



October 16, 2014

City of Ithaca Planning Board
108 E. Green Street
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

RE: Chain Works District SEQR Draft Scoping Document
FE Project #2011-104

Dear City of Ithaca Planning Board:

On behalf of the Applicant, UnChained Properties, LLC, enclosed please find a Draft Scoping Document dated October 8, 2014, for the proposed Chain Works District, a 95-acre property located along the 96B corridor, S Aurora Street / Danby Road where Turner Street and South Cayuga Street meet the Northern edge of South Hill.

The project is a mixed-use development consisting of four primary phases: 1) the redevelopment of four existing buildings (21, 24, 33 and 34); 2) the repurposing of the remaining existing Emerson Power Transmission/Morse Chain Factory on South Hill; 3) potential future development within areas of the remainder of site adjacent to the existing buildings/parking areas; and 4) future development with areas of the remainder of the site. This redevelopment project will create a new District consisting of residential, offices, commercial, manufacturing, and open space within the existing 821,200 square foot facility.

The Draft Scoping Document outlines the Chapters and their general contents for the Draft EIS Document, which would consist of: a Project Overview, the SEQR Process in relationship to this project, the Environmental Setting/Potential Impacts/Mitigation, Reasonable Alternatives, Cumulative Impacts, Growth Inducing Impacts and Character of Community, Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts, and the Effect of Proposed Project on the Use and Conservation of Energy, as well as References and Appendices.

Sincerely,

WHITHAM PLANNING & DESIGN, LLC

FAGAN ENGINEERS & LAND SURVEYORS, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'SW'.

Scott Whitham
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'JBG'.

James B. Gensel, P.E., CPESC
President

Phone: 607.379.9175 Email: whitham@whithamdesign.com 123 S. Cayuga Street Suite 201 Ithaca, NY 14850

113 East Chemung Place, Elmira, NY 14904 | PH: 607.734.2165 FX: 607.734.2169
www.FaganEngineers.com

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enclosures

cc: David Lubin - UnChained Properties, LLC
Paul Sylvestri, Esq. - Harter Secrest & Emery, LLP
Chain Works District Project Team
Town of Ithaca Planning Board
City and Town of Ithaca Planning Committees

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Phone: 607.379.9175 Email: whitham@whithamdesign.com 123 S. Cayuga Street Suite 201 Ithaca, NY 14850

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**DRAFT
SCOPING DOCUMENT**

for the

**CHAIN WORKS DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT
DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Project Location

620 South Aurora Street
NYS Route 96B
City and Town of Ithaca, New York

Project Sponsor / Applicant

UnChained Properties, LLC
225 Colonial Drive
Horseheads, New York 14845

Lead Consultant

Fagan Engineers & Land Surveyors, PC
113 East Chemung Place
Elmira, New York 14904

Lead Agency

City of Ithaca Planning Board
108 East Green Street - 3rd Floor
Ithaca, New York 14850

October 8, 2014

**Draft Scoping Document
Chain Works District Redevelopment Project
Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

Lead Agency Determination: October 28, 2014

Positive Declaration Issued: October 28, 2014

Public Scoping Session Held: TBD

Comments Accepted Through: December 28, 2014

Final Scope Accepted: TBD

Contact: Ms. JoAnn Cornish, Director
City of Ithaca
Dept. of Planning, Building & Economic Development
108 East Green Street - 3rd Floor
Ithaca, New York 14850-5690

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**Draft Scoping Document
Chain Works District Redevelopment Project
Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

