SUMMARY

1. Description

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has prepared this Final Design Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FDR/FEIS/Final Section 4(f)) addressing the conversion of a 4.6 km section of NYS Route 17 to interstate standards. The most significant aspect in this conversion is providing full access control by eliminating all existing driveways and intersections within the project area. The project lies entirely within the Town of Liberty, Sullivan County, State of New York. The project limits are from RM 17 9609 1107± to RM 17 9609 1136±. This is the only section without access control in Sullivan County.

The project objectives are:

- Upgrade this section of NYS Route 17 to full access control conforming to the expressway sections to the east and west.
- Improve safety by reducing or eliminating the potential for vehicular conflicts and accidents.

2. Other Major Actions

I-86

As part of the 1998 federal legislation, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) NYS Route was designated for inclusion in the Interstate Highway System as I-86.

3. Alternatives Considered

The Draft Design Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Section 4(f) (Draft DR/DEIS/Draft 4(f)) analyzed four build alternatives, Alternatives A1, A4, A4NE and B4, and a No Action/Maintenance Alternative. A sub-alternative to A1 is Alternative A1a which totally avoids all culturally sensitive sites potentially subject to Section 4(f) protection. Overviews of the alternatives are shown on Figures S-1 and S-2. Plans, Profiles and Typical sections of each of the build alternatives are included in Part B, the Draft DR/DEIS, Volume II previously distributed.
Alternatives A1 and A1a, Split Interchange on New Alignment South of Existing NYS Route 17

Alternative A1 is essentially a replica of an original concept that was designed and ready for construction in 1964. The alignments were modified slightly to meet current design standards. Most of the required right-of-way was previously purchased based on the 1964 plan. At the westerly end of the project the new NYS Route 17 roadway would bear to the south from the existing alignment, cross over the Little Beaver Kill and Benton Hollow Road and climb up the slope of the south side of the valley at a maximum grade of 4%. The roadway would continue along the valley wall, descend back to the valley floor passing under Liberty Highway (CR 176) and rejoin existing NYS Route 17 approximately 1 km east of Cooley Road. The mainline alignment would require the removal of one seasonal housing unit, located on the hill south of Parksville. Retaining walls would be used at two locations along the new NYS Route 17 westbound lanes to reduce disturbance to the wooded hillside, the Little Beaver Kill, and the abandoned railroad bed. Alternative A1a included mainline bridges to avoid filling over the abandoned railroad bed. O’Keefe Hill Road would be realigned to run adjacent to NYS Route 17 and connect to Liberty Highway (CR176) south of the new bridge carrying Liberty Highway over NYS Route 17.

Existing NYS Route 17 would be converted to a two-lane local road or service road with 3.3-meter lanes and 1.8-meter shoulders. This road connects Old Route 17 (Liberty Highway) at the westerly end of the project to Old Route 17 (Liberty Highway CR 176) at the east end of the project. An existing bridge over Little Coddington Brook would be rehabilitated and a new structure carrying Liberty Highway over the new NYS Route 17 expressway would be required. Existing residences and businesses along the existing NYS Route 17 corridor would have direct access to the new local road.

The eastbound exit and westbound entrance ramps would be located at the western end of the project. The eastbound exit crosses to the south side of the Little Beaver Kill on a new bridge, follows the abandoned railroad alignment, and ties into Fox Mountain Road opposite Benton Hollow Road. This ramp under Alternative A1a would bridge over the top of the abandoned rail bed and run adjacent and south of the rail bed prior to intersecting Fox Mountain Road. Fox Mountain Road crosses beneath the NYS Route 17 overpass and ties into the new local road on the north side of the Little Beaver Kill.

The westbound entrance ramp would be located west of the Fox Mountain Road and Liberty Highway intersection. The access control requirements at the intersection of the
The westbound entrance ramp would require the acquisition of a one-story commercial block building between the new Fox Mountain Road and the westbound entrance ramp.

