

III. ALTERNATIVES

A. INTRODUCTION:

Several alternatives for the proposed action have been evaluated. These include varying development densities for the planning periods and the no action alternative.

Varying development densities were evaluated for 1999 and 2009. This involved a discussion of projected growth above and below development levels used as a basis for the impacts and mitigation measures section of this document.

The no action alternative was also discussed. Potential impacts of the no action alternative were evaluated.

In addition, as part of Section II, M, Economics, a description of alternative methods for funding improvements associated with future development is provided. The alternative funding mechanisms discussed include impact fees, development excise taxes and negotiated developer contributions.

Another alternative would be rezoning by the Town to densities less than permitted under existing zoning. This method could be used by the Town to ensure Development Mitigation Costs would be consistent with their goals and policies.

B. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES:

I. Varying Development Densities:

Indicated in Section II, A, Demographics, is a description of the levels of projected development for the two (2) planning periods, 1999 and 2009. Outlined below is a description of the methodology used for developing the chosen growth scenario.

Four (4) alternatives were evaluated to project the population through both planning periods. The four (4) alternatives considered for the DGEIS are outlined in Table III-B-1. The first alternative utilized the 5.6 percent growth rate projected by the CDRPC (LUMAC Technical Report p.3) for the Town of Colonie through the year 2009. This would result in a 1999 population of four thousand one hundred forty two (4,142) and 2009 population of four thousand three hundred seventy-five (4,375) in the study area. As there would be a net increase of four hundred and fifty-nine (459) people during the twenty year planning period. Due to the lack of undeveloped lands in other sections of Town and the fact that seven hundred and sixty residential units are currently proposed within the study area, this projection was not considered appropriate.

In Alternative two (2), the growth rate was based on the full build out of the currently undeveloped, residentially zoned lands over the two (2), ten (10) year planning periods. Based on 1987 aerial photographs and the Land Use Plan developed by the LUMAC, it was determined that there are currently two thousand nine hundred nine (2,909) undeveloped acres zoned for residential use in the project study area. Twenty (20) percent of this land area was deducted to accommodate roadways and other required infrastructure, leaving approximately two thousand three hundred twenty-seven (2,327) acres to be developed at medium density (seventeen thousand (17,000) square foot lots). This translates to an

TABLE III-B-1

TOWN OF COLONIE
 Boght Road - Columbia Street
 Population Projection Alternatives

YEAR	ALTERNATIVE 1 5.6% GROWTH RATE (TOWNWIDE)	ALTERNATIVE 2 FULL RESIDENTIAL BUILDOUT	ALTERNATIVE 3 30% GROWTH RATE	ALTERNATIVE 4 CHOSEN ALTERNATIVE
1980 Census	3,659	3,659	3,659	3,659
1989	3,916	3,916	3,916	3,916
1999	4,142	12,558	5,091	11,165
2009	4,375	22,200	6,618	14,790

approximate addition of five thousand nine hundred sixty (5,960) housing units and seventeen thousand two hundred eighty-four (17,284) people in the Boght Road-Columbia Street area in the year 2009. Each year nearly three hundred (300) residential permits would be issued, increasing the population by approximately eight hundred sixty five (865) annually. The total population for the area in the year 2009 would be twenty-two thousand two hundred (22,200) or over twenty (20) percent of the total population projected for the Town in 2009.

Full residential build out over the next twenty (20) years is neither desirable or realistic. Based on past trends, the magnitude of required development in the next twenty (20) year period for full build out is not expected to occur. In addition, it may not be economically feasible to provide the required municipal services to adequately serve this scale of development.

In the third development scenario for the study area, an arbitrary growth rate of thirty (30) percent during each planning period was applied to the 1989 population shown in Table II-B-1. This would result in population of five thousand ninety-one (5,091) and six thousand six hundred eighteen (6,618) in the years 1999 and 2009 respectively. Corresponding total housing units in 1999 would be one thousand seven hundred fifty-five and in 2009 would be two thousand two hundred eighty-two (2,282).

The above development scenario would result in the development of only approximately fifteen (15) percent of the currently undeveloped residential acres by the year 2009. In addition, the seven hundred and sixty (760) proposed residential units would account for eighty-one (81) percent of the population growth in the project study area. It is unlikely that development will occur at this rapid pace during the next several years and then decrease to less than ten (10) building permits issued annually for the remainder of both planning periods.

