

**GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
STATEMENT**

**FOR THE**

**VILLAGE OF SALEM  
GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**VILLAGE OF SALEM**

**WASHINGTON COUNTY, NY**

**SALEM VILLAGE BOARD**

**ANNE DUNIGAN, MAYOR**

**NOVEMBER 5, 2008**

GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FOR THE

VILLAGE OF SALEM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VILLAGE OF SALEM

WASHINGTON COUNTY, NEW YORK

GEIS Required By and Prepared  
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Final GEIS Acceptance Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRODUCTION

### **Proposed Action**

The proposed action that is subject to this environmental impact review is the updating of the Village of Salem's General Development Plan adopted in 1975. The purpose of the proposed action is to take into account changing development trends. It is intended to better reflect the Village's future development in a manner that is consistent with the changing conditions and needs of the Village.

### **Legislative Authority**

The authority and responsibility to conduct comprehensive planning, regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens and adopt a general development plan is granted by the New York State Legislature under Village Law Section 7-722 entitled Village Comprehensive Plan. Adoption of a comprehensive plan, also known as a general development plan, by the Village Board of Trustees requires that all Village land use be in accordance with the general development plan. Furthermore, the Village Board must take the plan into consideration whenever capital projects occur on land identified in the Village General Development Plan.

"A 'village general development plan' means the materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices, and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the village."

A General Development Plan provides the Village with appropriate guidance to review future projects as well as the essential background information and justification for amending the Village zoning ordinance. The Plan also provides developers and other project applicants and sponsors with guidance on where and how their projects can be developed, facilitating the site plan review process, and providing early detection of potential conflicts in land use.

### **SEQRA Compliance**

A village general development plan and any amendment thereto are subject to the provisions of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) under Article Eight (8) of the Environmental Conservation Law and its implementing regulations. A village general development plan may be accompanied by, a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) pursuant to SEQRA statute and regulations. The adoption by the Village Board of the Comprehensive Plan is a Type 1 action subject to review under 6 NYCRR 617. No

further compliance with such law is required for subsequent site specific actions that are in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established for such actions in this GEIS and its findings. This document is the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) subsequent to a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) prepared by the Salem Village Board (the "Lead Agency") in connection with the update of the Village's General Development Plan.

### **Public Participation Process**

The Village Board did hold public hearings on the Proposed Plan and on the Draft GEIS. Comments were accepted on the General Development Plan and those that were environmentally related were considered according to SEQRA requirements in the development of the final plan proposed for adoption. Since the General Development Plan is a planning document and not a site specific project, all public comments were not environmental or SEQR related, however, all were prioritized for environmental concerns.

During the General Development Plan upgrade, the Village has provided access to the various stages of its development on the Town of Salem website. The Draft GEIS was also available on the site for public viewing. In addition, copies of the General Development Plan and Draft GEIS were made available at the Village Office in Proudfit Hall. The Town website provides meeting information, including agendas and meeting minutes, as well as the Plan itself as they became available for public comment and review.

### **Content of the Village General Development Plan.**

The Village General Development plan includes the following topics at the level of detail adapted to the special requirements of the village:

- (a) General statements of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long-range enhancement, growth and development of the village are based.
- (b) The existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses.
- (c) Consideration of agricultural uses, historic and cultural resources, natural resources and sensitive environmental areas.
- (d) Consideration of population, demographic and socio-economic trends and future projections.
- (e) Existing and proposed general location of public and private utilities and

infrastructure.

- (f) Existing housing resources and future housing needs, including affordable housing.
- (g) The present location of educational and cultural facilities, historic sites, health facilities and facilities for emergency services.
- (h) Existing and proposed recreation facilities and public parking.
- (i) The present and potential future general location of commercial and industrial facilities.
- (j) Specific policies and strategies for improving the local economy.
- (k) Proposed measures, programs, devices, and instruments to implement the goals and objectives of the various topics within the general development plan.
- (l) Any and all other items which are consistent with the orderly growth and development of the village.

