan property on Sterling Mine Road is appropriate for a mixed-*
40 *use development wherein the residential, office, institutional, and accessory uses are*
41 *integrated in a campus setting comprising one or several adjacent tax lots under common*
42 *ownership. Development should be clustered to protect ridgelines and scenic views from*
43 *nearby Harriman State Park and Sterling Forest State Park, and from Sterling Mine Road,*
44 *which is a town-designated scenic road. To encourage a smaller development footprint,*
45 *increased heights should be permitted, provided they do not extend above the defined ridgeline*

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1 *peak and employ use of earth tone colors, and materials to minimize offsite visibility.*
2 *Development coverage (i.e., the area covered to building and pavement) should be restricted*
3 *to no more than 30% of the total site area. The preservation of contiguous areas of privately*
4 *held open space should be encouraged. Sustainability measures, such as green roofs, roof-top*
5 *solar, electric vehicle charging stations, and low-impact development techniques should also*
6 *be employed.*

7
8 The 2004 Plan's proposed Land Use Map is proposed to be amended to change the Project Site
9 designation from "Low Density Residential (1 to 2 dwelling units per acre)" to "Mixed Use
10 Development (Commercial & Multi-Family Development)."
11 The above changes are consistent with what was presented in the DEIS and the changes to the
12 Proposed Action do not require further changes to the 2004 Comprehensive Plan.

13
14 *MITIGATION*

15
16 The Proposed Action would be consistent with surrounding land uses and is not anticipated to
17 result in any significant adverse land use impacts. As such, mitigation measures are not required.

18
19 The proposed MU-3 Zoning has been designed to protect viewsheds and ridgelines, minimize
20 development footprints and impervious surfaces, and includes strict performance criteria such that
21 it would not proliferate throughout the Town of Ramapo. The performance criteria would be
22 applicable to all uses within the proposed MU-3 Zoning District. If the applicant demonstrates that
23 those criteria are met in the course of the CDSP review, the Proposed Action would not result in
24 any significant adverse zoning impacts. As such, mitigation measures are not required.

25
26 The Town Board may consider additional zoning tools to achieve the same objectives of
27 minimizing impacts to wetlands, natural resources, and viewsheds. Provided that such zoning tools
28 are procedural in nature and do not expand the development potential of what was analyzed in the
29 DEIS, FEIS, and this Statement of Findings, no further environmental review would be required.

30
31 With the proposed amendments to the 2004 Comprehensive Plan in place, the Proposed Action
32 would be consistent with the Town of Ramapo Comprehensive Plan. The Proposed Action would
33 not result in any significant adverse public policy impacts. As such, mitigation measures are not
34 required.

35
36 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

37
38 Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency, for the reasons as discussed in Chapters 1
39 and 2 of the DEIS, and further discussed in the responses in Chapter 3 of the FEIS, finds that:

40
41 Land Use

- 42
43 1. The proposed land use is consistent with surrounding land uses, most notably the religious
44 institutional uses to the west, and the proposed zoning provides for special permit review
45 of the conceptual development plan by the Town Board to ensure that the proposed
46 live/work use has been planned and designed to avoid or minimize any land use impacts

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1 where feasible, and that it incorporates mitigation measures identified in the EIS, such as
2 requiring that at least 50% of the site be maintained as open space, providing ample
3 setbacks from roadways, landscaping, locating buildings and improvements in areas
4 where the topography minimizes visual impacts, and requiring that buildings use colors,
5 materials and architectural design to further minimize any visual impact on surrounding
6 land uses.

7
8 Zoning
9

- 10 2. The proposed MU-3 zoning is consistent with the overall purpose and intent expressed in
11 Chapter 376. It is also consistent with the prior proposal for development of the property
12 as an active adult use, which was consistent with the Town's objective of preserving open
13 space, and in doing so, restrict maximum development coverage to protect
14 environmentally sensitive areas of the property where possible, while accommodating the
15 needs of the Project Sponsor to use its property in a manner that furthers its religious
16 purposes.
- 17
- 18 3. The proposed zoning has been appropriately revised in response to the recommendations
19 of the County Planning Department, the Town's consulting planners and engineers, and
20 comments received from the public and interested organizations during the review process
21 to require a special permit to be issued by the Town Board for uses proposed in the MU-
22 3 Zoning District.
- 23
- 24 4. The special permit process, which now provides for review of an applicant's conceptual
25 development plan and supporting documents, a public hearing on that application, and
26 allows, but does not require, the Town Board to permit additional building height if the
27 applicant demonstrates to the Board that doing so will further the Town's objectives of
28 protecting open space and reducing development coverage while reducing the visual
29 impact of a development that conforms to the Town as of right building height, will further
30 those Town objectives and encourage proper development of the site.
- 31
- 32 5. In approving a special permit, the provision of the proposed zoning that authorizes the
33 Town to approve tree clearing activities that allow the site to be cleared and graded in a
34 comprehensive manner, consistent with the conceptual development plan approval, when
35 the applicant demonstrates that doing so will reduce or elimination the need import or
36 export material and reduce the time that the site is under construction, will further the
37 Town objectives by reducing the construction period and its potential impacts on
38 surrounding properties, reducing construction traffic and its impact on local roads, and
39 ultimately allowing site disturbances to be completed and stabilized in a significantly
40 shorter time period.
- 41
- 42 6. In approving a special permit, the Town Board special permit process requires the
43 conceptual development plan to be supported by a stormwater plan that addresses all
44 stages of the proposed activities in more detail, and by an open space preservation plan
45 that shows how environmentally sensitive areas can be protected, and how contiguous
46 areas of habitat on the project site can be protected to the maximum extent feasible, which

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1 will further the Town objectives of protecting environmentally sensitive areas and
2 preserving contiguous open space areas for habitat, thereby providing further opportunity
3 to ensure such areas are protected and any impacts are mitigated to the extent possible.
4

5 7. The proposed MU-3 zoning will, as described more fully in Section D.6 of these findings,
6 avoid potential off-site visual impacts on the viewshed visible from public viewpoints by
7 establishing a Ridgeline Protection Area that minimizes potential visibility of the
8 Proposed Action from off-site locations by restricting development to lower elevations of
9 the Project Site, below a minimum elevation of 800 feet above mean sea level, while the
10 FEIS shows the top of the tallest proposed building would be at 779 feet above mean sea
11 level
12

13 8. That the zoning proposed by the Project Sponsor has appropriately responded to
14 recommendations and comments from the Town Board, the Town's professional
15 consultants, the County Planning Department, and interested members of the public and
16 advocacy organization as follows:
17

18 a. the proposed FAR and development coverage have been reduced to FAR 0.25 and
19 maximum development of 25% of the "net lot area";
20

21 b. the minimum lot area of the proposed use will continue to be determined by the gross
22 area of the lot, reflecting that the entire lot will be planned and designed to allow the
23 integrated development proposed by the Project Sponsor;
24

25 c. both the number of dwelling units (645) and the maximum/minimum residential FAR
26 are now included, and the special permit will state the FAR and number of units
27 allowed on the site development plan approved by the Planning Board.
28

29 Public Policy
30

31 9. The proposed amendments to the 2004 Comprehensive Plan are appropriate, as they
32 replace provisions of the Plan that described and/or addressed a specific project proposed
33 by the former owner for the same property. In so finding, the Town Board notes that the
34 Proposed Action is generally consistent with the planning recommendations of those
35 sections: that 50% of the site be maintained as open space; that open space areas be
36 contiguous where possible; that development coverage not exceed 25% of the site; that
37 environmentally sensitive areas be protected by inclusion in open space areas where
38 possible; and that sustainability measures be encouraged in any proposed development on
39 the site.
40

41 10. That Proposed Action, like the Lorterdan project before it, proposes a use that is designed
42 and planned to encompass the entire property, warranting its treatment as a discrete
43 planning unit, and that the Proposed Action will, as noted previously noted, not only be
44 consistent with – or some cases exceed - those planning recommendations above, but, as
45 described in other sections of these findings, the Proposed Action is anticipated to result
46 in substantial secondary economic impacts, provide services that minimize impacts on

1 emergency service providers, provide a sustainability model for similar development in
2 the Town and the region, and also accommodate the religious purposes of the Project
3 Sponsor.

- 4
5 11. For the reasons above, the Town Board finds that the zoning and Comprehensive Plan
6 amendments that are part of the Proposed Action will not have any negative impact on
7 Planning, Zoning, or Public Policy.
8

9 **2. GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

10
11 The potential for the Proposed Action to affect geology, soils, and topography on and within the
12 vicinity of the Project Site was evaluated. Existing geology and soil resources as well as
13 topography and steep slopes within the Project Site were characterized. The discussion of
14 topography refers to issues related to elevation and slopes, while geology refers to both bedrock
15 geology and geology of unconsolidated surficial deposits (including soils and sediments). Soil is
16 typically considered the uppermost layer of the ground, which has been exposed to climatic and
17 erosive forces.

18
19 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

20
21 Due to the variability of depth to bedrock over the site, a varying degree of rock excavation is
22 anticipated to be required to achieve the proposed site grades, foundation subgrade elevations, and
23 for the installation of utilities. Excavation within the gneiss bedrock would be required for many
24 of the buildings, the majority of which would require the use of hydraulic hammers, line drilling,
25 and/or blasting. During the CDSP review process, areas where blasting is likely will be identified.
26 The Project Sponsor has represented that the activities to be approved as part of the CDSP may
27 require blasting. The Project Sponsor will identify to the Town Board areas on the Project Site
28 where blasting may occur. A detailed blasting plan will be developed and submitted to the Town
29 Building Inspector and/or the Town's consultants for review and approval prior to any blasting
30 being permitted to occur and shall be provided only for phases of work that will require blasting.
31

32 In general, controlled blasting methods would be used to reduce the potential for disturbance of
33 rock mass behind the final slopes and for uncontrolled blast-related ground vibrations. All blasting
34 will be completed in accordance with state and local regulations. Pursuant to Section 104-6 of the
35 Town Code, the Applicant would, at minimum, notify the Town and all property owners whose
36 property falls within a radius of 750 feet from the blasting site at least 48 hours in advance of
37 blasting. The majority of the blasting would occur in the center of the Project Site and would be
38 greater than 750 feet from the property line. However, notification to Consolidated Edison
39 (ConEd), which owns the transmission lines adjacent to the Project Site, and the properties that
40 separate the Project Site from Sterling Mine Road is anticipated. Notification to Table Rock
41 Estates may also be required due to the location of the property line. However, existing structures
42 on Table Rock Estates would be more than 1,500 feet from the blasting area.
43

44 The Proposed Action would result in approximately 116 acres of disturbance. The Proposed
45 Project has been designed to balance cut and fill on the Project Site. In raw numbers, to account

1 for bulking factors¹ the proposed volume of cut (1,689,000 cubic yards) is less than the proposed
2 volume of fill (2,110,000 cubic yards). The analysis assumed 6% on-grade construction materials
3 (foundations, trenches and roads) and a bulking factor of approximately 18%. Any changes in the
4 bulking characteristics would be accommodated by adjusting the height of the sports fields and
5 backlot to eliminate the need for import or export of materials. The cut and fill analysis has been
6 reviewed by the Town's consulting engineers, and the methodologies employed found to be
7 acceptable.

8
9 *MITIGATION*

10
11 Construction activities will be required to comply with Chapters 104, Blasting, and 188, Noise of
12 the Town of Ramapo Code regarding construction noise and hours of operation.

- 13
14 1. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) has been prepared by the Project
15 Sponsor as part of the EIS that illustrates project feasibility with respect to managing
16 construction phase erosion and sediment controls as well as outlining the permanent
17 stormwater features that will be constructed to provide water quality and quantity controls.
18 The SWPPP that was prepared has been reviewed by the Town's consulting engineer and
19 found to be generally in conformance with the General Permit GP-0-20-001, The New
20 York State Stormwater Management Design Manual, New York Standards and
21 Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control and Chapter 237 of the Ramapo Town
22 Code. The Project Sponsor will submit a project specific SWPPP to the Town during land
23 use approvals for review by the Town Board, in connection with its CDSP, and the
24 Planning Board, during site development plan review, at which time it will be reviewed
25 by the Town's consulting engineer.

- 26
27 a. The SEC Plan implements the following temporary erosion and sediment control
28 measures:
- 29 i. Prior to the start of construction activities, a stabilized construction entrance
30 will be installed at vehicle traffic entrance and exit points.
 - 31 ii. Dust control measures will be implemented as needed, such as water trucks.
 - 32 iii. Materials such as topsoil and stone will be temporarily stockpiled on the Project
33 Site during construction.
 - 34 iv. Stockpiles will be located away from storm drainage and water bodies and will
35 be protected from erosion.
 - 36 v. A silt fence will be constructed along the areas of ground disturbance, as
37 identified on Project plans. The silt fence will be inspected daily and after
38 significant storm events and will be maintained as needed.

¹ As discussed in the FEIS, "Bulking" is the increase in volume of material when it is excavated from its in-situ location. The bulking factor is the percentage of the volume change of excavated material to the volume of the original in situ volume before excavation.