The eastbound entrance and westbound exit ramps would be located east of Parksville. The eastbound entrance ramp begins on Liberty Highway and crosses Little Coddington Brook before merging into NYS Route 17. The westbound exit ramp follows the existing NYS Route 17 westbound lanes and connects to Liberty Highway north of the bridge carrying the Liberty Highway over NYS Route 17.

**Alternative A4, Southerly Alignment with a Diamond Interchange South of Parksville**

This alternative is similar to Alternative A1, except the split interchange of Alternative A1, is replaced with a single-diamond interchange located just south of Parksville. The diamond interchange would provide access to and from NYS Route 17 in all directions at this single location. This interchange configuration is a more conventional interchange and less confusing to the traveling public than the split interchange of Alternative A1. The NYS Route 17 horizontal alignment is identical to Alternative A1. The profile for NYS Route 17 differs from Alternative A1 to accommodate the interchange location. It is also raised on the east end to cross over Liberty Highway rather than under it as is done with Alternative A1. This raised profile improves visibility of Parksville from the mainline, relative to the other “A” Alternatives, particularly in the westbound direction prior to the exit ramp. This profile modification was in response to local concerns that NYS Route 17 travelers would be unaware of the Parksville area businesses until after they had passed the exit ramp.

The interchange connects to Parksville with a two-lane road passing under the new eastbound and westbound lanes and connecting to Main Street opposite Short Avenue and Cooley Road. This interchange configuration requires the acquisition of two, one-story seasonal housing units south of the new NYS Route 17 alignment, seven seasonal cabins, and a one-story, wood-frame commercial building (94 Main Street) located in Parksville. The seven cabins are all part of a single property determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Existing NYS Route 17 will connect Liberty Highway at both ends and be converted to a two-lane local road with full access to homes, businesses, and other side roads. Fox Mountain Road will also be realigned similar to that described under Alternative A1.
Alternative A4NE, Southerly Alignment with Diamond Interchange East of Parksville

Alternative A4NE is a variation of Alternative A4. The diamond interchange would be located further east of the Alternative A4 interchange. The interchange ramps connect to a realigned Liberty Highway which then connects the west and east ends of Liberty Highway as described above for Alternative A1. The NYS Route 17 alignment is similar to that of Alternatives A1 and A4, except on the east end where a reverse curve is eliminated.

Buildings that would be acquired include ten cabins southwest of Parksville, one commercial building, and two metal garages on East Main Street. The cabins are all part of a single property determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Relocation of approximately 1,000 meter of Little Coddington Brook would be required to build this alternative.

Alternative B4, Existing Alignment with a Diamond Interchange

For this alternative, NYS Route 17 would generally follow the existing alignment. The right-of-way along NYS Route 17 and the ramps would be converted to full control of access which would require acquisition of all homes and businesses fronting on NYS Route 17. A diamond interchange would be constructed at Cooley Road. At the interchange, NYS Route 17 would be raised to pass over Cooley Road and Short Avenue requiring new overpass bridges on NYS Route 17. Due to the raised profile, new bridges would also be required where NYS Route 17 crosses the Little Beaver Kill just west of the Cooley Road Intersection.

A new local road would be constructed adjacent to and north of NYS Route 17. It would extend from Liberty Highway on the west to Cooley Road on the east. Existing roads on the north side of 17 would be connected to the new local road. Construction of the overpass and ramps also affect many properties on both sides of NYS Route 17 along Cooley Road and Short Avenue. In total, 23 buildings would need to be acquired to construct this alternative. Of these, three have been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
No Action/Maintenance Alternative

The no action/maintenance alternative does not eliminate the uncontrolled access section of NYS Route 17 and does not meet any of the project objectives.

4. Preferred Alternative

Alternative A4 is the Preferred Alternative. Plans, Profiles and Typical Sections are included in Appendix B. Estimated construction costs are $66.3 million and estimated right-of-way costs are $0.76 million.

Alternative A4 was selected as the Preferred Alternative since it best meets the need for a safe and efficient transportation facility while balancing the social, economic, and environmental impacts.

