

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING CHECKLIST: PREPARING FOR DEVELOPMENT

### Objectives:

The objectives of this planning checklist are twofold: first, to help towns assess their current capacity and identify where proactive change needs to take place to cope with new development and, second, to have towns engage in a collaborative dialogue on possible inter-municipal collaborations for cost sharing.

The checklist is based on the following facts and assumptions listed below.

### Facts

**Fact 1:** The County is currently growing at an average of 5 percent every ten years.

**Fact 2:** Between 2000-2003, the County population grew at about 1 percent.

**Fact 3:** The County is projected to grow at about 5.5 percent over the next 7 years without casino development.

**Fact 4:** Growth and development are increasing in Sullivan County even without casinos.

*Casino development will accelerate growth, and we assume the following impacts:*

**Assumption 1:** Consistent with the Innovation Group market study of three casinos, we assume that the first three casinos will be fairly close in employment size ranging between 4000-3000 total employees. We assume further that the remaining two casinos will be smaller in size to avoid “market saturation” in the county and the Catskill region.

**Assumption 2:** It is assumed that a little over 70 percent of total employees for each casino will come from outside the county to fill management, security, and specialized gaming positions that require specific expertise and skills, and also require successful background checks to secure employment.<sup>1</sup>

**Assumption 3:** In preparation for a worse case scenario, we assume further that the number of out-of-county employees will need housing either in the form of rental apartments, condos, townhouses, and/or single family homes. Since Sullivan County lacks a sufficient new housing stock, we expect a significant surge in major housing subdivision applications, approvals, and subsequent construction throughout the county, particularly large scale housing subdivisions of 50 or more units.

**Assumption 4:** While proposed housing subdivisions in Sullivan County have ranged from 1 unit to a high of 120 units, we estimate that the average housing subdivision in the *post-land claim time period* will be 75 units.

---

<sup>1</sup> At times, numerous job candidates residing in Sullivan County have had challenges in securing employment with some of the larger companies in the county due to poor drug testing results. We expect that this phenomenon will continue exist and that some would lack specific skills requiring importation of potential employees from other areas. Indeed, many top management positions will be filled by non-county residents long before the facilities open.

**Assumption 5:** Large scale housing subdivision approvals that go before municipal planning boards will have a significant impact on county planning workload, if they fall under the state mandated 239 reviews of subdivisions.

**Assumption 6:** In meeting the demand of casino development, county planning staff will also have to continue to conduct 239 reviews of proposed commercial/industrial development and other mandated referrals (i.e., review of site plans, re-zoning, special variances use permits, etc.), either directly and/or indirectly related to casino development. Furthermore, technical assistance will need to be continued to towns to help them cope with development. In other words, the impact of gaming cannot be assessed in isolation of other statutory and non-statutory needs in the county.

**Assumption 7:** Casino construction will be phased-in; however the *time lag* between projects will be *tight*, and, equally important, future projects could occur concurrently assuming that future casinos secure federal approval of their project.

**Assumption 8:** Projects beyond the possible time sequencing of three casinos induces a significant amount of error. Therefore, much of our projections focus on the impact of three casinos realizing the possibility of 2 more in the area.

## **PLANNING CHECKLIST**

### **I. PLANNING & LAND USE**

- Is your comprehensive plan updated?
- Do your Town Boards refer to the comprehensive plan when reviewing proposed development?
- Is your current zoning applicable for the development you desire?
- Are your setbacks appropriate?
- Do you have design guidelines for different types of development?
- Do you have technical resources available to you to help meet goals in your comprehensive plan? Do you need to develop those resources?
- Will community character be protected with regards to predominant land uses, population density, and the relationship between residential and nonresidential areas?
- Will proposed development mesh with adjacent municipal land use plans?

### **II. WATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Has your community defined growth areas and priority areas where sewer and water capacity is needed?
- Will development adversely impact water & sewer districts?
- Has your municipality thought about how to connect water sources to development areas?
- Has your community developed a plan to maintain the quality of its water?

### **III. TRAFFIC & ROADS**

- Have you considered future dollars for local DPW crews given increased road maintenance, snow removal, etc?
- Have you considered wait time and safety concerns at your intersections?
- How will localities absorb the cost of additional streetlights?
- How will your community address spillover parking issues, particularly, in the downtown areas?

- Who will absorb the cost of new roads and what are the environmental impacts?
- Is your municipality prepared for the impact of increased traffic on alternative routes (back roads); road maintenance, capacity, potential conflicts with other uses (agriculture), etc.?

#### **IV. HOUSING**

- What are you doing to anticipate development in your community?
- Will proposed development adversely impact housing in your municipality or neighboring municipalities?
- How does your municipality intend to address the workforce housing gap?
- Is your municipality ready to implement design and property management standards for workforce and low-income housing? How will those standards be enforced?
- Is your locality prepared for the impact of 7,000 new housing units in the next nine (9) to ten (10) years?

#### **V. LIFE SAFETY ISSUES: FIRE, AMBULANCE & EMERGENCY SERVICE**

- How will development impact the municipality in providing community health and safety services?
- How should municipalities deal with the fact that much of the existing service is provided by volunteers?
- Are necessary safety features and emergency management plans in place to handle emergencies within the municipality?