This Scoping document has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 pertaining to Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law – State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR). This Scope defines the content of the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) that is to be prepared at the direction of the City of Ithaca Planning Board as the designated Lead Agency for the proposed action. This Scoping document provides a general description of the proposed action, an overview of the SEQR process, a discussion of potentially significant adverse environmental impacts and associated mitigation, and reasonable alternatives to the proposed action.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Unchained Properties LLC (Developer) seeks to redevelop and rehabilitate the +/-800,000 sf former Morse Chain/Emerson Power Transmission facility, located on a 95-acre parcel traversing the City and Town of Ithaca's municipal boundary. The Developer has applied for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) in the City of Ithaca and a Planned Development Zone (PDZ) in the Town of Ithaca for development of a mixed-use district, to be called the Chain Works District, which includes residential, commercial, office, and manufacturing. The project will be completed in multiple phases over a period of many years with the initial phases involving the redevelopment of the existing structures. Potential new development would reflect the character of the existing structures to fit as an aggregation of the Chain Works District. This is a Type I Action under the City of Ithaca Environmental Quality Review Ordinance and the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

DGEIS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DGEIS shall include an Executive Summary that adequately and accurately summarizes the document with a brief description of the action, the existing environmental setting, potential significant adverse impacts, proposed mitigation and proposed alternatives.

CHAPTER 1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

- **Project Location and Setting**

The Project site is located on NYS Route 96B (Danby Road) south of the intersection with Hill View Terrace and spans the City and Town of Ithaca boundary line, Tompkins County, New York.

- **Introduction, Background and History**

The Project will be introduced in this Section including the background of the Project site and its history.

- **Project Purpose, Need and Benefit**

The purpose of the Project, analysis of need and the benefits to the community will be reviewed and explained in this Section, including social and economic considerations.

- **Site Program and Layout**

This Section will summarize the specifics of the Project including:

- Proposed structures;
- Proposed site layout;
- Proposed Planned Unit Development District delineation and regulations in the City of Ithaca.
- Proposed Development Zone District in the Town of Ithaca.
- Site access; vehicular and pedestrian access to and from public right-of-ways; emergency access; proposed street network within the site; parking facilities; a description of intermodal access (i.e. mass transit, pedestrians and bicycles).
- Utilities and stormwater management facilities;
- Design principles for architectural design, landscaping, green space, site lighting, screening and other aesthetic considerations;
- Zoning compliance, City of Ithaca and Town of Ithaca regulatory approvals required to enable site development.

- **Sustainable Design/LEED ND**

The sustainable design elements of the Project and the Applicant's use of LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) as a basis of the development of the Project will be explained in this Section.

- **Project Phasing**

This Section will include the construction phasing of the Project. Details will include specific development components such as infrastructure and time required for construction.

- **Required Approvals**

All other Federal, State and Local Agency permits and approvals that will be required for this Project will be outlined in this Section.

CHAPTER 2 STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW (SEQR) PROCESS

- **Project Classification and Lead Agency Designation**

- In accordance with 6 NYCRR, Part 617 of the SEQR implementing regulations, the City of Ithaca has classified the Project as a Type 1 action for the purposes of environmental review.
- The City of Ithaca Planning Board was established the Lead Agency for the purpose of carrying out the obligations of SEQR on **October 28, 2014**. The City Planning Board issued a Positive Declaration on **October 28, 2014**.

- **The Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) Process**

- Scoping
- Draft GEIS
- Public/Agency Comment Period
- SEQR Public Hearing
- Final GEIS
- Findings Statement

- **SEQR Review Agencies**

Known Involved Agencies:

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Health
- New York State Department of Transportation
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Places
- Tompkins County Planning Department
- Tompkins County Department of Health
- City of Ithaca Common Council
- Town of Ithaca Town Board
- Town of Ithaca Planning Board

Known Interested Agencies:

- Tompkins County Area Development
- Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit
- **Town/City Committees? [Check with City Staff for a list.]**

CHAPTER 3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, POTENTIAL IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION

- **Land Use and Zoning**

This Section includes a description of the following:

- Location and dimensions of all existing buildings, structures and other improvements.
- The historical use of the site and a description of the current condition of the buildings and whether any buildings are eligible for historical designation.
- The City and Town requirements under the existing zoning.
- An analysis of the redevelopment of the site under the proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Planned Development Zone (PDZ) rezoning.
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses, impacts to adjacent property and mitigation.
- Describe how land use on the Project Site will change and how that may affect the community character of the surrounding neighborhood.