Operations/Safety

The Preferred Alternative is operationally superior to the other alternatives that were under consideration. The diamond-shaped interchange will provide convenient access for both the traveling public and the local community by being centrally located and less than 1/4 mile from the densest concentration of businesses in Parksville. It also provides the best alignment with Cooley Road, which carries the heaviest volume of local traffic. The interchange, being located only 175 meters (575 ft) from Main Street and Short Avenue is close enough to encourage travel into Parksville, yet far enough to provide the necessary access control beyond the ramp intersections without causing additional impacts. Access should be controlled along the intersecting road for a minimum distance of 30 meters, but ideally 90 meters (100 to 300 ft) from ramp intersections to prevent driveways or intersections from being located so close to the ramps that traffic flow and safety would be compromised. Since there are no existing businesses or residences in the immediate vicinity of the proposed ramp locations, providing the access control will not cause additional impacts.

The ramps of the non-conventional split interchange under Alternative A1 would not be centrally located to the businesses within Parksville nor to Cooley Road and are neither convenient for the traveling public nor the local community. The large distance between the ramps could affect safety and operations due to people being unfamiliar with the ramp locations and unsure where to re-enter the highway.
The Alternative A4NE interchange would also be further removed from the concentration of existing businesses and Cooley Road. In addition, the ramp intersections formed with Liberty Highway would be at relatively sharp skew angles. Although Liberty Highway was proposed to be realigned to intersect more perpendicular to the expressway alignment (and ramps), site constraints and design criteria limited the extent of realignment that could be accomplished resulting in the sharper intersection skew angles. These angles can affect the ability for larger vehicles such as semi-trucks and buses to negotiate the turns. They also can compromise safety due to awkward intersection sight angles, a tendency for drivers to not come to a complete stop when traveling in the direction of the skew, and increased exposure time within the intersection when turning opposite the skew angle.

Although the Alternative B4 interchange would be placed directly with Cooley Road, the need to preserve historic resources results in an extremely constrained interchange with eight intersections and/or driveways all within 170 meters (560 ft) of each other, as well as within 40 meters (130 ft) of ramp intersections. The close proximity of the ramps, intersections and driveways and lack of sufficient access control beyond the ramp terminals would negatively affect traffic operations and safety and does not comply with minimum interstate standards.

Response of emergency vehicles to and from Parksville will continue to be primarily along Route 17 and Liberty Highway. Elimination of the traffic signal and the central location of the Preferred Alternative interchange will provide safe and efficient access to Parksville and Route 17.

Historic Preservation

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act requires that alternatives be developed to avoid resources that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Design elements of all alternatives were modified during preliminary design to avoid or minimize impacts to eligible resources. Although each of the main alternatives has some level of impact, Alternative B4 has the most.

Alternative A1 could result in potential proximity impacts to three sites and impact 640 meters (2100 ft) of the abandoned rail bed which was deemed to have some historical and recreational significance. Alternative A1a was developed as the Total Avoidance Alternative, avoiding direct impacts to the rail bed.
The Preferred Alternative will result in the removal of seven small structures that are all part of one eligible property (bungalows just south of Main Street), potentially one minor proximity impact, and 465 meters (1525 ft) of impact to the abandoned rail bed. The recreational trail on the abandoned rail bed will be mitigated by providing new trail segments where needed to connect with the undisturbed segments. The areas where new trail will be provided are shown on plans located in Appendix B. None of the eligible resources along the existing NYS Route 17 and Main Street corridors would be impacted.

Alternative A4NE would remove nine small structures from the same eligible property listed under Alternative A4 and impact 815 meters (2,675 ft) of the abandoned rail bed.

The large concentration of eligible historic resources within the hamlet of Parksville required numerous retaining walls to minimize the footprint of the Alternative B4 interchange. The limits of access control near the ramps were also proposed to be less than recommended to avoid acquiring eligible resources (see Figure S-3). Even with these measures, Alternative B4 would require the complete acquisition and removal of two sites and result in substantial proximity impacts to nine sites. Four sites near the interchange location, including the Parksville Methodist Church would experience substantial proximity impacts due to the mainline expressway being raised by 7 meters (23 ft), new ramps, and multiple retaining walls as close as 3 meters (10 ft) and as high as 5 meters (16 ft).