- 1 vi. Temporary seeding will occur on areas that are cleared or graded where work
2 has stopped (temporarily or permanently) stabilizing the soil with temporary
3 vegetative cover.
- 4 vii. Silt fences and temporary sediment traps will be used to intercept runoff to
5 reduce the amount of sediment leaving the site.
6
- 7 b. The SEC Plan provides the following permanent mitigation measures to be
8 implemented at the conclusion of Project:
- 9 i. Areas that will be vegetated will be seeded, mulched, and maintained as
10 outlined in the Project plans after completion of the major construction activity.
- 11 ii. Soil restoration will be completed where soils have been disturbed and will be
12 vegetated to restore healthy soil.
- 13 iii. Soil restoration will follow practices outlined in the New York State Standards
14 and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control and in the New York State
15 Stormwater Management Design Manual (NYSDEC, 2015a).
- 16 iv. Erosion control blankets will be installed to provide erosion protection and to
17 assist with rapid establishment of vegetation.
- 18 v. Stone check dams will be installed in vegetated dry swales to provide soil
19 stabilization and decrease stormwater runoff rates.
20
- 21 2. As the Town of Ramapo is an MS4 community, the SWPPP prepared as part of the EIS,
22 which illustrates feasibility level design has been reviewed by the Town's consulting
23 engineer and found to be generally in conformance with the referenced standards. A
24 SWPPP shall be submitted for each discrete land use approval requested for review and
25 approval by the Town and their consultants. Prior to any soil disturbances occurring, the
26 Town's Stormwater Management Office (SMO) shall sign an MS4 SWPPP Acceptance
27 Form at which time the applicant may file a Notice of Intent (NOI) with the NYSDEC to
28 gain permit coverage under GP-0-20-001.
29
- 30 3. The project is anticipated to disturb more than 5-acres at one given time. As such, a 5-
31 acre disturbance waiver shall be submitted to the Town of Ramapo for review and
32 consideration. The applicant has presented a conceptual phasing plan in the FEIS that
33 identifies site development stages, comprising approximately 20 phases. No phase
34 proposes more than 25-acres of disturbance at one time.
35

36 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

37
38 Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency finds that:

- 39
40 1. The Town Board finds that the SWPPP prepared as part of the EIS which is for feasibility
41 provides adequate construction phase controls to manage soil erosion during construction
42 to avoid turbid discharges to receiving water bodies or down gradient stormwater
43 infrastructure. Further, the SWPPP outlines the design of the permanent stormwater

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- 1 features to meet both the water quality and quantity standards of GP-0-20-001, the New
2 York State Stormwater Management Design Manual and Chapter 237 of the Town Code.
3
- 4 2. The Project Sponsor will be required to submit a project specific SWPPP for each land
5 use approval requested that shall be reviewed and approved by the Town and their
6 consulting engineer.
7
- 8 3. Implementation of the SWPPP must include the Applicant's inspection of controls and
9 reporting of same to the Town SMO, and by the Town's monitoring and enforcement as
10 required by all applicable local, County and State laws, and the NYSDEC Permit
11 Requirements.
12
- 13 4. Compliance with the SWPPP during construction will be a condition of all land use
14 approvals and is a requirement to be in compliance with GP-0-20-001. The Project
15 Sponsor is required to retain a qualified inspector to perform weekly SWPPP inspection
16 during all phases of the construction. Twice weekly if a 5-acre disturbance waiver is
17 granted. The inspection report will be circulated to entities identified by the Town. The
18 inspection log will be maintained onsite in a SWPPP mailbox. At the same time,
19 inspectors from Town will oversee construction, reviewing the reports from qualified
20 inspector, and monitor the Site as per the report and ensure that any necessary corrective
21 action is taken. The SWPPP ensures that a thorough maintenance and repair program will
22 be in place which will be inspected at frequencies identified in the General Permit or at
23 greater frequencies deemed necessary by the Applicant. The Town also have authority to
24 conduct routine or random inspections of the site pursuant to the General Permit.
25
- 26 5. Best Management Practices (BMPs) that must be followed in SEC Plan are diverting clean
27 surface water before it reaches any active construction area, and deaccelerating and
28 distributing stormwater runoff through natural vegetative buffers or structural means
29 before discharging it to off-site areas. As the Town Building Department determines
30 appropriate, silt fences will be supplemented by orange construction fencing to define the
31 limit of site work and protect wooded and wetland areas that will not be regraded and will
32 be retained in their existing condition until the developed areas are completed and
33 stabilized. Sediment runoff which occurs on site must be trapped prior to reaching critical
34 areas like wetlands. Because some of the major improvements for the Project, such as
35 parking areas, access roads and buildings, will require disturbance of the existing
36 topography, the following engineering standards shall be implemented as appropriate in
37 the development of the site specific SWPPP during site plan review: silt fences, retaining
38 walls, inlet protection, temporary sediment basins, temporary swales, vegetative
39 measures, stabilized construction entrances, temporary stockpile, dust control measures
40 and slope stabilization.
41
- 42 6. It will be a condition of land use approvals that the Project Sponsor enters into a
43 Stormwater Control Facility Maintenance Agreement with the Town. The Agreement
44 ensures that the stormwater control measures will be built in accordance with the approved

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1 project plans and thereafter be maintained, cleaned, repaired, replaces and continued in
2 perpetuity in order to ensure optimum performance of the components.

3
4 7. The Project Sponsor will apply for a 5-acre disturbance waiver that is subject to the review
5 and approval of the Town of Ramapo. As part of this waiver request, the Project Sponsor
6 will submit the required waiver to the Town for review. Only after the Town's Stormwater
7 Management Officer issues an approval, may more than 5-acres of land be disturbed. The
8 applicant is aware that the granting of such waiver is a discretionary decision of the Town,
9 one that may be denied, suspended or revoked based upon specific circumstances. The
10 Town may choose to engage the NYSDEC in the review of the disturbance waiver request
11 prior to issuance of an approval or disapproval.

12
13 8. All blasting shall be completed in accordance with state and local regulations. Pursuant to
14 Section 104-6 of the Town Code, the Applicant shall notify all property owners whose
15 property falls within a radius of 750 feet from the blasting site at least 48 hours in advance
16 of blasting. As part of any Site Plan approval that may be granted, a blasting plan shall be
17 provided.

18
19 The Town Board finds that the Proposed Action's potential impacts to geological resources will
20 be mitigated, and any potentially significant adverse impacts of the development will be negated,
21 through the implementation of an SEC Plan to address potential soil erosion and dust that could
22 occur during construction and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to ensure that
23 during the post-development site conditions, all runoff generated from the site will be managed
24 and that adequate water quality and quantity controls are being provided. GP-0-20-001 and
25 Chapter 237 of the Town Code provides necessary means to monitor and enforce implementation
26 of the SEC Plan and SWPPP during construction, and the Applicant will enter into a binding
27 Stormwater Control Facility Maintenance Agreement with the Town that will ensure all permanent
28 stormwater controls on the property are properly operated and maintained by the designated
29 responsible party acceptable to the Town.

30
31 **3. NATURAL RESOURCES**

32
33 The plant and animal communities and habitat types that occupy the Project Site and the potential
34 impacts to those resources from the development of the Proposed Action were evaluated. Impacts
35 from construction and operation of the Proposed Action to vegetation, ecological communities,
36 wildlife, threatened, endangered, and special concern species, as well as significant habitats, were
37 assessed by considering land clearing, forest fragmentation, visual and noise disturbances, and
38 post-construction habitat restoration.

39
40 The Project Site is a 249-acre tract of second growth forest within a heavily forested area of eastern
41 Rockland County and Orange County, New York, and western Bergen County, New Jersey. The
42 site is contiguous or nearly contiguous with thousands of acres of additional woodland to the north,
43 south, and west, including state lands and other protected areas. It therefore primarily supports
44 forest-interior wildlife species, and those that have large area requirements and are sensitive to
45 fragmentation. There are also vernal pools, an ephemeral stream, a small red maple swamp and a

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1 small portion of a NYSDEC-mapped freshwater wetland on the Project Site that provide aquatic
2 habitat for amphibians and reptiles. Federally or state-listed species and significant natural
3 communities that are either known or considered to have the potential to occur within the Project
4 Site on the basis of their habitat requirements include: Indiana bat (U.S. and NYS endangered),
5 northern long-eared bat (U.S. and NYS threatened), Jefferson salamander (NYS special concern),
6 marbled salamander (NYS special concern), spotted turtle (NYS special concern), eastern box
7 turtle (NYS special concern), timber rattlesnake (NYS threatened), whip-poor-will (NYS special
8 concern), and Appalachian oak-hickory forest.

9
10 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

11
12 Throughout the design process of the Proposed Action, efforts were made to avoid and minimize
13 wetland and natural resource impacts by reducing ground disturbance and impervious surface
14 coverage to the greatest extent practicable. Such measures included reducing surface parking
15 coverage through use of multi-level parking structures, minimizing roadway and sidewalk widths
16 where possible, minimizing building footprints by increasing building heights, ensuring that
17 utilities and services are centrally located where possible, and eliminating a road through the
18 western portion of the site from the A/V center to the residential area. Additionally, the use of
19 retaining walls would be used throughout the site to accommodate the necessary grade changes
20 without requiring large swaths of land to be cleared and re-graded.

21
22 The clearing and grading areas have been updated based on the revised site plan. The Proposed
23 Action would now clear 113 acres of trees on the 249-acre Project Site to construct the A/V
24 Production Center, which would include audio and video production studios, offices, residential
25 buildings, parking garages, sports fields, and various other buildings and facilities. This is an
26 increase from the 103 acres of tree clearing that was presented in the DEIS. However, 79.65 of
27 these acres would be revegetated as part of the Proposed Action and 40 percent of the Project Site
28 would be preserved as deed-restricted open space.

29
30 Since the issuance of the DEIS, a timber rattlesnake spring emergence survey was conducted by a
31 NYSDEC-approved timber rattlesnake expert and found no timber rattlesnakes or evidence of
32 active dens on the Project Site. The closest know winter dens are located in New Jersey,
33 approximately 1.3 miles and 1.8 miles from the Project Site..

34
35 Overall, construction of the Proposed Action is not expected to significantly impact local
36 populations of any wildlife species. Potential impacts to wildlife from the operation of the
37 Proposed Action would primarily include disturbances from human activity, noise, and nighttime
38 lighting. However, following development of the Project Site, the wildlife community would
39 inherently be composed of human-adapted species that are tolerant of disturbance and commonly
40 inhabit areas with human activity. Therefore, existing species that remain post-construction or
41 new species that colonize the Project Site after the Proposed Action is built would not be adversely
42 affected by human activity associated with the A/V Production Center's operation.

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1 *MITIGATION*

2
3 While the project will result in the removal of mature forest, the Applicant has committed to a
4 planting plan comprised of native species as well as an invasive species management plan to help
5 introduce a more native replacement landscape than if these plans were not in place. Over 79 acres
6 would be revegetated as part of the Proposed Action, including the planting of 9,467 new trees,
7 26,544 new shrubs, 490,000 square feet of lawn, and 1,315,000 square feet of wild grasses. All
8 tree removal conforms with guidance provided by NYSDEC for protection of the timber
9 rattlesnake, the Indiana and northern long-eared bat. Landscaping within the Project Site is
10 proposed to also include green roofs on the residential buildings. The green roofs help to mitigate
11 impacts to ecological communities by replacing otherwise impervious structures with vegetated
12 roofs that would provide habitat for some species of insects and wildlife.

13
14 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

15
16 Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency finds that:

- 17
18 1. The planting plan shall be comprised of native species as well as an invasive species
19 management plan to help introduce a more native replacement landscape. The planting
20 plan shall revegetated over 79 acres, including the planting of 9,467 new trees, 26,544
21 new shrubs, 490,000 square feet of lawn, and 1,315,000 square feet of wild grasses. The
22 planting plan shall be designed to assist with the various functions of the site, in particular
23 to maximize its ecological richness, biodiversity, biophilic and education attributes. In
24 addition, 50 percent of the Project Site shall be preserved as deed-restricted open space.
25
26 2. Landscaping within the Project Site shall include green roofs on the residential buildings.
27
28 3. To minimize any potential effects of the Proposed Action on timber rattlesnakes, the
29 following protective measures shall be implemented:
30
31 a. All tree clearing is planned to be within the October 31 and March 31 denning period,
32 when timber rattlesnakes are inactive and underground;
33
34 b. All construction contractors working on the Project Site will be required to perform
35 job-site training for all personnel working at the Project Site, including snake
36 identification and actions to be taken if a rattlesnake is encountered;
37
38 c. Construction personnel would consistently inspect active construction areas for coiled
39 or crossing snakes, and immediately halt activity and contact NYSDEC Region 8
40 headquarters should a rattlesnake be observed; and
41
42 d. As part of any blasting plan, the Project Sponsor will be required to coordinate with
43 NYSDEC on mitigation of any potential impacts from blasting activities.
44
45 4. The tree removal window of October 31 through March 31 noted for the timber rattlesnake
46 conforms with guidance provided by NYSDEC for protection of the Indiana and northern

1 long-eared bat. If due to unforeseen reasons the tree clearing cannot be accomplished
2 during the clearing window, the Applicant shall consult with NYSDEC and the U.S. Fish
3 and Wildlife Service before undertaking tree removal activities after March 31
4

5 5. All outdoor lighting shall be downward-directional and shielded to avoid trespass into
6 adjacent habitats and potential effects on wildlife, including bats. Woodland buffers shall
7 remain around the protected vernal pools to further limit potential exposure of the pools
8 to nighttime lighting to avoid effects of light pollution on amphibian behavior.
9

10 6. With implementation of the tree cutting restrictions, the best management practices, and
11 deed-restricted open space, adverse impacts to the protected Indiana bat, Northern long-
12 eared bat, and timber rattlesnakes will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable.
13 In addition, the preservation and non-disturbance of remaining habitat is adequate to
14 accommodate displaced non-regulated species so that there will be no significant impact
15 to those species as well. With the native species replanting plan and the deed-restricted
16 open space, adverse impacts to vegetation and wildlife will be minimized to the maximum
17 extent practicable.
18

19 **4. SURFACE WATER, FLOOD PLAINS, GROUNDWATER RESOURCES, AND** 20 **WETLANDS** 21

22 The potential for the Proposed Action to affect water resources (i.e., wetlands, surface waters,
23 floodplains, and groundwater) on and within the vicinity of the Project Site was evaluated.
24 Thirteen forested wetlands, comprising a total of 14.3 acres, were delineated within the Project
25 Site, some of which are under USACE jurisdiction. The Project Site is located within flood hazard
26 zone X (an area of minimal flood hazard) and is in the EPA-designated Ramapo River Basin
27 Aquifer Systems and within a Rockland Country Groundwater Protection Zone.
28

29 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS* 30

31 Throughout the design process of the Proposed Action, efforts have been made to avoid and
32 minimize wetland impacts to the greatest extent possible by reducing ground disturbance and
33 impervious surface coverage to the extent practicable. Such measures included reducing surface
34 parking coverage through use of multi-level parking structures, minimizing roadway and sidewalk
35 widths where possible, minimizing building footprints by increasing building heights, ensuring
36 that utilities and services are centrally located where possible, and eliminating a road through the
37 western portion of the site from the audio/video center to the residential area. Additionally, the
38 use of retaining walls will be used throughout the site to accommodate the necessary grade changes
39 without requiring large swaths of land to be cleared and re-graded.
40

41 **Table 4** presents the updated USACE jurisdictional wetland impact areas for the Proposed Action.
42 The FEIS includes a greater amount of temporary disturbance than what was presented in the
43 DEIS because it includes areas within the wetlands that would be disturbed as part of the
44 Landscape Master Plan, which includes selective tree removal and plantings within the wetlands.

