

## 5.0 ALTERNATIVES

### 5.1 No Action

The “No Action” alternative will not meet the goals of the applicant nor those of the Town of Guilderland and would mean that the project proposed would not be built. The community would not gain the benefit of the much-needed town village center that strengthens the overall community and creates a primary outdoor town gathering site. Additional land from the project site is being provided for needed expansion of the YMCA to include a community daycare center. The project also proposes a roadway that would link Mercy Care Lane to Winding Brook Drive, greatly improving the safety for westbound exits onto Route 20. In addition, the site plan provides an internal roadway that could, in the future, be connected to the 20 Mall.

The project also includes various residential options that currently do not exist for the young professional and 50 and older population of Guilderland. This forces many long-time residents of the community to leave during their retirement years.

Glass Works Village would provide 21.7 acres of open space and 12.1 acres of landscaped area, together with numerous new pedestrian and bicycle pathways to address a long-standing desire of neighboring residents. Economically, the mixed-use nature of the project will provide significant net tax revenues to the school district and all of the town departments.

The “No Action” alternative to constructing Glass Works Village should not be considered a feasible alternative because all of the community benefits would be lost if the project was not built.

It is reasonable to assume that if a “No Action” were to occur now, the subject site would be developed at some future point with other land uses permitted under zoning as an allowable or special use. Any other use eventually constructed will also create traffic and site activities. The appropriate action by the Town on a development proposal for private lands is being taken which is to evaluate the development proposal, identify any adverse impacts posed, and see that those impacts are avoided or mitigated during site development to the extent possible.

## **5.2 Maximum Development Under Existing Zoning**

Under this alternative, the development of the site is in conformance with the R-15 and RO-40 zoning classifications. Both classifications (RO-40 and R-15) are residential single-family districts. The purpose of these districts is to provide for single-family homes and other compatible uses at suburban standards. If the project site were to be built out under the existing zoning, the all-residential development would have a negative impact on the school district, adding a higher percentage of school age children with less tax revenue.

## **5.3 Maximum Development Under Proposed PUD Regulations**

Since the Town has not adopted a comprehensive hamlet PUD regulation, the proposed development would have a maximum of 327 residential units and 190,000 square feet of commercial space.

## **5.4 Alternative Location and Design Concepts**

The final design of Glass Works Village reflects the input and recommendations from a wide variety of groups. This final plan is the fourteenth amended version. These fourteen versions reflected various design concepts, each of which was considered and finalized in the present plan. These plans were all designed based on the principles of New Urbanism and consistent with the proposed Town Hamlet Plan. There were numerous proposed actions and designs prior to the applicant's proposal, which were not accepted or desired by the Town.

There were a number of alternative locations considered to bring the village concept to the Town of Guilderland. Those properties were identified and evaluated based on the following factors/criteria:

- Availability of lands that could support both commercial and residential applications.
- Infrastructure ability and impacts.
- Traffic impact concerns.
- Ability to connect to Town anchors (YMCA, Library).
- Economic impacts.

- Environmental impacts.

Two alternative sites within the general Glass Works Village area were examined by the applicant and found to be incompatible for development of sufficient scale to warrant serious consideration. They are as follows:

**SITE A:** Approximately 58 acres located on the western side of Route 155 near the intersection with Route 20.

- The property is available for sale.
- The site is large enough to accommodate the residential-commercial-village design concept.
- The site has enough road frontage and can be considered a viable candidate to the commercial village design concept.
- The site will most likely never be able to have a controlled signal device since it is less than one thousand feet from the major intersection of Routes 155 and 20. There is also no apparent second means of egress to secondary roads.
- The site has all infrastructure available and appears to have sufficient capacities.
- The property offers limited access to Town resources and the ability to establish pedestrian links are limited.
- The properties to the north include additional Pine Bush protected land and a commercial park with warehouses and office buildings.
- The lands to the south include a number of small businesses, a bank, and a new Walgreens on the corner. The intersection of Routes 155 and 20 would need to be crossed to access any significant Town or consumer resources.
- The anticipated economic impacts would be similar to the proposed site with the exception that this site does not offer the Town anchors of the YMCA, Library and Elementary School, thus limiting the ability to create a true town center.
- This alternative site would have serious impacts upon the existing Pine Bush designated conservation area. Approximately 70% of the site would be required to be preserved if it were to conform with the current Pine

Bush Preserve Commission and town regulations. The limited developable area of this site would be inadequate to accommodate the village design concept. Further disturbance of wetland areas would require an individual permit while the subject property has been designed to create the entire residential and commercial development without requiring an individual permit for the disturbance from the Army Corps of New York and New York State.