Providing the appropriate lengths of access control at the B4 ramp intersections would require the acquisition of at least the two additional National Register Eligible structures.

Public Comment

Public comment indicated nearly equal support for both the southerly alignment alternatives (A Alternatives) and on existing alignment (Alternative B4), with the Town of Liberty endorsing Alternative A4 (the Preferred Alternative). Most of the support for Alternative B4 has been from existing businesses located along NYS Route 17 wishing to be bought out for fear of losing traffic and revenue if a southerly route was constructed. During the development of the alternatives however, many suggestions were made by the local community, including current business owners, to include various elements as part of the ‘A’ alternatives, such as visibility, signing, and landscape enhancements, that would help sustain existing businesses and promote growth.
ALTERNATIVE B4

LIMITED LEVEL & VACANT AREA

1.1 HECTARES (2.6 ACRES)

MINIMUM DISTANCE THAT ACCESS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED

COMPACT INTERCHANGE
The Preferred Alternative creates opportunity for sustainability and growth by enhancing the existing NYS Route 17 corridor and hamlet, preserving the existing businesses and homes, and creation of a destination point.

Support for Alternative A4NE was minimal and any support for Alternative A1 waned during the later stages of the public participation process and preparation of the DR/DEIS.

Visibility

The Preferred Alternative provides the best visibility of Parksville from the expressway. Based on comments made at Steering Committee and informational meetings, the visibility of Parksville was improved by raising the easterly elevation of the proposed expressway to pass over the top of Liberty Highway. Vehicles approaching from the east will have upwards of 10 seconds of visibility of Parksville in advance of the exit ramp. The westerly portions of Parksville will be visible approaching from the west, well before the exit ramp location.

With the ramps of Alternative A1 located at the outer limits of Parksville there would be no visibility of Parksville prior to reaching the exit ramp locations.

Alternative A4NE provides poor visibility of Parksville, particularly approaching from the east (westbound). The easterly location of the interchange is such that the beginning of the exit ramp is beyond where Parksville would become visible.

Although Alternative B4 would be in the existing NYS Route 17 corridor, visibility of the remaining portions of Parksville would be poor particularly for vehicles approaching from the east. The raised elevation of the expressway to create the overpass at Cooley Road, median barrier, guiderail, highway alignment, retaining walls, existing vegetation and surrounding terrain contribute to the poor visibility. There would be only slight glimpses of Parksville approaching from the east.

Economics

There are ten existing businesses within Parksville that are moderately to heavily dependent on highway traffic and approximately ten non-highway dependent businesses. Of the highway dependent businesses, seven are located near the existing NYS Route 17/Cooley Road intersection. Current traffic volumes through the NYS Route 17/Cooley Road intersection average approximately 10,000 vehicles per day. Based on the existing traffic patterns, it would be expected that less than 1,500 vehicles per day would pass
through this intersection under the ‘A’ Alternatives. This number represents primarily traffic generated by the permanent and seasonal residents of Parksville and surrounding communities, and does not include any traffic that may exit from the new expressway to access businesses in Parksville. With the Preferred alternative having an expressway alignment that maximizes the visibility of Parksville and an interchange less than ¼ of a mile from the densest concentration of highway-dependent businesses the opportunity is created to attract expressway travelers to area businesses.

Under Alternatives A1/A1a it is unlikely that the businesses themselves would attract additional traffic due to the interchange configuration, remote ramp locations and lack of visibility from the expressway. Similar non-conventional interchanges and lack of visual assurance from the expressway often deter people from exiting due to the fear of getting lost or having to travel out of the way to re-enter the highway. Therefore, the prospect for existing businesses to sustain or thrive, in particular those reliant on highway traffic, would be severely diminished.

Alternative A4NE would have similar negative impacts as Alternative(s) A1/A1a on the existing Parksville business community due to its interchange location and lack of visibility from the expressway.