Table 4
 Wetland Impacts

Area	Area Disturbed (SF)	Type	Description
Federal Wetland FW11	493	Permanent	Construction of Residential bridge
Federal Wetland FW11	1,218	Permanent	Construction of boardwalk
Federal Wetland FW1	1,310	Permanent	Construction of boardwalks
Federal Wetland FW2	95	Permanent	Construction of boardwalks
Federal Wetland FW2	2,737	Permanent	Construction of retaining walls
Federal Wetland FW10	282	Permanent	Construction of main entrance
TOTAL	6,135	Permanent	
Federal Wetland FW11	92,331	Temporary	Temporary impacts for selective tree removals
Federal Wetland FW11	2,220	Temporary	Temporary impacts for bridge construction
TOTAL	94,551	Temporary	
Federal Wetland FW11	15,777	Compensatory	Multiple areas around FW 11

1

2 Well drilling for the closed-loop geothermal system would be performed by a New York State and
 3 Rockland County Registered Driller and all wells would be subject to permitting by the Rockland
 4 County Health Department. Construction of the Proposed Action would not result in significant
 5 groundwater withdrawals and would not have the potential to contaminate groundwater.

6

7 *MITIGATION MEASURES*

8

9 The Proposed Action includes targeted planting of native species across the Project Site and along
 10 newly disturbed edge habitats to help offset impacts resulting from the clearing of trees.
 11 Establishment of diverse vegetation and creation of ecotones (the transition between the newly cut
 12 forest edge and the landscaped areas around the buildings, parking areas, etc.) provide a variety
 13 of habitats and potential food sources that could help to increase wildlife diversity post-
 14 construction.

15

16 Sediment and erosion control measures (e.g., silt fencing and hay bales) would be implemented
 17 during construction of the Proposed Action, consistent with the SWPPP. To manage stormwater
 18 runoff from impervious surfaces during operation, the Proposed Action would include green
 19 infrastructure practices, supplemented with standard stormwater management practices (SMPs)
 20 where needed.

21

22 Permanent impacts to USACE-regulated wetlands would require mitigation. Typically, impacts to
 23 vegetated freshwater wetlands are mitigated by creation of similar wetlands in a ratio that is
 24 determined by USACE during the permitting process. The Applicant proposes 15,777 square feet
 25 of compensatory mitigation, which exceeds the proposed 6,135 square feet of permanent wetland
 26 disturbance by a ratio of greater than 2.5:1 (see **Table 4**). The Applicant intends to apply for a
 27 Nationwide Permit 39 (institutional development). Temporarily disturbed wetlands will be
 28 restored to existing conditions following construction of the Proposed Action.

29

30 The implementation of the SWPPP will avoid any potential significant adverse stormwater
 31 impacts to surface water quality. Mitigation for the permanent impacts to USACE-regulated

1 wetlands would offset those impacts; specific mitigation requirements would be determined
2 during the permitting process.

3
4 Based upon the Proposed Action's avoidance of wetlands and surface water resources to the
5 maximum extent practicable and its compliance with federal, State, and Town regulation of these
6 resources, including wetland mitigation requirements, the Lead Agency finds that the proposed
7 Project will adequately mitigate the impacts to wetlands and surface water resources. The
8 Proposed Action would not result in a significant adverse impact to groundwater or the floodplain.

9
10 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

11
12 The Town Board finds that the Proposed Action's potential impacts to waters flood plains,
13 groundwater resources and wetlands will be minimized and mitigated. Permanent impacts to
14 USACE-regulated wetlands would require mitigation which will be carried out with compensatory
15 mitigation at a ratio greater than 2.5:1.

16
17 **5. STORMWATER**

18
19 Existing and proposed stormwater runoff conditions on the Project Site were evaluated.

20
21 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

22
23 The Proposed Action would increase impervious surface coverage on the Project Site and require
24 a SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities (GP-0-20-001).

25
26 *FINDINGS AND MITIGATION MEASURES*

27
28 Green infrastructure practices and standard SMPs would be implemented throughout the site to
29 reduce and treat stormwater runoff. Green infrastructure practices would include measures such
30 as green roofs, bioretention facilities, and open channel dry swales. Standard SMPs would include
31 a selection of stormwater treatment ponds and wetlands, which would help provide treatment of
32 the WQv, extended detention of the 24-hour, 1-year storm event, and peak flow mitigation of the
33 10-year and 100-year flood events. With implementation of these runoff reduction techniques,
34 there would be a zero net incremental rate of discharge.

35
36 The SWPPP phasing plan is provided in the FEIS and is incorporated herein by reference. With
37 the stormwater management measures detailed in the FEIS in place, no significant adverse
38 stormwater impacts are anticipated.

39
40 The Project Sponsor will be required to submit a project specific SWPPP prior to each land use
41 approval being considered. The Town of Ramapo as a traditional land use MS4 shall review the
42 submitted SWPPP for compliance with General Permit GP-0-20-001, The New York State
43 Stormwater Management Design Manual, Chapter 235 of the Town of Ramapo Code and the New
44 York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control. If found to be technically
45 correct, the Town's SMO will issue an MS4 SWPPP Acceptance Form, the Project Sponsor may

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1 then submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) seeking permit coverage and only after the requisite time
2 period has passed from the submission of the NOI may soil disturbances occur.

3
4 The Project Sponsor will apply for a 5-acre disturbance waiver that is subject to the review and
5 approval of the Town of Ramapo. As part of this waiver request, the Project Sponsor will submit
6 the required waiver to the Town for review. Only after the Town's Stormwater Management
7 Officer issues an approval, may more than 5-acres of land be disturbed.

8
9 The applicant is aware that the granting of such waiver is a discretionary decision of the Town,
10 one that may be denied, suspended or revoked based upon specific circumstances. The Town may
11 choose to engage the NYSDEC in the review of the disturbance waiver request prior to issuance
12 of an approval or disapproval.

13
14 A decision on the waiver request will not be made until after the project has gained coverage under
15 GP-0-20-001 and has received the NYSDEC Acknowledgement of Permit Coverage letter.

16
17 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

18
19 Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency finds that:

- 20
21 1. The SWPPP prepared as part of the EIS, which is for feasibility, outlines the design of the
22 permanent stormwater features to meet both the water quality and quantity standards of
23 GP-0-20-001, the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual and Chapter
24 237 of the Town Code.
25
26 2. The Project Sponsor will be required to submit a project specific SWPPP for each land
27 use approval requested that shall be reviewed and approved by the Town and their
28 consulting engineer.

29
30 The Town Board finds that the Proposed Action's potential impacts to stormwater will be
31 minimized and mitigated, and any potentially significant adverse impacts of the development will
32 be negated, through the implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to
33 ensure that during the post-development site conditions, all runoff generated from the site will be
34 managed and that adequate water quality and quantity controls are being provided. The Applicant
35 will enter into a binding Stormwater Control Facility Maintenance Agreement with the Town that
36 will ensure all permanent stormwater controls on the property are properly operated and
37 maintained by the designated responsible party acceptable to the Town.

38
39 **6. VISUAL RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

40
41 The potential visual impacts of the Proposed Action from forty-three Viewpoints identified in the
42 adopted Scoping Document were evaluated. The Lead Agency considered responses from
43 involved and interest agencies and the public recommending viewpoints for this impact analysis
44 and selected viewpoints based on potential Project Site visibility from selected locations along
45 public roadways and trails.

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1
2 Although not subject to NYSDEC review for visual impacts, the potential visual impacts of the
3 Proposed Action were assessed based on the NYSDEC Program Policy document “Assessing and
4 Mitigating Visual and Aesthetic Impacts,” last revised December 13, 2019 (DEP-00-2). This
5 policy document provides useful guidelines for assessing potential visual impact.
6

7 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*
8

9 The Proposed Action has been designed to minimize its visibility from adjacent and distant uses
10 including Sterling Mine Road, and designated resources. As detailed in Chapter 7 of the DEIS,
11 Sterling Mine Road is one of ten Town of Ramapo designated Scenic Road Districts, which
12 include all property in unincorporated areas of the Town of Ramapo within 1,000 feet from the
13 centerline of the designated road. The Town of Ramapo established a Scenic Road District
14 (Chapter 215 of the Town Code) to preserve its “historic resources, stone walls, other natural
15 features, and scenic views from its roadways and other public areas” that contribute to the overall
16 character of the Town. The proposed buildings would be set back from Sterling Mine Road and at
17 a lower elevation than the ridgeline. Intermittent views of the Project Site would be visible to those
18 traveling along Sterling Mine Road. The greatest potential for visibility of the Proposed Action
19 would occur at the Project Site entrances, as the Proposed Action involves clearing and grading
20 near the roadway. Project Site visibility would increase during the leaf-off condition. During both
21 the leaf-on and leaf-off condition, views into the interior of the Project Site would be limited by
22 the retention of existing healthy mature trees, addition of new landscaping, and the proposed
23 orientation of the buildings. The Proposed Action is consistent with the applicable provisions of
24 Chapter 215 of the Town Code.
25

26 The unique location and topography of the Project Site can accommodate buildings that are 75
27 feet in height without causing significant adverse visual impacts. The Project Site is setback from
28 Sterling Mine Road and rises from an elevation of approximately 500 feet along its perimeter to
29 860 feet above sea level at the top of the ridge in the southeast portion of the site. The low point
30 of the site is in its northern corner along the Nakoma Brook and Sterling Mine Road. The Proposed
31 Action would preserve the natural features of the property—particularly its rock outcroppings,
32 wetlands, and steep slopes—to the greatest extent possible. This would be accomplished by
33 organizing the majority of the development along a central spine between the 600-foot and 700-
34 foot elevation contour on the north side of the ridge. Only one building, the proposed backlot,
35 would be located on the south side of the ridge at an elevation of 700 feet. To minimize the
36 project’s footprint, most of the parking would be located in garaged structures.
37

38 This central spine avoids impacting wetlands at the lower elevations of the Project Site and
39 provides a greater buffer between Sterling Mine Road and the proposed building. It also avoids
40 developing higher on the ridgeline, which would increase visibility of the Proposed Action from
41 offsite locations. The majority of the development is above Sterling Mine Road, yet well below
42 the peak of the ridgeline and thus screened from view. Existing water features such as ponds and
43 streams would be unchanged. Existing wetlands would be avoided where feasible. Where wetland
44 impacts cannot be avoided, an extensive wetland mitigation plan including native plantings and
45 invasive species management is proposed. In addition, the Proposed Action includes an extensive

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1 landscaping plan to enhance the function and biodiversity of the Project Site, while maintaining
2 existing habitat corridors and preserving large contiguous forested areas.

3
4 Portions of the Proposed Action would be visible from several studied Viewpoints, including some
5 trails within New York State parks. While this visibility may be considered an unavoidable impact,
6 it would not constitute a significant adverse impact as there are many existing structures in the
7 intervening landscape. These existing structures include those both similar to the Proposed Project
8 in size, style, and use, and dissimilar, including water towers and high-tension power lines, with
9 their adjacent clear-cut areas. The Proposed Action would retain existing vegetation around the
10 perimeter of the Project Site to minimize visibility of the interior from Sterling Mine Road.

11
12 An updated visual analysis included in the FEIS demonstrated that the increase in size of the A/V
13 Studio building from 120,000 square feet to 290,678 square feet would not significantly change
14 the potential visibility of the Proposed Action as the proposed height would not change (see FEIS
15 Table 1-3). As such, the conclusions reached in the DEIS remain valid.

16
17 In addition, the Project Sponsor provided a visual analysis of a 45-foot height alternative in
18 Appendix I to the FEIS. Although the buildings in this 45-foot height alternative would not be as
19 tall, it shows that 20 additional acres of trees and vegetation would have to be cleared to achieve
20 the same building square footage. In addition, buildings would need to be located higher on the
21 ridge than the Proposed Action.

22
23 Furthermore, to balance the additional 390,000 cubic yards of cut on site, the grades across the
24 site would need to be raised, thus further increasing the overall height of the buildings. Locating
25 the buildings higher on the ridgeline and adding more fill to balance the site and provide at grade
26 access to the buildings would negate any perceived benefit of a lower height alternative, as this
27 layout has the potential to be more visible than the Proposed Action from off-site locations. As
28 further discussed in the Alternatives section below, this alternative results in additional impacts
29 compared to the Proposed Action in other areas, including additional blasting during construction,
30 increased impervious area, increased wetland impacts, and decreased contiguous open space.

31
32 *MITIGATION*

33
34 The Proposed Action has incorporated into the project design the following measures to minimize
35 the visibility of the Proposed Action, such that no significant adverse visual impacts would result:

- 36
37
- 38 • Extensive landscaping and a tree preservation plan;
 - 39 • Earth tone building colors and low reflective glass;
 - 40 • Orientation of buildings to avoid sun glare;
 - 41 • Limiting building heights to well below the ridgeline;
 - 42 • A variety of native deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs;
- 43
44
45

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11
- Landscaping at the entrance to the Project Site and throughout the interior of the Project Site;
 - The retention of existing healthy and mature vegetation around the perimeter of the Project Site, and infill of healthy native species where appropriate;
 - Orientation of buildings and indoor lighting controls to minimize interior lighting; and
 - Site lighting with full cutoff shields to limit lateral spread of light to be dark-sky friendly.

