

STL Status Report #1

Here's an update on the proposed development at Williams Lake.

- Has the plan changed? Although Hudson River Valley Resorts has made no formal updates to the Concept Plan presented to the Town in November 2007, a number of potential changes can be inferred from verbal comments made by the developer and documents that STL has obtained via FOIL requests. The following changes should therefore be considered to be speculative:
 - [The developer's original plan for the rail trail](#) was deficient in several ways. A revised plan would preserve the continuity of the rail trail through the property, following the original Walkkill Valley RR right-of-way over most of its path (except adjacent to Williams Lake itself). Public access and permanent right-of-way are still uncertain.
 - HRVR's estimates of daily water use (originally 9 times what the Williams Lake hotel used) have been reduced substantially. The justification for this reduction will be closely scrutinized during the review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).
 - The locations of many of the 59 detached single-family residences proposed for the project have changed, moving them away from rugged terrain and open mine shafts. As a result, the number of houses to be built on the ridge West of Binnewater Road has more than doubled. Pedestrian access from these homes to the main resort property would be via a new bridge over Binnewater Road.
 - The current road entrance to the property would become a service entrance, with the main entrance being a new road on the North side of Williams Lake, intersecting Binnewater Road between Williams Lake and Fourth Binnewater.
 - Although central parking would still be provided for the hotel facilities, the private homes, including the attached single-family homes, would have their own adjacent parking. HRVR has thus abandoned the concept of a pedestrian-only environment.
 - The sewage treatment plant was originally to have discharged its effluent into a NY State wetland. The current plan seems to be either to

pipe the effluent further South along Binnewater Road until it can be discharged into the stream that runs alongside the road or to omit the private sewage plant altogether and connect to the Town plant, which would have to be substantially enlarged (it is currently operating at capacity).

- **There has been no change in the overall size and composition of the project.**
- Because of concerns about water supply and disposal in an area of karst geology, both Save The Lakes and the Town encouraged DEC to require analysis by an independent karst expert, rather than relying on developer resources for this critical area of study. DEC has agreed and is developing the protocol (study methodology) to be used, while the Town is in the process of hiring the expert.
- DEC rejected a preliminary DEIS because it did not include review by the independent karst expert described above and because some environmental studies were submitted without prior approval by DEC of the methodologies to be used.
- Save The Lakes has hired Mark Gerstman, former head lawyer for DEC, and Warren Reiss, also a former DEC attorney and legal counsel for Scenic Hudson, to represent us. This will be particularly important during the upcoming DEIS review cycle. **We need additional funding to support their work.**
- Save The Lakes, in partnership with the Sierra Club, sponsored a talk by Congressman Maurice Hinchey on his proposal ([Hudson River Valley Special Resource Study Act](#)) to conduct a study regarding possible inclusion of the Hudson River Valley corridor into the National Park Service, thus potentially providing federal funds for land preservation and eco-tourism development to the area.
- HRVR has hired local real estate agent [Brian Cafferty](#) as their Community Outreach Coordinator, a position he describes as consisting of 'public relations'.
- Two years ago, the Town Board created a Zoning Review Committee (ZRC) to suggest specific changes to the Town Zoning Code, largely directed at implementing recommendations contained in the 2007 Town Comprehensive Plan. One of the changes under consideration was the creation of a Planned

Development District (PDD), an overlay district that would allow relaxation of many of the restraints of the Zoning Code, with Town Board approval and in exchange for 'amenities' deemed valuable to Town citizens, for large planned developments such as the HRVR project. At the ZRC's third and final public presentation of its efforts in mid-June, the ZRC stated that implementation of the PDD concept was a matter of policy and outside the scope of its authority. It thus passed responsibility for any further action on PDDs to the Town Board.

- HRVR is expected to provide a revised version of the DEIS to the DEC, which will, once it is deemed acceptable, make it available for public review. During this review, STL will want to present expert testimony regarding the adequacy of the studies done and the mitigation efforts that HRVR proposes. **Again, we will need significant [contributions to support this work](#).**

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