The fourth and chosen growth alternative is based on a variety of factors. It was assumed that the currently proposed seven hundred sixty (760) residential lots would be built during planning period 1. Distributed over the entire planning period these proposals alone would result in the issuance of seventy-six (76) building permits per year. Through discussions with the Town of Colonie Engineering and Planning Services Department, it was estimated that a total of two hundred and fifty (250) residential building permits would be issued annually between 1989 through 1999. Growth during planning period 2 would decrease to an additional total of twelve hundred fifty new units (one hundred twenty five (125) building permits per year).

This growth would result in the development of approximately fourteen hundred sixty (1460) acres or sixty-three (63) percent of the currently existing vacant residential lands. Adequate lands would be available for both school sites and recreation opportunities as well as any residential development that will occur beyond the twenty (20) year planning period.

A significant amount of commercial/industrial/retail/transition uses are expected through both planning periods in the project study area. Aerial photographs dated 1987 and the LUMAC Land Use Plan were used to determine the existing non-residential land uses outlined above. Approximately forty (40) percent of lands zoned for these uses were developed at the time of this report. A number of growth projections, of varying degrees were developed and are shown on Table III-B-2.

Through discussions with the Town of Colonie Engineering and Planning Services Department and a study of the recent building trends, it was determined that sixty (60) percent of the properly zoned lands will be developed by 1999. In the year 2009, including existing conditions, eighty (80) percent or approximately five hundred twenty-eight (528) acres of the six hundred twenty (620)

TABLE III-B-2
BOUGHT ROAD COLUMBIA STREET
INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL/RETAIL/TRANSITION USES
GROWTH ALTERNATIVES

PERCENT DEVELOPED	NUMBER OF ACRES	PROJECTED BUILDING AREA (SQURE FEET)*
40 (Existing Development)	264	2,874,960
46	304	3,306,204
48	317	3,449,952
56	370	4,024,944
60	396	4,312,440
64	422	4,599,936
72	475	5,174,928
80	528	5,749,920
100	660	7,187,400
*It is estimated that 25% of a building lot will be dedicated to building space.		

acres designated for commercial/industrial/retail uses will be developed. This scale of growth will allow both service businesses geared primarily to provide retail convenience goods to individuals living in the project study area and commercial or industrial operations that will provide employment opportunities and tax dollars to the community as a whole.

Distribution of future development was based primarily on the location of existing sewer and water service and the location of potential future service. Factors such as locations of developments currently proposed, transportation access, surrounding land use and the LUMAC Land Use Map were also considered.

If one of the other alternatives was chosen as the basis of this DGEIS, one of the following scenarios could occur: more development for both planning periods, less development for both planning periods, and different distributions of development. A discussion of each is provided below.

Since many variables affect the distribution and magnitude of development, more development could occur in the study area than was projected. If more development does occur, impacts to the area generally will be increased which will result in the need for increased mitigation.

Traffic would be greater which would create a need for more improvements at greater cost. Improvements could include road widenings, intersection upgrading, and additional signalization.

Improvements to sewer and water systems would have to be accelerated. Costs would be greater for improvements which could include: water source supplementation, distribution system upgrades, sanitary sewage treatment facility

upgrades, and sanitary sewage collection system improvements. Impacts to surface waters, groundwater, drainage, etc. could also be expected to exceed impacts identified in the chosen development scenario.

Should development exceed the projected development scenarios, the appropriate SEQRA procedures should be applied accordingly. Procedures for future implementation can be found in Section VII, Future SEQRA Actions in the Study Area.

Conditions opposite of those identified above could be expected if actual development is less than development projected for the planning periods in this study. Impacts to traffic, sewer, water, etc. would be less than the chosen development scenario.

2. Rezoning of the Project Study Area:

One method of reducing the level of projected development and thus the expected impacts would be to reduce the allowable densities in all or a portion of the project study area. This would be accomplished through a change in zoning.

A reduction in density of residential and non-residential uses may allow the Town to control the Development Mitigation Costs associated with growth. By calculating the Development Mitigation Costs of a specific growth scenario, the Town can determine if the level of costs meet their goals and policies. Once an acceptable level has been determined, procedures for the associated zone change can be initiated. A carefully evaluated reduction in allowable zoning density may have the positive impact of ensuring that municipal, community and other services will continue to meet the needs of a growing populations.

3. No Action Alternative:

By implementing the No Action Alternative this study would not be prepared, thus eliminating the discussion of development related impacts and mitigation measures for the twenty (20) year planning period. Individual development proposals in the study area would be subject to the requirements of SEQRA.

The cumulative impacts of development and required mitigation measures, along with cost estimates and funding mechanisms, would not be realized. Improvements associated with new development would continue to be funded on a project-by-project basis.