12 The existing vegetation, Proposed Landscaping Plan, and intervening topography would reduce
13 most views of the Proposed Action from off-site locations. While the Proposed Action may be
14 visible from trail sections within Sterling Forest and Harriman State Parks, mere visibility is not
15 considered a significant adverse impact.¹

16
17 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

18
19 The Town Board acting as Lead Agency has reviewed and considered the potential visual impacts
20 of the Proposed Action from forty-three Viewpoints identified in the adopted Scoping Document.
21 The Lead Agency considered responses from involved and interest agencies and the public
22 recommending viewpoints for this impact analysis and selected viewpoints based on potential
23 Project Site visibility from selected locations along public roadways and trails.

- 24
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40
1. The Lead Agency recognizes the Proposed Action has been designed to minimize its visibility from adjacent and distant uses including Sterling Mine Road, and designated resources. The Lead Agency finds that the Proposed Action is consistent with the applicable provisions of Chapter 215 of the Town Code. As detailed in Chapter 7 of the DEIS, Sterling Mine Road is one of ten Town of Ramapo designated Scenic Road Districts, which include all property in unincorporated areas of the Town of Ramapo within 1,000 feet from the centerline of the designated road. The Town of Ramapo established a Scenic Road District (Chapter 215 of the Town Code) to preserve its “historic resources, stone walls, other natural features, and scenic views from its roadways and other public areas” that contribute to the overall character of the Town. The proposed buildings would be set back from Sterling Mine Road and at a lower elevation than the ridgeline. Intermittent views of the Project Site would be visible to those traveling along Sterling Mine Road. The greatest potential for visibility of the Proposed Action would occur at the Project Site entrances, as the Proposed Action involves clearing and grading near the roadway. Project Site visibility would increase during the leaf-off condition. During both the leaf-on and leaf-off condition, views into the interior of the Project Site

¹ New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Program Policy document “Assessing and Mitigating Visual and Aesthetic Impacts” last revised December 13, 2019 (DEP-00-2).

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1 would be limited by the retention of existing healthy mature trees, addition of new
2 landscaping, and the proposed orientation of the buildings.

3
4 2. The Lead Agency finds that the unique location and topography of the Project Site has the
5 potential to accommodate buildings that are 75 feet in height without causing significant
6 adverse visual impacts. In the event that the Project Sponsor requests that additional
7 building height be allowed as part of its CDSP application, it will have to submit an
8 additional height development plan and demonstrate that it meets the zoning standards for
9 allowing the building height proposed on that plan. The Project Site is setback from
10 Sterling Mine Road and rises from an elevation of approximately 500 feet along its
11 perimeter to 860 feet above sea level at the top of the ridge in the southeast portion of the
12 site. The low point of the site is in its northern corner along the Nakoma Brook and
13 Sterling Mine Road. The Proposed Action would preserve the natural features of the
14 property—particularly its rock outcroppings, wetlands, and steep slopes—to the greatest
15 extent practicable. This would be accomplished by organizing the majority of the
16 development along a central spine between the 600-foot and 700-foot elevation contour
17 on the north side of the ridge. Only one building, the proposed backlot, would be located
18 on the south side of the ridge at an elevation of 700 feet. To minimize the project's
19 footprint, most of the parking would be located in garaged structures.

20
21 3. The Lead Agency finds that while portions of the Proposed Action would be visible from
22 several studied Viewpoints, including some trails within New York State parks, this
23 visibility may be considered an unavoidable impact, and would not constitute a significant
24 adverse impact as there are many existing structures in the intervening landscape. These
25 existing structures include those both similar to the Proposed Project in size, style, and
26 use, and dissimilar, including water towers and high-tension power lines, with their
27 adjacent clear-cut areas.

28
29 4. The Lead Agency finds that an updated visual analysis included in the FEIS demonstrated
30 that the increase in size of the A/V Studio building from 120,000 square feet to 290,678
31 square feet would not significantly change the potential visibility of the Proposed Action
32 as the proposed height would not change (see FEIS Table 1-3). As such, the analysis
33 conducted in the DEIS remains valid.

34
35 5. The Lead Agency finds that the provided visual analysis of a 45-foot height alternative in
36 Appendix I to the FEIS demonstrates that the 20 additional acres of trees and vegetation
37 that would have to be cleared to achieve the same building square footage and the
38 increased elevation of some of the buildings would increase the visual impacts of the
39 Proposed Action.

40
41 6. The Lead Agency finds that the Proposed Action has incorporated into the project design
42 the following measures to minimize the visibility of the Proposed Action, such that no
43 significant adverse visual impacts would result:

44
45 a. Extensive landscaping and a tree preservation plan;

- 1 b. Earth tone building colors and low reflective glass;
- 2
- 3 c. Orientation of buildings to avoid sun glare;
- 4
- 5 d. Limiting building heights to well below the ridgeline;
- 6
- 7 e. A variety of native deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs;
- 8
- 9 f. Landscaping at the entrance to the Project Site and throughout the interior of the
- 10 Project Site;
- 11
- 12 g. The retention of existing healthy and mature vegetation around the perimeter of the
- 13 Project Site, and infill of healthy native species where appropriate;
- 14
- 15 h. Orientation of buildings and indoor lighting controls to minimize interior lighting;
- 16 and
- 17
- 18 i. Site lighting with full cutoff shields to limit lateral spread of light to be dark-sky
- 19 friendly.
- 20
- 21 7. For the reasons above, the Town Board finds that the Proposed Action will not have a
- 22 significant adverse impact as associated with visual impacts and community character.

23
24 **7. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

25
26 The potential impact to emergency services (police, fire, ambulance); schools; water, sewer, and
27 solid waste service providers; and parks and recreational resources that may occur as a result of
28 implementation of the Proposed Action were evaluated. The Project Site is located primarily
29 within the Town of Ramapo, with a small portion in the Town of Tuxedo and in close proximity
30 to the Village of Sloatsburg.

31
32 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

33
34 Emergency services calls from project residents would be routed primarily to providers within the
35 Town of Ramapo, which would be supported by mutual aid from the Town of Tuxedo and Village
36 of Sloatsburg. Public emergency service providers would be supplemented by on-site, private,
37 emergency service providers.

38
39 The Project Site is located in the Suffern Central School District. However, the Project Sponsor
40 has expressly represented that the project would not generate any school age children and therefore
41 would have no effect on the school district's resources.

42
43 The Project Site is located in the Rockland County Sewer District #1 (RCSD1). Initial
44 correspondence with RCSD has not indicated any capacity concerns related Project-generated
45 demand. Water service would be provided by Veolia North America (formerly SUEZ Water North

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1 America), which has stated that sufficient capacity exists to serve the Proposed Project. Solid
2 waste and recycling services would be provided by private carter.

3
4 The Proposed Action includes on-site recreational resources for its 1,240 residents. Facilities for
5 resident use would include hiking, sports fields, and fitness studios. In addition, the Project Site is
6 located in an area well-served by County and State parkland.

7
8 Regarding the updates between the DEIS and FEIS, the changes to the Proposed Action would not
9 increase the number of people living and working on the Project Site, nor would it increase the
10 number of visitors. Further, the addition of a FAR cap for residential uses included with the revised
11 MU-3 zoning would reduce the maximum number of potential hypothetical residents from what
12 was analyzed in the DEIS. As such, the analysis and conclusions presented in the DEIS remain
13 valid.

14
15 *MITIGATION*

16
17 The Lead Agency finds that the Proposed Action would not result in any significant adverse
18 impacts to emergency services (police, fire, ambulance); schools; water, sewer, and solid waste
19 service providers; and parks and recreational resources. However, the Applicant has stated that it
20 understands that the development of this parcel will potentially require greater attention from the
21 Sloatsburg Fire Department than in the parcel's current vacant state. Therefore, it has agreed to
22 make a one-time contribution to the Village of Sloatsburg to obtain replacement mini-pumper and
23 brush trucks that are 44 and 63 years old respectively. These will enable the fire district to service
24 the Proposed Project as well as the greater community.

25
26 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

27
28 Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency finds that:

- 29
30 1. The Applicant shall make a one-time contribution to the Village of Sloatsburg to obtain
31 replacement mini-pumper and brush trucks that are 44 and 63 years old respectively.
32 These will enable the fire district to service the Proposed Project as well as the greater
33 community.
34
35 2. The Proposed Action's mitigated impact on recreational resources is predicated on the
36 development of sports fields and outdoor passive recreational opportunities as part of the
37 Proposed Development. The DEIS analysis also considers potential amendments to the
38 Proposed Action in the future including the development of buildings on the currently
39 proposed sports fields and back lot. Should these recreational amenities be removed as
40 part of an amended Site Plan, the impact of the Proposed Action on Town recreational
41 resources shall require additional analysis.
42
43
44
45

1 **8. HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**
2

3 The Proposed Action would require permits and approvals from the Towns of Ramapo and
4 Tuxedo, Rockland, and Orange Counties, NYSDEC, and USACE. The Proposed Action is
5 therefore subject to SEQRA and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.
6

7 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*
8

9 *Historic Resources*
10

11 At present, there is only one structure on the Project Site, at its northwest corner: a structurally
12 deficient stone bridge that crosses a small stream and provides the only vehicular access into the
13 interior of the property. The bridge is approximately 20 feet wide and consists of stone gravity
14 walls on both sides of an elevated dirt road. In a letter dated December 29, 2020, the New York
15 State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) determined that the bridge
16 is not eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places. The reconstruction
17 of this bridge has been completed and is not a part of the Proposed Action.
18

19 The Proposed Action is located east of the former Table Rock Estate property, which OPRHP
20 identified as being eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its
21 collection of early-twentieth-century estate architecture. The DEIS contains a detailed visual
22 analysis which documents that the Proposed Action would not be visible from Table Rock Estates.
23 Therefore, the Proposed Action would not introduce visual, atmospheric or audible elements that
24 would diminish the integrity of the property's significant historic features or negatively affect any
25 of the characteristics of the historic property that qualify it for inclusion in the National Register.
26 The Proposed Action would not diminish the integrity of the Table Rock Estate property's
27 location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association.
28

29 As detailed in the DEIS and FEIS, the southern portion of Harriman State Park is located
30 approximately 2.5 miles east and northeast of the Project Site. OPRHP identified Harriman State
31 Park as being eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. As identified in the DEIS and
32 FEIS, Harriman State Park has hiking trails with scenic long-distance views of the Ramapo
33 Mountains, and several of these Viewpoints have views of the Project Site. The Proposed Project
34 would not adversely impact the characteristics for which Harriman State Park has been determined
35 eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.
36

37 As stated in OPRHP's June 6, 2016 Resource Evaluation for Harriman State Park, "Harriman
38 State Park is significant under criteria A and C in the areas of conservation, recreation, landscape
39 architecture, social history and architecture as one of New York's earliest and most influential
40 state parks, for its association with precedent-setting recreational and social welfare programs, for
41 its enormous naturalist designed landscape, and for its outstanding collection of rustic park
42 architecture."
43

44 The minimal visibility of the Proposed Project, viewed from certain distant locations in the park
45 as described above and in the visual analyses contained in the DEIS and FEIS, would not adversely

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1 impact the historic characteristics or the visitor’s experience at Harriman State Park. This
2 conclusion is supported by the June 2, 2022, OPRHP determination that the Proposed Action
3 would have no indirect, visual impacts on the National Register eligible Harriman State Park
4 (07109.001181). The determination letter further concluded that, “it continues to be the opinion
5 of the OPRHP that no properties, including archaeological and/or historic resources, listed in or
6 eligible for the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places will be adversely
7 impacted by this project.”

8
9 *Archaeological Resources*

10
11 The Project Site was the subject of a 2005 Town of Ramapo SEQRA review completed for the
12 Lorterdan project. The SEQRA review for Lorterdan included a Phase 1A and 1B Cultural
13 Resources Survey of the Project Site completed by Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc.
14 (HAA) in 2002 (OPRHP archaeology survey 02SR52540).¹ HAA’s Phase 1A research of the
15 Project Site identified the site as having moderate archaeological sensitivity associated with its
16 precontact occupation and concluded that it had low sensitivity for historic period archaeological
17 resources. HAA conducted Phase 1B testing to identify the presence or absence of archaeological
18 resources in undisturbed, level portions of the Project Site that were not included within mapped
19 wetland areas. The testing resulted in the identification of four archaeological sites referred to as
20 Locus 1 (OPRHP Unique Site Number [USN] 08704.000227), Locus 2 (OPRHP USN
21 08704.000228), Locus 3 (OPRHP USN 08704.000229), and Locus 4 (OPRHP USN
22 08704.000230). Only Locus 4 would have been impacted by the Lorterdan project. HAA
23 recommended a Phase 2 Archaeological Survey/Evaluation of Locus 4 in the event that the project
24 as then proposed could not be redesigned to avoid impacts to Locus 4 and the 50-foot area buffer
25 area around it. As the Lorterdan project was not constructed, no additional evaluation occurred.
26 Based on the findings of the previous Phase 1A and 1B Survey, OPRHP issued a finding of “No
27 Impact” on historic or cultural resources for the Sterling Mine Road Active Adult Community in
28 2002.

29
30 Locus 1 and Locus 2 are both well outside the area of disturbance for the Proposed Action, and
31 the Proposed Action has been designed to avoid any project-related impacts within a 50-foot buffer
32 of the site identified as Locus 3. The Proposed Action would affect the location of Locus 4. As
33 such, the Applicant completed a Phase 2 Archaeological Evaluation of Locus 4 to determine its
34 State/National Register (S/NR) eligibility status. That evaluation recovered small quantities of
35 naturally-occurring, non-cultural lithic material but no evidence of prehistoric activity. In the
36 absence of prehistoric remains meeting the eligibility requirements of the S/NR, the Phase 2
37 Evaluation recommended no additional fieldwork. Since Locus 4 is not culturally significant, it
38 does not need to be avoided and the Proposed Action may disturb this area.

¹ Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc. (2002): “Phase IA Literature Review and Sensitivity Assessment and Phase IB Archaeological Field Reconnaissance; Sterling Mine Road Active Adult Community; Town of Ramapo, Rockland county, New York.” Prepared for: Lorterdan Properties at Ramapo, I, LLC; Montclair, NJ.