Alternative B4 would require nearly all of the existing homes and businesses fronting on existing NYS Route 17 to be removed, resulting in the displacement of ten homes and nine businesses employing approximately 75 employees. Due to the highway location and interchange configuration under this alternative and existing terrain, very few areas would remain for relocation or redevelopment.

Following release of the Draft DR/DEIS and the receipt of comments, NYSDOT undertook a review of literature on the effects of bypasses on communities. The review is documented on pages V-10 through V-42 of this Final DR/FEIS. While the review does not enable a definitive prediction of the economic effects of the Parksville project it identifies potential impacts as well as planning and mitigation measures available to NYSDOT and local authorities. Planning/mitigating measures identified by the literature and under the authority of State Highway Agencies (the NYSDOT in this case) include alignment location, access to town, visibility, signage, amenities, and local involvement. The Draft DR/DEIS and this Final DR/FEIS discuss in detail how each of these planning and mitigating measures were considered in the development of alternatives and in part led to the selection of Alternative A4 as the Preferred Alternative.
Additional planning/mitigating measures under the authority of local agencies include zoning, infrastructure improvements, advertising/marketing, Main Street program, and planning.

Enhancements

Enhancements suggested through the Steering Committee and general informational meetings were wide and varying and included features such as curb, sidewalk, ornamental lighting, parking/picnic areas, fishing access, playgrounds, ponds, and others. The enhancements suggested are intended to improve the aesthetics of Parksville, thereby creating an atmosphere inviting to expressway travelers and conducive for business sustainability and growth, as well as improving the quality of life for its residents.

The enhancements will have more positive effects under the Preferred Alternative than could be achieved under any of the other Alternatives. The conversion of existing NYS Route 17 to a two-lane road under the Preferred Alternative not only improves safety of ingress and egress from businesses and residences, but also provides the opportunity to create more green space and aesthetically-pleasing enhancements to the entire corridor including potential fishing access areas. Although Alternatives A1 and A4NE would provide similar opportunities to enhance the existing NYS Route 17 corridor, the remote interchange locations and lack of visibility from the expressway would result in the enhancements mostly going unnoticed by expressway travelers. The desired effect of promoting travel into Parksville likely would not be achieved under these alternatives.

No enhancements could be done to the existing NYS Route 17 corridor under Alternative B4 and any streetscape enhancements to improve the Main Street and Short Avenue sections of Parksville would be of very questionable value due to the close proximity of the expressway and the numerous retaining walls and median barrier necessary under this alternative. Individual walls, as previously described for preserving historic resources in the interchange area would be up to 5 meters (16 ft) in height and 135 meters (440 ft) long between the mainline and all four ramps. Retaining walls up 11 meters (36 ft) in height and 550 meters (1,800 ft) in length would also be required to fit the service road adjacent to the westbound expressway lanes. A total length of 1,110 meters (3,600 ft) of retaining wall would be constructed under Alternative B4 in addition to long lengths of concrete barrier. The walls would not fit into the natural surroundings of Parksville and attempts at aesthetic improvements to the Main Street area with the expressway and walls in the direct background would be of questionable value. Very little of Parksville would remain to promote as a destination stop.
Displacements

The Preferred Alternative will result in the displacement of one business and two seasonal homes within Parksville. Beth’s Headquarters on Main Street will be acquired and can easily be relocated within Parksville. The other ‘A’ alternatives would have also required one commercial displacement and no permanent resident displacements.

Alternative B4 would result in nearly all the homes and businesses along existing NYS Route 17 being displaced. Ten homes would be acquired and nine businesses with nearly 75 employees would be displaced, with very few areas within Parksville to relocate. The service road adjacent to the expressway could not be developed due to the surrounding terrain, and there would only be approximately 1.1 Hectares (2.6 acres) of somewhat level, unoccupied property in the immediate vicinity of the interchange as shown on Figure S-3. The estimated reduction in tax revenue would be over $80,000.