- **Land**
 - Existing topography.
 - Existing vegetation.
 - A geotechnical analysis of soils, depth to bedrock, depth to the water table.
 - Review of cut/fill impacts and erosion potential and mitigation.
 - Proximity of the site to existing recreational resources in and around the site.

- **Water Resources**
 - Describe the location and type of surface water resources.
 - Describe the hydrogeological setting, i.e. groundwater flow.
 - Include projections of post development peak flow rates and total runoff volumes from the site for 1, 10 and 100 year, 24 hour storm events.
 - Discuss existing and proposed stormwater management facilities.
 - Analyze stormwater management alternatives (i.e. rain gardens and other green infrastructure alternatives, water quality measures, above-ground detention/retention, subsurface detention/retention, etc.).
 - Provide a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that meets the New York State (SPDES), City of Ithaca and Town of Ithaca stormwater requirements for discharges after construction for stormwater management and regulatory requirements during construction see Chapter 5.

- **Vegetation and Fauna**
 - Identify any rare, threatened or endangered species.
 - Identify and evaluate any impacts to wetlands, if any (Federal and State).
 - Describe the potential impacts to terrestrial and aquatic resources on the project site - discuss where natural vegetation will be eliminated.
 - Consider alternative construction techniques to mitigate or avoid impacts to the terrestrial/aquatic ecology.
 - Consider alternative site layout techniques to mitigate or avoid impacts to wetlands (if any) within the immediate area.

- **Impacted Areas from Historic Use**
 - Review the history of the site and the associated existing environmental impacts.
 - Include a summary of the site investigations and identify areas of concern.
 - Outline mitigation measures that allow for mixed use redevelopment.

- **Historic and Archaeological Resources**
 - Describe potential impacts to resources that are identified to be of significance in the study area.
 - Provide and address comments received from the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (if any).

- **Transportation and Circulation**

This Section will provide a detailed discussion and complete analysis of the Traffic Impact Study (TIS) for the proposed project identifying all potential impacts that the Project will have on the transportation system along with incremental mitigation measures. The TIS will include a description of the existing roadway network, peak traffic volumes and associated Level of Service (LOS). There will also be discussion as to any potential post development impacts on the improvements and traffic and mitigation.

- Describe ownership of proposed streets within the development.
- Analyze all intersections connecting the site to the existing street network.
- Analyze traffic impacts and necessary mitigation associated with each phase identified in Chapter 1.
- Discuss alternative densities and alternative street layouts that may mitigate or avoid any *adverse* traffic/transportation impacts.
- Analyze existing intersections during peak hour and including the following:
 - NYS 96B/King
 - NYS 96B/Ithaca College (Alumni)
 - NYS 96B/Coddington
 - NYS 96B/Grandview
 - NYS 96B/Hillview
 - NYS 96B/Columbia
 - NYS 96B/Prospect
 - Aurora/State
 - Aurora/Seneca
 - Seneca/Cayuga
 - Cayuga/Green
 - Cayuga/Clinton
 - Cayuga/Spencer
 - Spencer/Albany/Elmira/Park (roundabout)
 - Albany/Clinton
 - Albany/Green
 - Albany/Seneca
 - Turner/Columbia
 - Spencer/Clinton/Turner
 - State/Green
 - State/Tuning Fork
 - State/Stewart
 - State/Mitchell
 - Columbia/Hudson
 - Coddington/Hudson
- Evaluate the need for off-site mitigation to the existing and proposed study intersections.
- Evaluate existing pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities and opportunities for future connections to reduce the reliance on passenger vehicles.
- Evaluate parking needs for the Project site.
- Evaluate and coordinate emergency access.