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1 In the absence of archaeological resources meeting the eligibility requirements of the S/NR, and
2 the avoidance of the three other Loci, the Proposed Action will have no effect upon archaeological
3 resources.

4
5 *MITIGATION*

6
7 The Proposed Action would have no direct or indirect significant impact on historic resources; as
8 such, no mitigation is required.

9
10 A formal Archaeological Avoidance Plan was prepared to document the protection measures to
11 be implemented during construction to prevent disturbance to the identified archaeological sites.
12 With implementation of the Archaeological Avoidance Plan, the Proposed Action would have no
13 direct or indirect significant impact on archaeological resources.

14
15 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

16
17 Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency finds that:

- 18
19 1. The Archaeological Avoidance Plan shall be included as part of the CDSP and Site Plan
20 applications for the Proposed Action. During the CDSP review, the Project Sponsor will
21 be required to demonstrate that the Conceptual Development Plan has been designed to
22 avoid any project-related impacts within a 50-foot buffer of Locus 3. To prevent
23 accidental impacts to the site during construction, the 50-foot buffer are shall be marked
24 in the field and enclosed with a fence during construction in accordance with the
25 Archaeological Avoidance Plan submitted to SHPO. With the implementation of the
26 Archaeological Avoidance Plan, the Lead Agency finds that there will be no significant
27 adverse impacts to archaeological resources.

28
29 **9. INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES**

30
31 The Proposed Action's potential effects on local and regional water supply, sanitary sewer
32 systems, and electric and gas utilities were evaluated.

33
34 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

35
36 *Water Supply*

37
38 Water supply to the Proposed Action would be provided by SUEZ Water North America, now
39 Veolia North America. In accordance with recommendations by SUEZ, the Applicant would
40 install a 6" water main with a maximum service pressure of 90 pounds per square inch (psi) at the
41 property entrance of the Project Site fed from an off-site SUEZ owned and operated pump station.

42
43 The Proposed Action would incorporate water-saving technologies into the Project Design,
44 including the use of low-flow plumbing fixtures and rainwater harvesting for some HVAC and
45 plumbing uses.

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1 Regarding the updates between the DEIS and FEIS, the updated loads are comparable to what was
 2 presented in the DEIS. The updated water and sewage loads for the Proposed Project are included
 3 in **Table 5** below.

Table 5
Water and Sewage Load by Building

BUILDING	DOMESTIC WATER (GPD)			SEWAGE (GPD)		
	PEAK HOUR WATER DEMAND (PHD)	AVERAGE DAY WATER DEMAND (ADD)	MAXIMUM DAY WATER DEMAND (MDD)	PEAK HOUR WATER DEMAND (PHD)	AVERAGE DAY WATER DEMAND (ADD)	MAXIMUM DAY WATER DEMAND (MDD)
RES 1	73,600	9,200	18,400	66,200	8,300	16,600
RES 2	103,200	12,900	25,800	92,900	11,600	23,200
RES 3	88,000	11,000	22,000	79,200	9,900	19,800
RES 4	73,600	9,200	18,400	66,200	8,300	16,600
RES 5	103,200	12,900	25,800	92,900	11,600	23,200
RES 6	88,000	11,000	22,000	79,200	9,900	19,800
RES 7	88,000	11,000	22,000	79,200	9,900	19,800
RES 8	103,200	12,900	25,800	92,900	11,600	23,200
RES 9	73,600	9,200	18,400	66,200	8,300	16,600
RES 10	88,000	11,000	22,000	79,200	9,900	19,800
OFFICE	85,800	14,300	28,600	77,200	12,900	25,700
EVENTS	91,200	11,400	22,800	82,100	10,300	20,500
AV	100,800	16,800	33,600	90,700	15,100	30,200
FITNESS	16,200	5,400	10,800	14,600	4,900	9,700
VISITOR	27,600	4,600	9,200	24,800	4,100	8,300
CAR WASH	1,200	600	1,200	1,100	500	1,100
INTERIM BUILDING	66,000	11,000	22,000	59,400	9,900	19,800
TOTAL (incl. interim use building)	1,271,200	174,400	348,800	1,144,000	157,000	313,900
TOTAL (excl. interim use building)	1,205,200	163,400	326,800	1,084,600	147,100	294,100
Source: BR&A Site Utility Report, last revised 9/9/2021						

4
 5 *Sanitary Sewer*
 6

7 The Proposed Action would connect to the Rockland County Sewer District #1, which has the
 8 capacity to serve the project. Updated sewage load calculations are provided in **Table 5** above.
 9 The Proposed Action would require an extension of a RCSD1 10-inch sanitary sewer main by
 10 approximately 2,500 linear feet along Sterling Mine Road to connect to the nearest sanitary
 11 manhole. Wastewater generated from the Project Site would be conveyed through this sewer main
 12 extension to the Hillburn Advanced Water Treatment (AWT) facility.
 13

14 To connect to the public sanitary system, the Applicant would be required to pay a one-time
 15 connection fee and annual service fees to Rockland County. (Although the Applicant is generally

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1 exempt from real property taxation, it is not exempt from sewer use and connection fees.) These
2 fees are detailed in the letter from Rockland County included in Appendix A to the FEIS.

3
4 The Applicant is contemplating installing a septic tank and drain field to serve the small, 3,000-
5 square-foot backlot building. A septic system for only this small structure would avoid the need
6 for a pump station between the backlot building and the rest of the Project Site (which would be
7 served by the RCSD1). This septic system would have a design capacity of approximately 1,250
8 gpd.

9
10 *Electricity and gas*

11
12 The anticipated electrical usage of the Proposed Action would be offset by the sustainable options
13 being considered, such as rooftop solar photovoltaics on the A/V Studio Building that would have
14 a peak capacity of 2 (two) megawatts (MW), equal to 30 percent of Proposed Action’s electrical
15 demand. In addition, the Applicant will work with Orange and Rockland Utilities (O&R) to
16 participate in demand response and distributed generation programs to reduce electrical costs. This
17 includes opportunities to purchase electricity off peak from O&R that would be stored on a 20
18 megawatt hour (MWH) utility scale battery to use during peak hours. The battery energy storage
19 system would be on the Project Site. This would result in lower electrical demands for regional
20 electricity generation and avoid the need for increased fossil fuel combustion to meet peak
21 demand.

22
23 *MITIGATION*

24
25 The Proposed Action incorporates energy saving measures, including energy generated from
26 rooftop photovoltaics and the use of on-site natural gas for backup generators, into the project
27 design and would not require additional mitigation measures to reduce impacts to the local electric
28 and gas utilities.

29
30 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

31
32 Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency finds that:

33
34 SUEZ (now Veolia) has provided a “will serve” letter to the Project Sponsor. The water-saving
35 measures included in the Proposed Action would reduce the demand on the public water supply.
36 Therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in a significant adverse impact on the public
37 water supply.

38
39 The Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in any significant adverse impacts to sanitary
40 sewer infrastructure or the Hillburn AWT’s ability to treat wastewater. However, in the event that
41 the sewer capacity analysis demonstrates the existing sanitary sewer main or Hillburn AWT have
42 inadequate capacity to accommodate added flow from the Project Site, the Applicant shall be
43 responsible for the cost of the design and construction costs for improvements to accommodate
44 the project

1 The Proposed Action would not result in a significant adverse impact on the electric and gas
2 utilities.

3
4 **10. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION**

5
6 The DEIS identified the potential traffic impacts and proposed mitigation measures for the
7 identified traffic impacts. The analyses presented and methodologies utilized in the DEIS was very
8 conservative as the baseline conditions were developed utilizing conservative adjustment factors
9 to estimate pre-pandemic conditions along with a conservative estimate of No Action traffic levels.

10
11 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

12
13 As documented in the DEIS, and as updated for the FEIS to account for the realignment of the
14 residential driveway entrance, in the future with and without the Project, two intersections would
15 experience impacts. These two intersections are (1) Sterling Mine Road and Eagle Valley
16 Road/Site Residential Driveway and (2) Sterling Mine Road and CR 68/Site Main Driveway
17 (offset).

18
19 As discussed in Chapter 1 of the FEIS, at the request of the Orange County Department of Public
20 Works, and as part of a separate project, the Project Sponsor will abandon the existing dirt
21 driveway that provides direct access to the Project Site and construct a 4-way intersection with
22 Eagle Valley Road, Sterlington Road, and Sterling Mine Road. Access to the residential area of
23 the Project Site would be from Sterlington Road, which also provides access to the existing Sisters
24 Servants of Mary Immaculate and St. Joseph's Adult Care Home. As part of the Proposed Action,
25 this access would be improved from a dirt/gravel entrance to a paved roadway that would serve
26 as the secondary entrance to the Proposed Action. A plan for the realignment is shown in FEIS
27 Figure 1-6.

28
29 The existing traffic volumes from Sterling Mine Road to Sterlington Road are sufficient to warrant
30 a left turn lane based on American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
31 (AASHTO) standards. The addition of these volumes to the Project's residential entrance as part
32 of the realignment will result in an impact at this location that was not present when the driveways
33 were separate.

34
35 The Proposed Action capacity analysis has been updated to take into account the revised
36 intersection alignment design of Sterling Mine Road and Site Residential Driveway/Eagle Valley
37 Road. The capacity analyses for the intersections affected by the realignment described above are
38 presented in FEIS Appendix E Table E-1 along with corresponding Synchro output reports.

39
40 As discussed in the DEIS, the Tuxedo Farms Project in the neighboring Town of Tuxedo identified
41 signalization at the Sterling Mine Road and CR 68 intersection as a potential mitigation measure
42 for their project-related impacts. The Tuxedo Farms project would provide Rockland County with
43 the traffic signal warrant study to determine if signalization is required and would be responsible
44 to install the traffic signal if warranted. The Proposed Action would add a fourth (offset) leg to
45 this intersection. As such, a discussion regarding timing for installation of the signal would occur
46 between the Tuxedo Farms Project Sponsor and the County. The Project Sponsor would

1 coordinate with the County to ensure the traffic signal (if approved) accommodates their driveway
2 for alignment Option A, and would coordinate a timing plan to maximize efficiency and minimize
3 lost time per cycle for the two T-legged intersections under Option "A".
4

5 *MITIGATION*

6
7 For internal traffic circulation, all non-resident volunteers, deliveries, guests, and visitors to the
8 Site would be directed to the gated main entrance off Sterling Mine Road. Sufficient queuing is
9 provided between Sterling Mine Road and the gate house so that traffic will not back-up onto
10 Sterling Mine Road. Residents would access the Site from either the main entrance or from a
11 residents-only gate entrance off Sterling Mine Road in the Town of Tuxedo.
12

13 The existing traffic volumes from Sterling Mine Road to Sterlington Road are sufficient to warrant
14 a left turn lane based on American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
15 (AASHTO) standards. The addition of these volumes to the Project's residential entrance as part
16 of the realignment cause an impact at this location that was not present when the driveway was
17 separate. Under existing conditions, the realignment of the intersection of Sterling Mine Road and
18 Eagle Valley Road/Site Residential Driveway monitoring for a traffic signal is warranted. To
19 mitigate the additional volume the Project Sponsor shall be required to prepare a signal warrant
20 analysis within six months of completion of the Proposed Project and occupancy of the Project
21 Site.
22

23 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*

24
25 Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency finds that:

- 26
27 1. The Project Sponsor shall be required to prepare a signal warrant analysis within six
28 months of completion of the Proposed Project and occupancy of the Project Site.
29
30 2. Through coordination with the Tuxedo Farms Project Sponsor and the County regarding
31 the potential need for a traffic signal at the Sterling Mine Road and CR 68 intersection,
32 and the signal warrant analysis to be conducted by the Proposed Action Project Sponsor
33 at the Sterling Mine Road and Eagle Valley Road intersection, any potential significant
34 adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated.
35
36 3. As illustrated in the DEIS, sight distances at both driveways would be acceptable and meet
37 the American Associations of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
38 standards with the removal of vegetation within the Sterling Mine Road right-of-way. The
39 Sterling Mine Road right-of-way vegetation removal plan shall be included in the Site
40 Plan Application.
41

42 **11. NOISE AND LIGHTING**

43
44 Potential impacts from noise levels and lighting associated with operation of the Proposed Action
45 were evaluated.

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POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Noise sources include Project Site vehicular traffic; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; and mechanical equipment. Based on the modeling, predicted noise levels from the Proposed Action would not exceed 55 dB(A) at the property line, which is consistent with the Town of Ramapo and Town of Tuxedo regulations.

Outdoor lighting for the Proposed Action would be low energy LED with daylight, timeclock, and presence control. The applicant would incorporate design elements consistent with the NYStretch Energy Code 2020. All outdoor lighting fixtures would be full-cutoff to minimize light spillover and glare. Lighting for the Proposed Action would be compatible and of appropriate scale for the development and the proposed lighting would conform to all applicable town regulations.

MITIGATION

The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impact on noise levels or lighting. Noise generated by the Proposed Action would be concentrated in the center of the Project Site and would not generate unreasonable levels of noise above 55dB(A) at any property line, consistent with both the Town of Ramapo and Town of Tuxedo regulations. Site lighting is designed to not exceed 0.1 foot-candles at the property line, except at the main entrance driveway where additional lighting is required for safety. Additionally, the Proposed Action includes egress lighting controls, to reduce lighting to 50% when unoccupied for more than 15 minutes, and outdoor parking lighting control to reduce lighting levels by 50% when unoccupied for more than 15 minutes and/or between 12AM and 6AM. As such, the Proposed Action would not require additional mitigation related to lighting and noise.

FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS

Specifically, the Town Board acting as Lead Agency, for the reasons discussed in Chapters 1 and 11 of the DEIS, and further discussed in the responses in Chapter 3 of the FEIS, finds that:

1. The Town Board as Lead Agency finds that the noise sources included in the Project Site vehicular traffic; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; and mechanical equipment would not exceed 55 dB(A) at the property line, which is consistent with the Town of Ramapo and Town of Tuxedo regulations.
2. The Lead Agency finds that the outdoor lighting for the Proposed Action would be low energy LED with daylight, timeclock, and presence control. The applicant would incorporate design elements consistent with the NYStretch Energy Code 2020. All outdoor lighting fixtures would be full-cutoff to minimize light spillover and glare. Site lighting is designed to not exceed 0.1 foot-candles at the property line, except at the main entrance driveway where additional lighting is required for safety. Additionally, the Proposed Action includes egress lighting controls, to reduce lighting to 50% when unoccupied for more than 15 minutes, and outdoor parking lighting control to reduce lighting levels by 50% when unoccupied for more than 15 minutes and/or between 12AM

1 and 6AM. Lighting for the Proposed Action would be compatible and of appropriate scale
2 for the development and the proposed lighting would conform to all applicable town
3 regulations.

- 4
5 3. For the reasons above, the Town Board finds that the Proposed Action will not have a
6 significant adverse impact as associated with noise and lighting.

7
8 **12. SOCIOECONOMICS**
9

10 The expected economic benefits of the construction and operations of the proposed A/V
11 Production Center were estimated using the IMPLAN (IMPact analysis for PLANning) input-
12 output model. The model estimates both the direct (on-site) economic benefits and the indirect
13 and induced benefits to the region.
14

15 Using IMPLAN terminology, the reporting breaks out total economic impacts into three
16 components:
17

- 18 1. **Direct** effects represent the initial benefits to the economy of a specific new investment;
19 e.g., on-site employment (during construction and operations) and associated labor
20 income.
21
22 2. **Indirect** effects represent the benefits generated by industries purchasing from other
23 industries as a result of the direct investment. For example, indirect employment resulting
24 from the project's operational expenditures will include jobs in industries that provide
25 goods and services to the construction and operations.
26
27 3. **Induced** effects represent the impacts caused by increased household income in a region.
28 Direct and indirect effects generate more worker income by increasing employment
29 and/or salaries in certain industries. Households spend some of this additional income on
30 local goods and services, such as food and drink, recreation, and medical services.
31

32 The DEIS also assessed the Proposed Action's incremental demand for municipal services,
33 estimated its marginal costs using a case study approach, and described offsetting municipal
34 benefits.
35

36 In response to comments from the Town of Ramapo, the FEIS further evaluates the potential fiscal
37 impacts to the Town of Ramapo. The FEIS is an update to the analysis presented in the April 2021
38 DEIS and provides additional back-up on the methodology used therein.
39

40 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*
41

42 Construction impacts are expected to be comparable to that of any other similarly sized
43 construction project, although the amount of directly generated construction wages and salaries
44 would be reduced to the extent that volunteer workers are used for construction. Local

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1 expenditures are expected for goods and services, such as meals, fuel and vehicle maintenance,
2 and other miscellaneous expenditures.

3
4 It is expected that indirect and induced employees would be generated by the construction project
5 throughout the affected regions (i.e., Town of Ramapo, Rockland County, and New York State).
6 The indirect and induced economic growth in these regions would create the demand for labor in
7 businesses providing services noted above or other support services. This economic growth would
8 continue for an estimated 5 years (the anticipated construction period) and would benefit
9 restaurants, food suppliers, lodging, automobile services, building supply stores, and other
10 services.

11
12 Volunteer construction workers are expected to be housed off-site at the nearby Woodgrove at
13 Sterlington apartment complex located on NYS Route 17 in the Town of Ramapo, at other
14 facilities owned and operated by the Applicant, and on-site at the A/V Production Center. These
15 volunteers will be provided a living stipend to purchase groceries, gas, and personal effects, and
16 can be expected to make the bulk of these purchases locally, to the economic benefit of the
17 Ramapo and Rockland County economies. The living stipend for construction volunteers will total
18 \$14.9 million over the course of the construction period. In addition to the living stipend, many
19 construction volunteers have income or savings from other sources as they have generally taken a
20 leave of absence from their secular work for a short period and thus have disposable income. It is
21 expected that the construction volunteers would spend monies from their stipend and from their
22 savings in the Ramapo area on typical household consumer expenditures. These expenditures in
23 turn induce employment in the local economy.

24
25 Operational period benefits would result from the addition of up to 1,240 new residents/employees
26 at the Project Site. However, to present a more conservative analysis, the analysis of operational
27 benefits considered the potential economic effects of 1,000 full-time volunteers. The Proposed
28 Action would also introduce/require temporary on-site contractor employment, as needed (e.g.,
29 plumber, electrician).

30
31 Watchtower provides an annual stipend to its full-time resident volunteers for living expenses such
32 as clothing, food, and gas. The volunteer labor full-time equivalent stipend will total \$3.37 million
33 annually in direct employee compensation. As with the construction volunteers, it is expected that
34 the onsite volunteers during the operational period would spend monies from their stipend and
35 from their savings in the Ramapo area on typical household consumer expenditures. These
36 expenditures in turn induce employment in the local economy.

37
38 Operations of the proposed A/V Production Center would result in approximately 19 indirect and
39 induced jobs within the Town of Ramapo. Indirect jobs would include those in real estate;
40 independent artists, writers, and performers; and marketing researchers. Induced jobs would
41 include those at doctor's offices and restaurants, as a result of new household spending.

42
43 As a tax-exempt organization, the Applicant would continue to receive property and school tax
44 exemptions. However, applicable special district tax payments and user fees would continue to be
45 paid.

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1 **Table 6** summarizes the estimated economic benefits that would be realized within the Town of
2 Ramapo as a result of the Proposed Action.
3

Table 6
Town of Ramapo Benefits

	Construction	Operations
Employment (Annual Jobs)		
Direct	603	1,000
Indirect	27	17
Induced	6	2
Total	636	1,019
Employee Compensation (in Millions of 2020 dollars)¹		
Direct	\$93.37	\$3.37
Indirect	\$8.55	\$0.74
Induced	\$1.51	\$0.07
Total	\$103.43	\$4.18
Economic Output (in Millions of 2020 dollars)²		
Direct	\$465.01	\$23.64
Indirect	\$26.35	\$2.71
Induced	\$4.77	\$0.22
Total	\$496.14	\$26.57
Fiscal Revenue (in Millions of 2020 dollars)³		
	\$1.55	\$0.06
Notes:		
1 Employee compensation refers to "Labor Income" in IMPLAN.		
2 Economic output is the total value of industry production. For Industries that do not hold inventory, output equals revenues (sales); for Industries that do hold inventory, output equals revenues plus any net change in inventory (additions to inventory less sales out of inventory).		
3 Includes all estimated direct, indirect, and induced taxes. The Proposed Action would be exempt from paying direct taxes on production and imports (e.g., sales and property tax).		
Values may not add to totals due to rounding		
Sources: 2018 IMPLAN and AKRF, December 2021.		

4
5 **FINDINGS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

6
7 The Proposed Action’s estimated economic and fiscal revenue benefits outweigh the estimated
8 incremental municipal cost. Therefore, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in any
9 significant adverse impacts to the services provided by the Town of Ramapo. Therefore, there
10 would be no significant adverse socioeconomic impacts requiring mitigation.

11
12 **13. CONSTRUCTION**

13
14 The Proposed Action’s construction phasing plan and the potential for impacts due to construction
15 were evaluated.

16
17 **POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

18
19 Full build-out of the World Headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses Audio/Video Production Center
20 would occur in three major stages. Stage 1 will be tree removal, which will be subdivided into 5
21 subphases, and will have a duration of two months. Stage 2 will be major earthworks and blasting,
22 which will be subdivided into 6 subphases and will have a duration of 18 months. Lastly Stage 3
23 is building construction, landscaping, and finished surfaces. Stage 3 will be subdivided into 9
24 subphases and will have a duration of 38 months. Based on the type and depths of bedrock

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1 encountered during the geotechnical investigation, much of the rock excavation would require the
2 use of hydraulic hammers, line drilling and/or blasting.

3
4 The Tuxedo Planning Board and Orange County Department of Public Works required that a new
5 entrance be constructed in the Town of Tuxedo to serve both the adjacent Sisters Servants property
6 and the Project Site. This entrance has been constructed.

7
8 Initial construction access to the Project Site would be provided via the new entrance from
9 Sterlington Road. Rough grading and blasting of the main entrance area would begin in Stage 2,
10 Phase 8. Final grading, alignment, and paving of the main entrance area would occur in Stage 3,
11 Phase 12, and would include the left turn lane. Construction trucks would use State routes (e.g., I-
12 87 and NYS Route 17) and County Road 72 (Sterling Mine Road) to travel to/from the Project
13 Site.

14
15 The Proposed Action would generate vehicle trips associated with workers traveling to and from
16 the construction site, and hauling and delivery of materials and equipment. The Proposed Action
17 is anticipated to generate 616 construction jobs per year, of which 462 would be resident
18 volunteers. Volunteer construction workers are expected to be housed off-site at the nearby
19 Woodgrove at Sterlington apartment complex located on NYS Route 17 in the Town of Ramapo,
20 at other facilities owned and operated by the Applicant, and once operational on-site at the A/V
21 Production Center. Although some construction workers would arrive on the Project Site in private
22 cars, the majority are expected to arrive by a Watchtower provided jitney service from existing
23 proximate Watchtower residences (primarily the Woodgrove at Sterlington apartments) to the
24 construction site.

25
26 Since the DEIS, the site work for the Proposed Project has been redesigned to balance cut and fill
27 on the Project Site, which will reduce the number of truck trips during the earthworks phases of
28 the project. As the Town's consulting traffic engineer noted in his comments on the DEIS,
29 construction traffic could require up to 170 truck trips per day for a period of two years. Now,
30 Construction truck traffic will primarily be for the exporting of trees and brush during the tree
31 clearing phase and for the importing of construction materials. Consequently, construction truck
32 trips to/from the Project Site are now anticipated to range from an average of 30 trucks per day to
33 an average of 50 trucks per day. Truck movements, including delivery of construction materials
34 and equipment, are typically distributed throughout the work day.

35
36 *MITIGATION*

37
38 Construction of the Proposed Action would be carried out in accordance with the Town of Ramapo
39 Noise Code (Chapter 188), which allows construction activities between the hours of 8 AM and
40 10 PM, except legal holidays when no activity is permitted.

41
42 During construction of the Proposed Action, vegetation would be removed and bare soil would be
43 exposed as part of excavation and site preparation. To reduce soil erosion and sedimentation
44 related impacts, construction of the Proposed Action would conform to the requirements of
45 NYSDEC SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity, Permit
46 No. GP-0-20-001. This permit requires that projects disturbing more than one (1) acre of land must

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1 develop an SWPPP containing both temporary erosion control measures during construction and
2 post-construction stormwater management practices. The SWPPP includes an Erosion and
3 Sediment Control Plan that would be subject to review and approval by the Town's consulting
4 engineer and potentially the NYSDEC. All erosion and sediment control measures would also be
5 developed in accordance with the New York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and
6 Sediment Control.

7
8 To mitigate potential impacts associated with construction traffic, the Project Sponsor will provide
9 25 jitney vehicles to transport volunteer construction workers from the Woodgrove at Sterlington
10 apartment complex located just off NYS Route 17 at 950 Woodmont Ln, Sloatsburg, NY 10974.
11 The jitney vehicles would be 15 passenger vans that would transport occupants in two shifts in the
12 morning and would return in the evening. The apartment complex is approximately 2 miles east
13 of the Project Site via Sterling Mine Road. Jitney service would also be provided from Tuxedo
14 Bethel, located at 1422 Long Meadow Rd, Tuxedo Park, NY 10987, approximately 8 miles from
15 the Project Site via Long Meadow Rd and Sterling Mine Road. The jitney service would minimize
16 the number of construction worker trips and the need for parking on the construction site. Given
17 typical construction hours, the majority of worker trips would occur during off-peak travel times
18 (7:00 AM to 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM) and therefore would not typically affect traffic
19 during the standard peak vehicular travel hours (e.g., 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM to 6:00
20 PM).

21
22 To further mitigate construction related traffic impacts, the Proposed Project has been designed to
23 balance cut and fill on the Project Site, which will reduce the number of truck trips during the
24 earthworks phases of the project. Sterling Mine Road (CR 72) is a truck route with approximately
25 1,063 to 1,111 trucks per day under current conditions. It is expected that only a limited number
26 of trucks would travel to or from the site during the standard vehicular peak traffic hours.
27 Therefore, the minimal increase in truck traffic during the construction period is not anticipated
28 to result in significant adverse traffic impacts and traffic generated during construction would be
29 temporary.

30
31 The Proposed Action would include a number of sustainability practices during construction,
32 including:

- 33
- 34 • Use of mass timber construction, which is comprised of multiple solid wood panels nailed
35 or glued together. Mass timber construction is a low-carbon alternative to concrete and
36 steel;
 - 37
 - 38 • Use of high recycled content/renewable or sustainably harvested materials to the extent
39 reasonably practicable;
 - 40
 - 41 • Use of locally and/or regionally extracted or manufactured materials where reasonably
42 feasible; and
 - 43
 - 44 • Diversion of construction waste from landfills and to recycling and reuse where
45 reasonably feasible.