Presidential Executive Order 12898, often referred to as “Environmental Justice”, directs federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse health and environmental effects of a federally proposed action. It encourages federal agencies to conduct their programs or activities such that no person is discriminated against because of race, color, or national origin, or economic status. Due to the diverse population and likelihood that many of the service sector jobs within Parksville are low wage, the residential and commercial displacements caused by Alternative B4 could potentially have disproportionate impacts on minority and low-income residents and/or employees within Parksville.

Noise

The close proximity of the Alternative B4 expressway to the more densely populated area of Parksville and the raised profile necessary to create an interchange with Cooley Road would result in the largest increase of noise pollution among the alternatives. Twenty-seven receptor locations would experience noise impacts under Alternative B4 with two being considered severe based on NYSDOT policy. The Preferred Alternative will result in impacts to sixteen locations. In comparison, the projected increase in future traffic volumes for the No-Build Alternative would result in impacts to 24 receptor locations. The other ‘A’ alternatives would have similar, but slightly less impacts than the Preferred Alternative with Alternative A1 impacting fifteen and A4NE impacting eleven.
**Water Quality/Ecology**

The project is located within the Delaware River drainage basin and in particular the Beaver Kill watershed. The Beaver Kill watershed consists of the Beaver Kill, Willowemoc Creek, the Little Beaver Kill and over 100 tributaries that flow into these streams. The overall watershed is frequently referred to as the “Beamoc”. The Beaver Kill system is noted for its trout fishery and is considered to be of local, state, and national importance. The wetlands and seeps on the southerly hillside are important cold water sources contributing to base flows and temperatures conducive for sustaining viable trout fisheries.

The Preferred Alternative traverses the southerly hillside and includes multiple bridges, arches, three-sided culverts, and retaining walls to minimize disruption to the southerly hillside hydrologic regime. Bridges will completely span the most important of the seeps and channels maintaining uninterrupted flow of the cool surface water, providing continuity between the wetland complexes, and safe passage points for wildlife.

Bridges longer than are needed for the hydraulic opening will also be provided where the mainline expressway crosses Little Coddington Brook. This was in response to comments from the NYSDEC, Trout Unlimited, and the Beamoc Study Group. The increased lengths will reduce the footprint of the highway embankment in this high quality habitat area, avoiding direct impact to the Little Coddington streambed, and providing open space for wildlife.

The Preferred Alternative will also include stream bank repair and restoration as part of the highway improvement project. The Little Beaver Kill crossings of NYS Route 17 just west of the Fox Mountain Road and Main Street in central Parksville are highly eroded. These areas, as well as the area behind the VFW building just west of the project limits will be repaired and stabilized to help prevent future erosion. Multiple sections along NYS Route 17, totaling over 1 kilometer in length also have varying levels of stream bank degradation due to the close proximity of the existing highway embankment and spoil areas infringing on the stream. The ability to restore and stabilize these segments of the Little Beaver Kill is made possible by returning the existing four-lane section to two lanes under the Preferred Alternative. These areas in close proximity to existing NYS Route 17 could not be restored and stabilized under Alternative B4.

The Preferred Alternative may provide more opportunities to treat and control stormwater runoff than do Alternatives A1, A4NE, or B4 since it will remove the four mainline lanes.
a greater distance from the Little Beaver Kill, and reduce the paved area directly adjacent to the stream from four lanes to two. The longer distances provide additional land area and time for the removal of sediment and thermal pollution prior to reaching the Little Beaver Kill. Measures necessary to control peak runoff rates will be consistent with the goal of reducing thermal impacts as well. The residency time of roadway runoff within detention basins will be limited to a maximum of 12 hours so as to not add thermal pollution due to a standing pool of water absorbing radiant heat. Shade will also be provided by retaining existing vegetation to the maximum extent practicable and through additional vegetative plantings. Soil conditions are being evaluated to determine the feasibility of infiltrating runoff as part of the overall stormwater pollution prevention plan.

The eastbound exit and entrance ramps of Alternative A1 would require two additional stream crossings and add additional paved surface directly adjacent to the streams. The ramps’ close proximities to the streams would make it difficult to remove sediments and thermal pollution from runoff prior to reaching the Little Beaver Kill and the Little Coddington.