## **Probable Environmental Impacts of the General Development Plan**

### **Recreational Facilities and Public Parking**

The Plan does recommend additional recreation and parking in existing and proposed public holdings and the more efficient facility use of village land for that purpose. Thus no significant adverse impacts are expected as a result of the Proposed Plan on the open space, parks and recreational facilities of the village.

### **Land Use Designations**

The land use designations for the village are summarized in the Land Use Categories section of the General Development Plan. These categories are based on current land use as well as future land use and are recognized in the Village Zoning Laws. The land use categories have not been changed in the updated version of the Plan. Thus no significant adverse impacts are expected as a result of the Proposed Plan on the land use in the village.

Other land use recommendations will result in more compact development patterns. These general land use recommendations will result in a more acceptable future for the village with a better quality of life for its residents. By encouraging compact development in the downtown area, there will be greater opportunities for walking, biking, and transit, while reducing automobile dependency in the

future. Through preservation efforts in agricultural areas and more concentrated business district zoning in the downtown area, the potential for sprawl is reduced. In general terms, no significant adverse general land use impacts are anticipated from the Proposed Plan.

### **Agricultural Land Use**

Probable impacts of the Proposed Plan on agricultural land uses should of course be positive. Areas proposed for agricultural uses are those lands currently located within the Agricultural District. With the exception of single family dwellings, only development that is incidental to farm activity would be allowed to occur in those areas. From a broad perspective then, the Proposed Plan will not have an adverse environmental impact on agricultural land use.

### **Historic Structure Preservation**

Much of the Village's central area is dominated by structures of historic or architectural interest. This area is thus designated for community action in terms of preservation, restoration or renovation of these structures. The proposed plan encourages increased flexibility in the application of local laws to encourage the consideration of historic districts in order to further protect the historic and archeological resources in the Village. The Plan will not cause any adverse impact on the character or quality of important scenic, historical, archeological, architectural or aesthetic resources of the Village.

### **Growth Induced Aspects**

The Plan is not expected to induce any growth above that generated by existing development pressures. Rather, it will reduce or redirect growth which will occur in agricultural areas without its implementation, to more appropriate areas consistent with the Plan.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts**

The Proposed Action is a legislative action and will therefore not result in any direct unavoidable adverse environmental impact. Any future development of land will likely result in demands on community services and create potential impacts typical of both residential and commercial development. These include, but are not limited, to the greater demand for community services, increased solid waste generation, increased water use and sewage generation, increased usage of electricity and energy resources, and increased traffic, and clearing of vegetation. It is noted that any applicable laws to be considered after adoption of the General Development Plan will be subject to review under SEQRA. It is further noted that any proposed development of land affected by any proposed amendment

discussed within this GEIS will be subject to its own environmental review under SEQRA when such development is proposed. Through that process, any potential impacts would be mitigated to the maximum extent practicable. While potential impacts have been generically described within the GEIS, these are not intended to serve as a substitute for a site-specific environmental review which will continue to be required on a case-by-case basis at the time that an application for development approval is submitted.

### **SEQR Thresholds**

Regardless of any pending application status, all future development actions within the Village of Salem shall be undertaken pursuant to the four (4) SEQR Generic EIS thresholds established by Part 617.10(d) as follows:

"When a final generic EIS has been filed under this part:

1. No further SEQR compliance is required if a subsequent proposed action will be carried out in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established for such actions in the generic EIS or its findings statement;
2. An amended findings statement must be prepared if the subsequent proposed action was adequately addressed in the generic EIS but was not addressed or was not adequately addressed in the findings statement for the generic EIS;
3. A negative declaration must be prepared if a subsequent proposed action was not addressed or was not adequately addressed in the generic EIS and the subsequent action will not result in any significant environmental impacts;
4. A supplement to the final generic EIS must be prepared if the subsequent proposed action was not addressed or was not adequately addressed in the generic EIS and the subsequent action may have one or more significant environmental impacts."