

White Pine Commerce Park Town of Clay, NY Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

Executive Summary

The Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA) proposes to develop a modern industrial park on its existing 339.26 acre White Pine Commerce Park property. The White Pine Commerce Park (formerly known as the Clay Business Park) is located northeast of the intersection of NYS Route 31 and Caughdenoy Road in the Town of Clay, Onondaga County, New York. The Park is approximately 7 miles north of the City of Syracuse.



On March 6, 2012 the OCIDA established itself as the Lead Agency for conducting the environmental review of the proposed White Pine Commerce Park project consistent with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). As Lead Agency, the OCIDA assumed the responsibility to prepare a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) and conducted a coordinated environmental review of the project among all Involved Agencies. The DGEIS was deemed complete by the OCIDA and determined ready for agency and public review and comment on September 20, 2012. A Public Hearing was held on October 16, 2012. The public comment period ended on October 29, 2012.

Subsequent to the DGEIS and as required by SEQRA, a Final GEIS has been prepared by the OCIDA. This Final GEIS responds to all substantive comments received on the DGEIS. Also included in this Final GEIS are new analyses of predicted traffic impacts and mitigation measures; a wetlands delineation report for the proposed sewer route; information regarding potential air contaminant releases; an assessment of Indiana bat habitat; and a Phase 1B archeological report. Consistent with SEQRA requirements, this Final GEIS will be followed by a SEQRA Findings Statement from the OCIDA.

This Final GEIS incorporates by reference the entire Draft GEIS and its Appendices. The Draft and Final GEIS address the potential impacts on environmental resources and mitigation requirements for the envisioned White Pine Commerce Park. These environmental resources include: land use and zoning; community character; transportation; utilities and community services; topography, geology and soils; water resources including floodplains and wetlands; air resources; ecological resources including endangered and threatened species; cultural and archeological resources; visual character and noise.

The site is zoned by the Town of Clay for industrial uses. Surrounding land use includes residential areas, small businesses and some industrial uses however much of the immediate project area is undeveloped and remains a mix of open fields, woodland, farmland and former farmland.

Industrial facilities at the Park are proposed to be located in three primary development areas in the central, southern and eastern portions of the property. The Preferred Development Scenario for the Park is illustrated in Chapter 1 of the Final GEIS. The scenario is a generalized graphic to illustrate areas that could be developed with minimal impact on environmental features. Development could potentially affect in some way up to approximately 182 acres or slightly more than one-half of the available acreage of the site according to this scenario.

The three developable areas (identified as A, B and C by the scenario) were determined through a review of site characteristics. These locations are most suitable for industrial development due to favorable road and rail access, level topography and other site development considerations including the absence of wetlands, floodplains and other environmentally sensitive features.

The OCIDA considered various configurations and alternative layouts for the site which were described in the DGEIS. It is the OCIDA's objective to maximize development potential of the site while avoiding or minimizing to the greatest extent practicable any adverse impacts on the environment. As envisioned, the White Pine Commerce Park could accommodate up to approximately 2 million square feet of industrial development without significant adverse effects on environmental resources.

Possible industrial uses at the White Pine Commerce Park could include, but may not be limited to, advanced manufacturing, materials processing, product assembly, research and development, and data management. The Park will be serviced by existing transportation systems and utilities. The Park is located along NYS Route 31 with access to interstate highway systems within two to four miles to the east and west. The site is adjacent to an active CSX rail line and less than five miles from Syracuse's Hancock International Airport. Important utilities exist near the site with sufficient capacities to serve the

Park. These utilities include electric, natural gas, water, telephone, fiber optic, cable and broadband communications.

The project will require additional infrastructure to support future development. The DGEIS addressed two important improvements that are necessary to prepare the site as “shovel ready”. These include: 1.) road and intersection improvements adjacent to the site along NYS Route 31 at Caughdenoy Road; and 2.) a new sanitary sewer line. The environmental impact and mitigation required for constructing this infrastructure has been considered together with the environmental impacts of Park development.

Lane configuration and widening improvements along Caughdenoy Road and at the NYS Route 31/Caughdenoy Road intersection are necessary. This has been determined based on an analysis of existing and potential future traffic conditions along NYS Route 31 and in consultation with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) and the Onondaga County DOT. Roadwork will include necessary drainage improvements and may necessitate the relocation of some utilities. Construction of these improvements is not anticipated to create significant adverse impacts. Standard engineering and best management construction practices will be implemented during any roadwork.

Sanitary sewer service is not immediately available in the immediate project area, but its feasibility has been assessed as part of this SEQRA process. A new sewer line will be necessary to service the Park with wastewater treatment at Onondaga County’s Oak Orchard Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The WWTP is located about 3 miles northwest of the project along the Oneida River in Clay. A proposed sewer line route from the Park to the WWTP has been identified from among several alternatives. The proposed route follows an existing 99-foot wide Onondaga County Metropolitan Water Board (MWB) right-of-way located approximately 1,000 feet southwest of the Park running roughly parallel to NYS Route 31 and then northward along the east side of Mud Creek to the WWTP.

The proposed sewer route crosses up to 16 small to medium size federal wetlands and surface water features which have been delineated and mapped. The deposition of fill or other material, intrusion and adverse impacts to these wetlands and surface water features will be avoided by using subsurface horizontal drilling methods to install the sewer line underneath the wetlands. Horizontal drilling will also be used to install the pipeline under existing roads and railroad tracks to avoid impacts to those transportation systems and their operations.

The potential for adverse impacts on historic and archeological resources at the Park and along the proposed sewer route was assessed. Field studies completed in 2013 in consultation with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation indicate that no significant historic or archeological resources will be impacted by the project and no mitigation is required.

The potential for impacts upon Indiana bat roosting habitat has also been assessed. The Indiana bat is an endangered State and federal species. There is potential for some roosting habitat in the project area. As such, certain mitigation measures will be followed to avoid or minimize potential impacts. The Preferred Development Scenario for the Park avoids environmentally sensitive areas including wooded and non-

wooded wetlands. Also no development is proposed north of existing transmission lines on site that contain substantial wetlands and woodlands. Mitigation includes limiting the removal of potential habitat trees prior to construction to non-roosting periods of the year. Consistent with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guidelines this period is between October 31st and March 31st. Potential habitat areas will be fenced using orange fencing during construction to avoid disturbance in these areas. These and other mitigation measures for the project are discussed in the Final GEIS and its technical appendices. Significant impacts to potential habitats are not anticipated.

Subsequent to this Final GEIS the OCIDA will prepare a Findings Statement consistent with SEQRA requirements. The Findings Statement will include information summarizing potential project impacts and mitigation measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts. The Findings Statement will complete the SEQRA process at which time the OCIDA will seek shovel-ready status for the project from New York State Empire State Development.