1
2 Throughout construction, the Project Sponsor will prioritize sourcing materials from local
3 suppliers and from the Hudson Valley region. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood
4 and other renewable resources would be targeted for use. Waste management of construction
5 materials will be a priority throughout the construction phase.
6

7 *FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS*
8

- 9 1. During construction of the Proposed Action, vegetation would be removed and bare soil
10 would be exposed as part of excavation and site preparation. To reduce soil erosion and
11 sedimentation related impacts, construction of the Proposed Action would conform to the
12 requirements of NYSDEC SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from
13 Construction Activity, Permit No. GP-0-20-001. This permit requires that projects
14 disturbing more than one (1) acre of land must develop an SWPPP containing both
15 temporary erosion control measures during construction and post-construction stormwater
16 management practices. The SWPPP includes an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan that
17 would be subject to review and approval by the Town's consulting engineer and
18 potentially NYSDEC. All erosion and sediment control measures would also be developed
19 in accordance with the New York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment
20 Control.
21
- 22 2. Blasting would be carried out in conformance with the 2020 edition of the *Fire Code of*
23 *New York State* and the National Fire Protection Association Explosive Materials Code
24 (NFPA 495-2018), Chapter 104 of the Town Code, and all other applicable laws and
25 regulations. Prior to initiating blasting on the Project Site, the Project Sponsor would
26 prepare and submit a site-specific blasting plan for Town review and approval. The
27 Blasting Plan would include schedules for blasting (day, hour, and duration), safety
28 protocols associated with both blasting activities, neighbor notification, documentation of
29 conditions of nearby buildings and structures, and the handling and transport of blasting
30 materials, and measures to mitigate noise-related impacts. Blasting activities are not
31 expected to impact rattlesnake dens. A spring emergence survey was conducted in the
32 spring of 2021 by a NYSDEC approved timber rattlesnake experts who found no timber
33 rattlesnakes or evidence of active dens on the Project Site (see FEIS Response 4-48). Prior
34 to blasting, the Project Sponsor would obtain a seismographic survey to determine
35 maximum charges that can be used at each location in area of excavation without
36 damaging adjacent properties or other work. Pursuant to Section 104-6 of the Town Code,
37 the Applicant shall notify the Town and all property owners whose property falls within
38 a radius of 750 feet from the blasting site at least 48 hours in advance of blasting.
39
- 40 3. The principal air quality impact associated with construction activities is the possible
41 generation of fugitive dust, which can vary in terms of volume and size of particulate
42 matter generated. Fugitive dust is associated with earth moving, such as site grading,
43 filling, and excavation for foundations. To mitigate and minimize these problems, erosion
44 and dust control procedures shall be followed during construction and shall include:
45

- 1 • Minimizing the area of disturbed soil by careful planning of grading operations so
2 that only the areas needed for any particular construction activity are disturbed;
3
- 4 • Minimizing the time span that soil is exposed;
5
- 6 • Spraying water on dusty surfaces;
7
- 8 • Utilizing ultra-low sulfur diesel equipment; and
9
- 10 • Using drainage diversion methods (silt fences) to minimize soil erosion during site
11 grading.
12

13 Water trucks would be used to spray exposed surfaces during dry weather periods. These water
14 trucks would obtain water from off-site locations and the amount of water used during construction
15 would depend on weather conditions during the construction period.
16

17 **E. ALTERNATIVES**

18
19 The DEIS considered several alternatives to the Proposed Action, including “Alternative 6,” a
20 lower height alternative. Alternative 6 would involve constructing the same building area but at a
21 lower height. Under this alternative, the maximum height would be 45 feet, which is the maximum
22 height under the existing RSH Zoning. A 45-foot tall building is roughly equivalent to a typical
23 four-story multi-family building.
24

25 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

26
27 Alternative 6 requires a significantly larger building footprint than the Proposed Action. As such,
28 the total area of disturbance would increase from 116 to 136 acres, and the total development
29 footprint (including buildings, roads, and footpaths) would increase from 27 to 40 acres (see
30 Figure 2-1 of the FEIS). In addition, Alternative 6 would require approximately 390,000 cubic
31 yards more cut than the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would balance cut and fills on the
32 Project Site. However, Alternative 6 would require approximately 1,718,031 cubic yards of cut
33 and 1,515,743 cubic yards of fill, which results in a net excess of 202,288 cubic yards of cut. To
34 avoid exporting the additional excavated material, grades across the Project Site would be raised,
35 thus increasing the overall elevation and height of the project.
36

37 Because of its larger footprint, additional disturbance of the site under Alternative 6 is
38 unavoidable. This larger footprint could have been moved either closer to the ridgeline, as shown,
39 or down to lower elevations. However, moving the footprint lower would adversely impact
40 existing wetlands. Avoidance of the wetlands is one of the guiding principles of the Project Site’s
41 design. Therefore, to avoid the wetlands at the lower elevations of the Project Site and
42 corresponding increased wetland impacts, the additional buildings of Alternative 6 must be located
43 higher on the ridgeline.
44

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1 As discussed above, a 45-foot height alternative would increase the amount of impervious surface
2 area on the Project Site. In addition, the surface area of buildings would increase the amount of
3 energy loss which would be made up with increased energy consumption. Infrastructure such as
4 district heating costs would increase requiring their feasibility to be revisited. The Project Sponsor
5 indicated that the additional construction costs and distance between buildings would hinder their
6 ability to implement some of the sustainable energy measures contemplated as part of the Proposed
7 Action. **Table 7** below provides a side-by-side comparison of the two alternatives.

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Table 7
Comparison of Proposed Action Versus 45 foot Height Alternative

Analysis Area	Proposed Action	45-Foot Alternative
Land Use and Zoning	No significant adverse effects on land use, zoning, or public policies. With the proposed amendments in place, the Proposed Action would be consistent with the Town of Ramapo Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code.	Inconsistent with the public policy and land use goals for increased preservation of contiguous open space, concentration of development footprint, and decrease in impervious surfaces.
Geology	Implementation of an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan would minimize soil erosion. Blasting required. No significant impacts to geological features.	Greater soil and erosion impacts than the Proposed Action. 390,000 cubic yards more cut than Proposed Action. Blasting required.
Natural Resources	Removal of 113 acres of trees and 116 acres of disturbance. 79.7 acres of disturbed area would be revegetated.	Removal of 133 acres of trees and 136 acres of disturbance. 88 acres of disturbed area would be revegetated.
Water Resources	0.14 acres of permanent wetland disturbance. No significant impact to wells or aquifers.	0.22 acres of permanent wetlands disturbance.
Stormwater	27 acres impervious surface. Implementation of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would prevent significant adverse impacts from stormwater.	40 acres of impervious surface, and greater impact on stormwater compared to Proposed Action.
Visual Resources	No significant adverse visual impacts.	20 acres more clearing than the Proposed Action. Development would be higher on the ridgeline, with greater visibility from offsite locations.
Community Facilities	No significant adverse impacts to community services or recreational resources. No effect on school district.	Same as the Proposed Action.
Historic	No impacts to historic or archaeological resources. Implementation of the Archaeological Avoidance Plan would prevent impacts to the Locus 3 archaeological site and its 50-foot buffer.	Same as the Proposed Action.
Infrastructure	No significant impacts on water supply, sanitary sewer service, or electric and gas service. Water usage estimated at 151,000 gallons per day (gpd). Sanitary wastewater estimated at 136,000 gpd. Energy consumption estimated at 6 MW (179 billion BTUs). Renewable energy components included.	Substantially similar to the Proposed Action.

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Traffic	Estimated weekday trip generation: 54 AM trips, 214 PM trips. Impacts would occur at intersection of Sterling Mine Road with Eagle Valley Road/Sister Servants Lane in the weekday PM peak hour, and intersection of Sterling Mine Road with CR 68 in the weekday AM and PM peak hours.	Same as the Proposed Action.
Noise and Lighting	No significant adverse noise or lighting impacts.	Greater potential for lighting impacts as the buildings would be located higher on the ridgeline.
Fiscal	1,240 new residents. Positive economic benefits to Town and region. No substantial impact on municipal costs or ability to provide services. Construction period tax revenue: \$18.91 million to Rockland County, \$10.58 million NYS. Operational period tax revenue: \$1.5 million to Rockland County, \$0.87 million to NYS.	Same as the Proposed Action.
Construction	Total construction period would be approximately 5 years consisting of three stages, tree removal, earthworks, and construction. Site would balance cut and fill. No significant adverse noise impacts during construction. No significant adverse impacts to air quality during construction.	20 more acres of clearing, and substantially more grading and excavation compared to Proposed Action. Would require approximately 390,000 additional cubic yards of cut, which would either require raising the grade of the buildings (thus increasing their height and potential visibility) or additional truck trips to export a net of 202,288 cubic yards of fill offsite which would require 14,450 truck trips and extend the construction period.
Sustainability	The Proposed Action includes 120,000 square feet of photovoltaics to harness solar energy, a geothermal well field to heat and cool all buildings on the Project Site, heat recovery on waste hot water from all residential bathrooms, a 5mW utility grade battery bank to store and distribute energy on site as a micro-grid, and 30 percent of the parking spaces would be designed for Electric Vehicles (EV) and Vehicle to Grid energy storage.	Similar sustainable energy measures to the Proposed Action. However, the larger footprint would have a greater environmental footprint and the project would be less sustainable than the Proposed Action.

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MITIGATION

While this Alternative would meet the programmatic purpose and needs of the Project Sponsor, the Project Sponsor has stated that it would not meet their sustainability or land stewardship goals. Alternative 6 would result in larger cumulative adverse environmental impacts when compared to the Proposed Action.

1 The potential adverse impacts of the Proposed Project are mitigated through a number of
2 mitigation measures incorporated into the project design including on-site components (e.g., green
3 and sustainable site design elements, the native species replanting plan, deed-restricted open
4 space, and wetland mitigation) and off-site components (e.g., signal warrant analysis for the
5 Sterling Mine Road and Eagle Valley Road intersection and the financial contribution to the
6 Sloatsburg Fire Department) such that the benefits of the project outweigh the potential impacts
7 and the lower height alternative is not necessary to pursue.
8

9 As the project moves forward through Conceptual Development Special Permit review and Site
10 Plan review, including amendments thereto, certain modifications may be made to the project
11 design relating to building locations, building footprints, and total square footage. If such plan
12 modifications result in substantially similar amounts of square footage, construction activity
13 staying substantially within the same limits of disturbance, and with substantially similar amounts
14 of impervious surface area as set forth in the DEIS and FEIS, then no further environmental review
15 under SEQRA will be required. If, however, the plans are modified in a manner that may increase
16 the amount or extent of environmental impact beyond that analyzed in the DEIS and FEIS, then
17 the Town will determine whether a supplemental EIS should be prepared.
18

19 *FINDINGS*
20

21 For all the reasons discussed above, which are more fully discussed in the FEIS, the Town Board
22 finds that the Proposed Action, as modified in the course of the Board's environmental review to
23 incorporate comments and recommendations from the Town Board, its professional planning and
24 engineering consultants, the Community Design Review Committee, involved and interested
25 agencies, and interested members of the public and advocacy organizations, is the action which
26 best balances the environmental impacts identified in the EIS with the programmatic objectives of
27 the Project Sponsor and the social, economic and other factors considered in this SEQRA Findings
28 Statement.
29

30 **F. SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE**
31 **AVOIDED OR ADEQUATELY MITIGATED IF THE PROJECT IS**
32 **IMPLEMENTED**
33

34 As discussed in each of the technical analysis areas above, the Proposed Action would create a
35 number of physical changes to the Project Site that cannot be avoided, but which can be minimized
36 or mitigation, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of the FEIS, and further discussed in the responses
37 in Chapter 3 of the FEIS.
38

39 Specifically, the Town Board finds that:
40

- 41 1. The Proposed Action will result in the unavoidable clearing and grading of approximately
42 116 acres of the Project Site. That area largely consists of second growth forest. Since the
43 Proposed Action requires an extensive amount of cut and fill to meet the necessary grades,
44 it is not feasible to preserve any trees within the area of disturbance. The loss of vegetation
45 and trees within the area of disturbance is considered an unavoidable adverse impact.

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2. While the loss of that area will be partly mitigated by the extensive landscaping plan proposed by the Project Sponsor, which includes the planting of native trees, shrubs and grasses, it cannot be entirely mitigated due to the need to construct building sites and other improvements.
 3. The Proposed Action requires construction and fill to create the proposed building sites, altering the natural topography of the Project Site. The proposed cut and fill operations will enable the Project Sponsor to balance grading cuts and fill on the Project Site, avoiding the need to import and export substantial quantities of material to the site, substantially reducing construction traffic and noise on the road network and allowing the site work to be completed in a shorter time period. The site design also includes retaining walls to minimize transitional grade change and reduce the area of site disturbance.
 4. The Proposed Action will result in unavoidable adverse impacts to approximately 2.31 acres of federally regulated wetlands. Of that total, 2.17 acres would be temporarily impacted by landscape plantings within those areas that are intended to enhance the existing wetlands vegetation, with any disturbed areas restored at the conclusion of that work. 0.14 acres would be permanently affected by necessary site work that cannot be avoided. While the area of disturbance is an increase from what was presented in the DEIS, the Town Board recognizes that the increase is primarily due to the landscaping enhancement work within the wetland areas that is a temporary disturbance.
 5. Development and use of the Project Site will generate solid waste due to office refuse, food wastes, and household waste. To minimize solid waste generation, the Project Sponsor has represented that the Audio/Video Production Center will recycle as much as possible, and the residential areas will provide recycling facilities to encourage residents to recycle; despite those efforts, the Town Board recognizes that the production of some solid waste is unavoidable.
 6. The change of the existing land use from vacant to occupied land in the Proposed Action creates several unavoidable adverse environmental impacts. As noted, construction of new buildings, roadways and parking areas would require excavation and grading, as well as creating additional impervious surfaces on-site. This increase in impervious surfaces would require detention, treatment, and eventual release of stormwater runoff that would formerly have been absorbed on the Project Site. A SWPPP will be implemented to ensure proper management of stormwater runoff during construction and the provision of permanent stormwater facilities that will provide both water quality and quantity treatment, but the Town Board recognizes that a portion of the discharge from the site will include some stormwater runoff that would have been previously absorbed on the site.
 7. The Proposed Action requires construction activities that will generate traffic to and from the site, noise from construction equipment and potential erosion concerns. While those impacts are unavoidable, the Proposed Sponsor has proposed a phasing plan, a SWPPP and erosion and sediment control plan, noise controls that conform to the Town's

1 regulations on noise, and traffic safety measures that would be implemented during
2 construction. These impacts would be temporary and are not considered significant.

- 3
4 8. While these impacts are unavoidable, the Town Board finds that the Proposed Action has
5 been planned and designed to minimize them to the extent practicable, and to meet several
6 of the Town's environmental and land planning objectives for the Project Site.

