

IX.3  
Report on Mitigation of Impact to Host Municipality and Nearby  
Municipalities



Village of South Blooming Grove, NY

Prepared for:

OCCR Enterprises, LLC  
c/o The Cordish Company  
601 East Pratt Street, 6th floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Prepared by:

VHB  
50 Main Street, Suite 360  
White Plains, NY 10606

June 19, 2014

## Table of Contents

- I. Study Purpose
- II. Background, Qualifications and Experience
- III. Mitigation

## **I. Study Purpose**

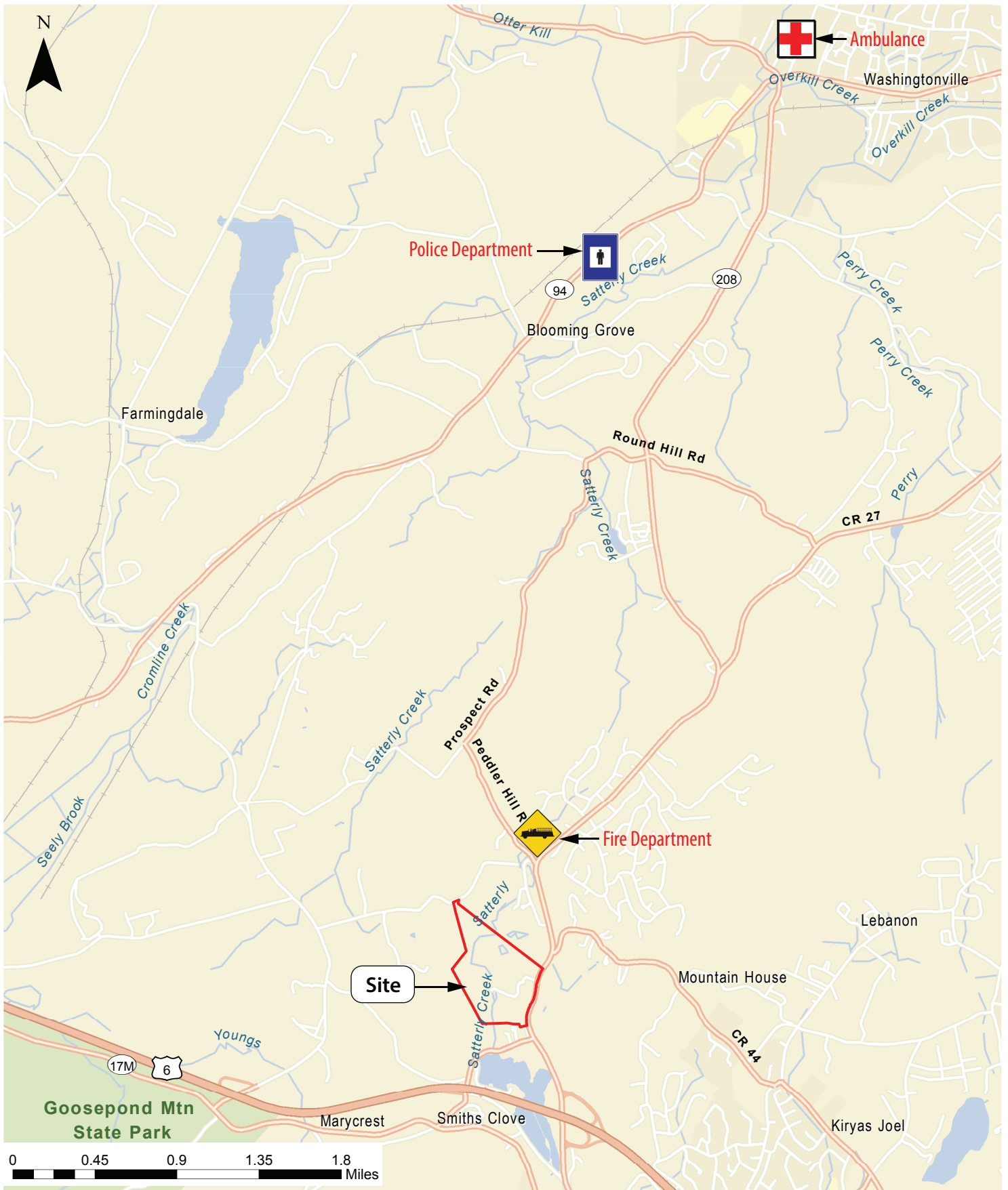
The Request for Applications to Develop and Operate a Gaming Facility in New York State includes a requirement to evaluate local impact and siting factors. The purpose of this requirement is to identify and describe potential impacts that might be expected to be experienced by the community in which the casino is located and in other nearby communities. These impacts relate to the development and operation of a relatively large facility that will attract substantial numbers of patrons, visitors and employees to the area. As a result, it is necessary to examine the ability of the area's physical infrastructure and service providers (See Exhibit 1 – Emergency Service Providers) to adequately handle increased demands. This information can then be utilized to identify mitigation measures appropriate to limiting possible negative effects from development of the hotel/casino complex.