- For these reasons, this alternative site was considered to have too many negative impacts to the community and environment to be considered a viable candidate for the village concept.

**SITE B:** Approximately 12 acres located on the southeast corner of Route 20 and Foundry Road.

- The site is not currently on the market, however discussions with the land owner give the impression that the property could potentially be purchased.
- The site is currently serviced by all necessary infrastructure including municipal water and sewer.
- The site is zoned commercial and could accommodate a village with shops but is not large enough to have both commercial and residential applications. The limited size would also restrict the planned open spaces in the village theme.
- The site does have an established traffic signal and frontage on Foundry Road allowing a second means of egress.
- The property borders a steep ravine and there is concern that the angle of repose may have a significant impact on the potential to develop the entire site, further reducing an already tight site for the village concept.
- Potential environmental liability concerns about the former dry cleaners and gas station would most likely limit the development to commercial only without the possibility of residential once again breaking from the ability to create a true multi-use village with residences and retail shops.

- The location has few Town resources in close proximity, however the Guilderland Fire Station across the street and golf course could be accessed.
- Due to the progressive widening of Route 20 over the years, many of the existing structures are close to the current curb line. As a result, there is limited space for sidewalks further inhibiting easy and pedestrian friendly links to other resources.
- For the above stated reasons, especially the limited size and inability to link to other near by amenities, this site has been excluded as a potentially viable option to develop the village concept as proposed under the current plan.

The developers considered alternative densities and designs to the 327 residential units and 190,000 square feet of commercial space. The proposed new urbanist design mandates a certain level of residential and commercial density to create a vibrant village center. The developers met with many groups including the Guilderland Hamlet Association, who requested an increased density which – although achievable – would have required design changes such as the elimination of two-car residential unit parking and higher structures. It would not have the same character for this hamlet district.

The developers considered a design with reduced densities; however, the proposed density is essential to providing the necessary amenities needed to create a first-class town center. Some of these amenities include traffic safety improvements, sidewalks, a nature preserve, parks, a village green, and bicycle paths as well as a host of improvements designed to enhance the overall Guilderland community.

The proposed density is also required to ensure the financial viability of the commercial and residential owners' association into the future due to the higher-than-average maintenance requirements of the village center.

The final proposed design of Glass Works Village reflects the input and recommendations from a wide variety of groups. This plan is based on the principles of New Urbanism and is consistent with the proposed Town Hamlet Plan currently being drafted by Behan Associates.

### **5.5 Route 20 Access**

Route 20 is located directly to the north of the project site and runs in a east-west direction along the front of the project site. At this location, Route 20 is configured as a four-lane roadway consisting of two east bound lanes and two west bound lanes with a minor central striped median. There is no formal center turning lane. Under the proposed plan, direct access to Route 20 will be via a proposed boulevard-style curb cut located towards the eastern end of the site. This access point will be designed in such a way so as to allow right turn out only movements onto Route 20 and right and left turn in movements to the site from the Route 20 east bound travel lane.

It is anticipated that primary access to the project site will be from Winding Brook Drive, where the majority of the proposed interior roads will connect to a proposed round about in a boulevard-like configuration located approximately 500 feet from the intersection. Secondary access to NYS Route 20 from the project site will be via a controlled intersection with Winding Brook Drive. An additional access point to the project site is planned obtained by creating a connection to Mercy Care Lane along an existing right-of-way located on the western side of the project site.

### **5.6 Improvements to Winding Brook Drive**

As noted previously, Winding Brook drive will serve as the primary vehicular access point into and out of the Glass Works Village development. Currently, Winding Brook Drive is a two-lane road that begins at the intersection with Route 20 to the north, and extends approximately eight tenths of a mile in a southwesterly direction to Nott Road. Winding Brook Drive terminates at the point where it intersects with Nott Road via a gate.

Under the proposed development plan, Winding Brook Drive will be improved into a two-lane boulevard beginning at the intersection with Route 20 and extending south to where it intersects with Mercy Care Lane. To augment the flow of vehicular traffic into and out of the project site as well as along Winding Brook Drive, a roundabout is proposed to be located approximately 500 feet from Route 20 (Figure 2b). No additional Town road reconfigurations are proposed.