7
8 **G. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF**
9 **RESOURCES**

10
11 Natural and manmade resources would be expended in the construction and operation of the
12 Proposed Action. These natural resources include the use of land and energy. Manmade resources
13 include the effort required to develop, construct, and operate the Proposed Action; building
14 materials; financial funding; and motor vehicle use. Resources are considered irretrievably
15 committed because it is highly unlikely that they would be used for some other purpose.

16
17 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

18
19 The use of land is the most basic of irretrievably committed resources, as the development of the
20 the Watchtower Audio/Video Production Center requires the commitment of land for the Project.
21 The Proposed Action would use vacant land for the construction of Audio/Video Production
22 Center buildings and associated parking areas and driveways.

23
24 The Proposed Action would result in the irreversible clearing and grading of approximately 116
25 acres of the Project Site, much of which comprises second growth forest. Within the 116 acre
26 limits of disturbance, approximately 0.14 acres of federally regulated wetlands would be
27 permanently disturbed. The loss of vegetation and trees and filling of wetlands within the area of
28 disturbance is considered an irreversible commitment of resources.

29
30 Irreversible changes to the topography would occur from site grading and filling activities. The
31 Proposed Action would result in changes to the natural topography of the Project Site for the
32 construction of the Audio/Video Production Center.

33
34 Grading activities are anticipated to involve both cut and fill operations. As discussed above, based
35 on the proposed grading plan for the Proposed Action, 1,689,000 cubic yards of cut and 2,110,000
36 cubic yards of fill are projected. The analysis assumed 6% on-grade construction materials
37 (foundations, trenches and roads) and a bulking factor of approximately 18%. Any changes in the
38 bulking characteristics would be accommodated by adjusting the height of the sports fields and
39 backlot to eliminate the need for import or export of materials.

40
41 Of the 116 acres of land to be disturbed, approximately 79.65 acres would be revegetated and
42 landscaped and 1.49 acres of ponds would be created. However, approximately 34.86 acres of the
43 Project Site would be impervious surfaces.

44

SEQRA Findings of Fact and Conclusions
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1 The actual building materials used in the construction of the Proposed Action (wood, steel,
2 concrete, glass, etc.) and energy, in the form of gas and electricity, consumed during the
3 construction and operation of the Proposed Action by the various mechanical systems (heating,
4 hot water, air conditioning, and manufacturing) would also be irretrievably committed to the
5 Proposed Action.

6
7 In addition, the Proposed Action would require water to serve the on-site uses. It is anticipated
8 that the Proposed Action would require an average of approximately 163,400 gallons per day (gpd)
9 of water.

10
11 *MITIGATION*

12
13 Considering the context in which they occur, none of these irreversible or irretrievable
14 commitments of resources is considered significant. Nevertheless, the mitigation measures
15 contained in the proposed site plan and described in the DEIS/FEIS adequately and appropriately
16 mitigate these impacts.

17
18 *FINDINGS*

19
20 The Town Board acknowledges that the Project requires the removal of vegetation and the
21 development of currently vacant and/or redevelopment of underutilized land. Once constructed,
22 the development of the vacant lands cannot be readily reversed and would be unavailable for other
23 future uses. The Proposed Action is therefore, from a practical perspective, an irreversible and
24 irretrievable commitment of resources, including land, construction materials and building
25 supplies, energy resources, and labor, which will not be available for other projects.

26
27 Although some of these materials (e.g., steel, glass) could be recovered and recycled if future
28 development were demolished, the use of these materials from a practical perspective represents
29 an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources. At this time, such resources are
30 considered to be available and should not present a burden upon scarce materials or resources.

31
32 The Town Board has weighed and balanced the commitment of land resources, materials and
33 human labor against the social, economic and other benefits of the Proposed Action. In doing so,
34 it has considered the religious nature of the proposed use, the exemplary effort to plan and design
35 the Project to provide an integrated live/work development that reduces transportation impacts,
36 preserves open space and protects environmentally sensitive areas of the Project Site, while
37 minimizing and mitigated visual impacts on neighboring properties and the viewsheds of the parks
38 and recreational resources. The Town Board has also considered the energy conservation and
39 sustainable construction techniques that have been incorporated to reduce or mitigate the energy
40 used by the Project, which are summarized in the following section of these findings.

1 **H. IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION ON THE USE AND**
2 **CONSERVATION OF ENERGY/SUSTAINABILITY**

3
4 The use and conservation of energy and the sustainability measures of the Proposed Action were
5 evaluated.

6
7 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

8
9 As described in the DEIS, the Proposed Action incorporates extensive sustainability measures
10 which have mitigating effects on climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The
11 Proposed Action is being designed to meet U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy
12 and Environmental Design (LEED) "Silver" standards for the Residences, Offices, Audio/Video
13 Studios, and Events Building. In addition, the Applicant is incorporating design elements
14 consistent with the NYStretch Energy Code 2020 and will reduce building energy consumption
15 between 10 to 12 percent lower as compared with a baseline building designed to meet the
16 minimum building code requirements and energy requirements of ASHRAE 90.1-2013. This
17 would exceed the required requirements to reduce energy expenditures by at least 2 to 4 percent
18 compared with a baseline building to qualify for LEED certification.

19
20 Since the issuance of the DEIS, the Applicant has further evaluated energy efficiency measures
21 and design elements that would be implemented. The energy sources to be used include a
22 geothermal heat pump system, rooftop solar photovoltaics, purchased grid electricity, and natural
23 gas back-up generators. The Proposed Action has been designed to be consistent with statewide
24 initiatives including NYStretch Energy Code 2020 as well as efforts to increase renewable energy
25 statewide by 2030. Specific elements that would exceed the recommended NYStretch policy
26 include:

- 27
28 • Electric vehicle charging infrastructure provided to handle future minimum 5% of all
29 parking spaces as EV use [C405.10].
30
31 • Whole building energy modelling (all utilities) required [C405.12].
32
33 • Egress lighting control (reduce to 50% when unoccupied for more than 15 minutes)
34 [C405.2.1.4].
35
36 • Outdoor and parking area lighting control (reduce to 50% when unoccupied for more than
37 15 minutes, and/or between 12AM and 6AM) [C405.2.6.3/C405.2.6.5].
38
39 • Reduced lighting allowances per space type (i.e., <0.78W/FT² for open offices)
40 [C405.3.2(2) Table].
41
42 • Specific requirements for lower U values, lower air barrier allowances, and higher
43 cooking/equipment efficiencies.
44

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1 Key sustainability features throughout the Project Site include green roofs, rooftop solar, electric
2 vehicle charging stations, low impact development stormwater management systems, a trail
3 system to encourage walking and biking throughout the campus, and locating the majority of the
4 development along a central spine in order to minimize internal travel distances. The heating and
5 cooling for the campus would be provided by the Central Energy Plant utilizing a geothermal heat
6 pump system. The campus system would be “electrified” so that normal heating loads can be met
7 without burning fossil fuel.¹ Orange and Rockland Utilities would provide electricity to the Project
8 Site. Back-up generators and a back-up boiler would be provided for resiliency. The site would be
9 positioned to use liquified hydrogen as a fuel source in the future. Green hydrogen is produced
10 through the electrolysis of water with electricity generated from zero-carbon sources and only
11 harmless oxygen is emitted during the process, making it a clean and secure solution.

12

13 The Proposed Action includes a number of energy conservation measures, such as:

14

- 15 • Individual apartment instantaneous plate and frame heat exchangers for domestic hot
16 water to minimize standby losses.
- 17
- 18 • Configuration of the Central Energy Plant to allow architectural flexibility to maximize
19 window-to-wall ratio for daylighting.
- 20
- 21 • All buildings would be designed such that the building orientation, external shading, high
22 R value, and high quality glazing would minimize HVAC loads.
- 23
- 24 • Thermal energy from waste heat would be utilized for domestic hot water generation and
25 to heat buildings.
- 26
- 27 • A dedicated outdoor air system with energy recovery would be utilized to increase
28 equipment efficiency and lower the Central Energy Plant load.
- 29
- 30 • Outdoor lighting would be low energy LED with daylight/timeclock/presence control.

31

32 Prior to project completion, as the site’s residence buildings are certified for occupancy, they
33 would be used to provide lodging for the construction volunteers who would be working on the
34 site. This would reduce the number of vehicle trips and carbon footprint of the project during the
35 construction process. The majority of the development of the Proposed Action is organized along
36 a central spine, which would minimize internal travel distances.

37

38 *MITIGATION*

39

40 Given that the Proposed Action would not result in significant GHG or energy use impacts,
41 mitigation is not proposed or required.

42

¹ The back-up generators would be natural gas fired.

1 *FINDINGS*

2

3 The Town Board has weighed and balanced the impact of the Proposed Action on the use and
4 conservation of energy resources and sustainability against the social, economic and other benefits
5 of the Proposed Action. The Town Board finds that the energy conservation and sustainable
6 construction techniques that have been incorporated into the design and operation of the Proposed
7 Action are anticipated to substantially reduce the energy used by the Project, as summarized
8 above, and that the proposed design and construction of the Project incorporates significant
9 sustainability practices.

10

11 As the Project Sponsor has represented that those measures will be incorporated into the Project,
12 no conditions are required.

13

14 **I. GROWTH-INDUCING ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

15

16 The potential for the Proposed Action to induce growth was evaluated.

17

18 *POTENTIAL IMPACTS*

19

20 The Proposed Action will only change the zoning and land use of the Project Site, and would not
21 induce growth in the surrounding where zoning has not changed.

22

23 Concern was expressed that the proposed MU-3 zoning could be utilized to allow other developers
24 to assemble parcels and develop another site in a similar manner. However, the Town Board
25 recognizes such action is unlikely for numerous reasons, including the economic cost of
26 assembling a project site that would meet the lot area requirement, the legislative character of any
27 zoning change, the requirement for the Town Board to not only approve a rezoning, but then
28 proceed to approve a conceptual plan and grant special permit approval for a proposed
29 development after the required environmental review process is completed, and the time and cost
30 of securing all agency approvals.

31

32 A number of local businesses near the Project Site would likely experience increased patronage
33 from employees during construction, as well as from residents and visitors after construction. It is
34 expected that this patronage would be welcomed in the business community, and would not result
35 in significant new development in areas not already developed with commercial uses.

36

37 The Proposed Action includes utility connections to the Rockland County Sewer District #1
38 (RCSD1). However, the Project Site is already located within RCSD1, and the extension of the
39 service line to the Project Site was considered in the 1997 DEIS for the Western Ramapo Sewer
40 District Expansion Project.

41

42 *MITIGATION*

43

44 The Proposed Action would not result in the rezoning of other sites.

45

1 It will not require new water or sanitary sewer connections not previously analyzed. Therefore, no
2 growth inducing impacts would result from those connections and no mitigation measures would
3 be required.
4

5 **J. APPLICANT REPRESENTATIONS**
6

7 In making its SEQRA findings, the Town Board relies upon voluntary agreements and
8 representations of the Applicant, as set forth in the environmental record before the Board, and in
9 the submissions made by the Applicant and the consulting team it has retained to assist it in the
10 environmental analysis of the Proposed Action. The Applicant has further represented and agreed
11 that it will either consent to the incorporation of such representations and agreements as
12 enforceable conditions of any approval of a site specific plan for development or return to the
13 Town Board for amendment of the Findings Statement insofar as may be required due to the
14 Board's reliance on such representations and agreements.
15

16 While the Board is mindful that SEQRA does not change the jurisdiction of agencies, the Board
17 has relied upon those agreements and representations. The conceptual development plan and
18 CDSP must be consistent with this Findings Statement and the representations set forth
19 herein, and the final site plan and must either be consistent with this Findings Statement, with
20 written findings adopted by the Planning Board, based on the environmental record and the
21 specific plan before it, before the site plan will be signed by the Planning Board Chairperson. As
22 appropriate, this Findings Statement makes specific reference to such agreements and
23 representations.
24

25 **K. CERTIFICATION TO APPROVE/FUND/UNDERTAKE**
26

27 Having considered the draft and final Environmental Impact Statement and having considered the
28 preceding written facts and conclusions relied on to meet the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part
29 617.11, this Statement of Findings certifies that:
30

- 31 1. The Town Board has given consideration to the Draft and Final Environmental Impact
32 Statements prepared in connection with the Proposed Action.
33
- 34 2. The requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 have been met.
35
- 36 3. Consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations from among the
37 reasonable alternatives available, the action is the one that avoids or minimizes adverse
38 environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and that adverse impacts will
39 be avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable by incorporating as
40 conditions to the decision those mitigative measures that were identified as practicable.
41

42 This Findings Statement shall be filed with the Town Supervisor of the Town of Ramapo and the
43 Town Board, all Involved and Interested Agencies as identified in the EIS, any person who has
44 requested a copy, and the Applicant. A copy of the adopted Findings Statement shall be forwarded
45 to the Town Clerk of the Town of Ramapo and maintained in files that are readily accessible to

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1 the public and shall be made available on request, and on the Town of Ramapo website at
 2 <http://www.ramapo.org/watchtower>

3
 4 **Name of Agency:** Town of Ramapo Town Board

5
 6 **Signature of Responsible Official:** _____

7
 8 **Name of Responsible Official:** Michael B. Specht

9
 10 **Title of Responsible Official:** Supervisor

11
 12 **Date:** _____

13
 14 **Address of Agency:** Town Board of the Town of Ramapo
 15 Town of Ramapo
 16 235 Route 59
 17 Suffern, New York 10901

18
 19
 20 **A COPY OF THIS FINDINGS STATEMENT HAS BEEN SENT TO:**

Mailing Address	Email Address
Michael B. Specht, Town Council Supervisor Town of Ramapo Town Board 237 Rt. 59 Suffern, NY 10901 845-357-5100 (Ext. 202)	SpechtM@ramapo-ny.gov
Sylvain Klein, Chairperson Town of Ramapo Planning Board 237 Rt. 59 Suffern, NY 10901 845-357-5100 (Ext. 269 or 283)	planning@ramapo-ny.gov
Deborah Villanueva, Planning Board Clerk Town of Tuxedo Planning Board 1 Temple Drive Tuxedo, NY 10987 845-351-4421	buildingclerk@tuxedogov.org
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