In response to this requirement, VHB has prepared the following report covering Section IX.A.3, Mitigation of Impact to Host Municipality and Nearby Municipalities.

## **II. Background, Qualifications and Experience**

VHB is a multi-disciplinary firm employing more than 900 planners, designers, engineers, environmental scientists and support personnel in 22 offices along the East Coast. Among the firm's casino and gaming project experience is the Caesars at Suffolk Downs resort and casino in East Boston and plans for an Ameristar resort and casino in Springfield, Massachusetts. The firm recently completed transportation and site assessments on behalf of a casino operator in the New York Metropolitan area, coordinated environmental analyses and documentation for redevelopment of the Concord Resort in Sullivan County to include casino and convention space and conducted planning and environmental studies related to development of the Foxwoods Resort Casino and the Mohegan Sun Resort. Other related experience of VHB staff includes work relative to the Narragansett Casino in West Warwick, Rhode Island, the SugarHouse Casino in Philadelphia, Empire City Casino in Yonkers and several casinos in Atlantic City.

In New York State, VHB and its staff have prepared hundreds of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's) in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Typically, these documents include analyses of the costs and benefits to local municipalities of proposed developments - residential, commercial, industrial, entertainment, recreational, institutional or some combination of one or more of these uses. This entails examining the characteristics of the proposed use, identifying the demands it is expected to place on local facilities and services and comparing them with the capacity of local governments to handle possible increased demands. Where residential development is proposed, impacts on local school systems are evaluated to ascertain how the potential increase in enrollments might affect school district facilities and budgets. By its nature, the proposed hotel and casino would have specific characteristics that would affect the needs it might generate for services and facilities in the area. These characteristics have been taken into account in the analyses described below.



VILLAGE OF SOUTH BLOOMING GROVE, NEW YORK  
**EXHIBIT 1 - EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### III. Mitigation of Impacts

Experience at other casino facilities similar to the one proposed has shown that the preponderance of police calls occur on site rather than in the surrounding community. This was found to be the case, for example, in the area around the Foxwoods Casino in Ledyard, Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> There, it was concluded that the increase in serious crimes occurred primarily on casino premises and that “the off-site incidence was found to be at historic low levels.”

In April 2014, the Orange County Department of Emergency Services issued a report titled, “Impact of Casinos on the Emergency Services of Orange County, New York.” In preparing the report, the Department contacted emergency service providers across New York and Connecticut communities where casinos are located and asked about the impacts experienced due to these facilities. The overall conclusion of the report was that, “casinos have had a minimal impact in terms of crime rates, medical calls, fire related incidents, and emergency management activities.” For example, in Connecticut it was reported that each of the two casinos generated three to four ambulance calls per week. The report noted that the most significant impacts are from the traffic generated by the casinos and the related increase in traffic incidents.

Based on these experiences as documented at other casinos, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would generate a significant number of emergency services calls. Nonetheless, the applicant - who has a substantial vested interest in ensuring that their facility is safe for its employees and patrons - recognizes that its proposed development does have the potential to impact the Village of South Blooming Grove and other nearby municipalities and related service providers. This understanding arises both from their experience operating similar facilities elsewhere as well as from discussions with local officials. Moreover, members of the applicant’s professional team, including VHB, have investigated possible impacts, talked with local staff and considered experiences elsewhere. By incorporating input from these providers early in the planning and design process, any of the potential impacts can be reduced and managed more efficiently.

The result of all of these efforts is a program of preliminary mitigation measures described below. The details of each of these would be worked out in conjunction with the appropriate agencies or providers as the design of the complex is detailed further and as it moves through the local review process.