- **Utilities**
 - Identify public water supply to the site and proposed water demand figures (domestic, industrial, and fire-flows). Hydraulic calculations will be included.
 - Describe proposed wastewater generation numbers, and describe the potential impacts to the existing water and sewer systems in the area.
 - Describe stormwater mitigation facilities.
 - Discuss location and description of all on-site and off-site utility improvements.
 - Discuss energy conservation measures and other "green" initiatives being considered by the Developer.

- **Noise, Odor and Light**
 - Discuss any potential noise and odor sources such as vehicular and truck traffic, mechanical equipment, construction, etc.
 - Assess potential impacts of proposed on-site lighting.
 - Provide details for proposed lighting fixtures and locations that minimize impacts yet allows a safe on-site environment.

- **Visual and Aesthetic Resources**
 - Design principles for architectural design, landscaping, green space, site lighting, screening and other aesthetic considerations. Discuss proposed Design Guidelines.
 - Provide renderings of elevations.
 - Describe/depict significant views from adjacent areas that may be impacted.
 - Describe proposed landscaping, including location and types of plantings and how they may reduce any adverse visual impacts.
 - Provide visuals that show the change in grade elevation for the development of the Site. Demonstrate how the existing grade elevation with the development works with sight lines and viewsheds internal/external to the Site to minimize any adverse viewshed impacts.
 - Describe proposed signage.

- **Socioeconomic Considerations**
 - Describe the ability of community services such as fire and police protection, schools, healthcare, ambulance services, parks & recreation, etc. to address increased demands of the project.
 - Discuss impact on local government finances and tax revenues, including information on the current Ithaca School District tax base and tax rates.
 - Identify any tax incentives or public money to be used for this project or any improvements related to this project

- **Construction Activities**
 - Describe construction staging and activities.

- Reference the erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) to minimize erosion and siltation.
- Coordination with the site remediation activities to minimize impacts to health, safety and environment.
- Mitigation of air and noise impacts due to construction activities such as through operational practices to minimize fugitive dust and hours of operation to reduce noise impacts.

CHAPTER 4 REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

Provide a discussion of the following Project alternatives in sufficient detail to allow for a comparative assessment of costs, benefits, and environmental risks for each alternative:

- No Action Alternative - An evaluation of the potential adverse and beneficial impacts that would result in the reasonable, foreseeable future if the proposed action was not undertaken.
- Development under Existing Zoning – An evaluation of developing the existing Site in accordance with the existing zoning under City and Town local ordinances.
- Alternative Layouts on Project Site – Development of alternative layouts of the proposed full development of the Project Site.
- Alternative Sites – An analysis of alternative sites for the Project within the local communities.

CHAPTER 5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Consider the potential impacts of the proposed action in the context of other projects under review or recently approved by the City or the Town in the vicinity of the subject property.

CHAPTER 6 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS AND CHARACTER OF COMMUNITY

An analysis of how the Project could potentially result in significant impacts on the growth and character of the surrounding neighborhood and community as a whole. A careful and well-reasoned analysis of the possible growth inducing aspects of the Project must be presented, including:

- A discussion on the growth inducing impacts the project may have on nearby commercial and institutional areas.
- The growth inducing impacts the project may have on nearby residences.

CHAPTER 7 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES AND UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

- Identify the natural and human resources that will be consumed, converted or made unavailable for future use.

- Identify and evaluate any adverse environmental effects of the proposed project that cannot be avoided, regardless of the mitigation measures considered in earlier sections of the DGEIS.

CHAPTER 8 EFFECT OF PROPOSED PROJECT ON THE USE AND CONSERVATION OF ENERGY

Identify anticipated levels of energy consumption, ways to reduce energy consumption, and/or ways to promote energy conservation.

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

The Appendices shall include technical analyses, reports and studies that supplement and support the narrative in the DGEIS, and relevant correspondence regarding the project. Examples include the Traffic Impact Study and environmental site investigation reports.

DRAFT