The potential impacts of the proposed hotel/casino would be mitigated through a combination of tax payments, incorporation of appropriate design and operational features and funding of specific mitigation measures. Each of these is described below:

1. Tax Revenues: The complex will generate substantial property tax revenues to the Village of South Blooming Grove, the Town of Blooming Grove, the Monroe-Woodbury School

---

<sup>1</sup> *Live! Casino Impact Assessment, Report to the City of Leominster, Mass.*, B&S Consulting, 9/17/2013., p.8.

District, Orange County and various special districts (police, fire, ambulance). Based on a preliminary analysis for the proposed development prepared by Beckman Appraisals, Inc., it is projected that property tax rates for local taxing jurisdictions (Village, Town, School District, Fire District, Ambulance District and Police) would decline by amounts ranging from approximately 10% to as much as 65%. In addition, the Village and Town would also receive limited amounts in sales tax revenue sharing. The County, which would benefit from increased property, sales and hotel occupancy tax revenues, would experience a 4.4% decrease in its tax rate. These revenues would be expected to substantially exceed the costs of servicing the project and/or any of new residential development it might attract. Thus, each of these public entities would have sufficient funds to pay for any necessary increase in their services, staffing and/or facilities.

Overall, it is projected that the complex would pay approximately \$15 million annually in property taxes. These tax revenues would reduce a typical Village homeowner's annual tax bill by an estimated 20% and, in portions of the Town outside of the Village, by 11%. In addition, the municipal building fees for the development would be equal to 1% of hard costs; these are currently estimated at approximately \$400 million, resulting in approximately \$4 million in building fees. These funds could be utilized to, among other things, pay for building inspections, which are expected to require retaining reviewers with the types of specific professional experience necessary to adequately review construction of this type and scale,

2. Design Features: In order to limit the impact of the hotel and casino on firefighting, the complex's design will incorporate vital features including: fireproofing; sprinkler systems throughout the building; a separate water storage tank for firefighting; and, designated fire access lanes around the complex to ensure that all parts of the building can be easily reached if necessary. These design features will help to reduce the potential for fires and will ensure that, if a fire were to occur, it would be more likely to be contained.
3. Staffing: There will be an on-site security staff of more than 200 who will be trained to provide security and first aid. By limiting the number of incidents that occur, and by ensuring that a substantial portion of such incidents can be handled without the necessity for calling on the outside emergency services providers, demands on the providers would be further reduced. To mitigate the potential increase in demand for service from the Blooming Grove Volunteer Ambulance Corps, the casino will also include a first aid station and infirmary to provide immediate care from trained staff.
4. Additional Mitigation Measures -The Applicant has committed to fund specific mitigation measures that might be identified as being necessary to support the proposed development. As described elsewhere, these would include improvements to Route 208 to ensure safe and adequate traffic flow into and out of the site and at the intersection

with Route 17. In terms of emergency services, these traffic improvements would help to ensure good access to the site for emergency vehicles.

In addition, the Applicant would consider providing other mitigation measures should they be deemed to be appropriate and feasible to deal with any identified impacts and if the relevant service providers find them to be useful. Based on initial discussions with local representatives, these measures might include such things as provision of specialized hand-held equipment for the Fire District, establishment of a police substation on the premises of the hotel/casino or provision of an ambulance for the Blooming Grove Volunteer Ambulance Corps, If so desired by the Corps, the Applicant could also make provisions for an ambulance to be parked at the site so that it can quickly be put into service when needed. To avoid wasteful or even counterproductive spending, however, it would be important that any such measures be decided upon as part of an overall approach to emergency service management at the property.

5. Charitable Contributions: At its existing facilities, the applicant has an extensive program of supporting local charities covering a variety of social, educational, medical, recreational and economic development needs. In South Blooming Grove and the surrounding communities, implementation of a similar program would help to mitigate possible negative impacts of the development as well as meeting existing needs in Orange County. The precise list would be developed as the planning process moves forward and then once the facility is open and operating.

#### **SOURCES:**

##### **Orange County Department of Emergency Services**

- Impact of Casinos on the Emergency Services of Orange County, New York, (April 2014)

##### **State of Connecticut, Division of Special Revenue**

- Gambling in Connecticut: Analyzing the Economic and Social Impacts, June 2009 prepared by Spectrum Gaming Group

##### **B&S Consulting**

- Live! Casino Impact Assessment, Report to the City of Leominster, Mass., (9/17/2013)