Alternative A4NE interchange would be placed directly adjacent to the Little Coddington. The mainline expressway and interchange configurations would require nearly 1,000 meters of the Little Coddington to be relocated. The NYSDEC has expressed concerns over the extensive stream relocations and its impacts on the trout and wildlife habitat.

Alternative B4 would not only maintain the lanes, shoulders, and median adjacent to the Little Beaver Kill, but would add additional lanes and shoulders in very close proximity due to the service road. Very little room would be available between the expressway and Little Beaver Kill for controlling the rate of runoff and removing sediments and thermal pollution.

**Hazardous Waste Contaminated Materials**

Only three areas of concern for potentially encountering hazardous or contaminated materials were identified with the Preferred Alternative. They are the abandoned rail bed, a former gas station that was once located approximately opposite the Short Avenue intersection with Main Street, and stream sediments due to past industrial activities. The Preferred Alternative will cross streams in three new locations; however, no piers are proposed within the streams and the lengths of the structures will make it unlikely that the stream beds would be disturbed.
Similar areas of concern would be associated with the other ‘A’ alternatives. The nearly 1,000 meters (3,200 ft) of stream relocation under Alternative A4NE include relocation of extensive stretches of the Little Coddington that are near or go through an existing junk yard, a former lumber yard, an automotive repair shop, and a former gas station. Four new stream crossings would be needed under both Alternatives A1 and A4NE.

Alternative B4 would disturb and/or acquire all, or portions of six areas identified as potentially containing hazardous or contaminated materials. Among them are two operating and one closed gas station, all of which appear on environmental databases as having prior soil and groundwater contamination histories. All appear to have undergone remediation; however the potential for encountering petroleum-contaminated materials at these sites is considered high. There are also three sites adjacent to NYS Route 17 that have or are being used as truck parking and uncontrolled fill areas. Semi-trailers, an empty above ground storage tank, and stained soil were observed at these sites and may represent areas of environmental concern. The new service road adjacent to the mainline and the ramps would have also resulted in seven new stream crossings.

5. Summary of Environmental Impacts

1.236 acres of federal jurisdictional wetlands will be impacted. Impacted wetlands will be mitigated primarily by expanding existing high quality wetlands in compliance with Executive Order 11990 and Section 404. Preliminary analyses indicate that two wetlands, one located near Benton Hollow Road and the other just east of the project limits can be expanded to provide the required mitigation.

The Wetlands Finding as required under Executive Order 11990 concluded that there is no practicable alternative to avoid wetlands and the project includes all practicable measures to minimize harm. The Wetlands Finding is being submitted along with this FEIS for signature. An unsigned copy is located in Appendix C.

The mainline will traverse seep areas on the southerly hillside that are sources of cool water important for maintaining habitat conducive for healthy trout populations. Structures as described in the discussion on the selection of the Preferred Alternative above will reduce the direct impacts to the seeps by 0.12 hectares (0.3 acres) and more importantly maintain the hydrologic connectivity between the seeps, wetlands, and streams.
The Preferred Alternative will result in the placement of 5,100 m$^3$ of fill (4.2 ac-ft) within regulated floodplains at two locations along the Little Beaver Kill. Just west of the Benton Hollow intersection with NYS Route 17 where the proposed expressway begins to diverge to the south, the mainline highway embankment will infringe into the floodplain, but will not impact on the floodway itself. Bridges will all span the floodway. As defined in 23 CFR 650, the project will not constitute a significant floodplain encroachment.

Streambank restoration will take place to repair and stabilize areas that have undergone severe erosion or have been infringed upon by human activities.

An analysis of potential surface water quality impacts from stormwater runoff was conducted. Metals, road salts, sedimentation due to erosion, and thermal impacts were all considered. Potential concentrations of copper, lead, zinc, as well as sodium and chloride (from road salts) were all determined to be well less than thresholds considered to be detrimental to water quality and aquatic life and therefore are insignificant. Stormwater runoff will be treated to remove sediments and thermal pollution through various measures including overland sheet flow, vegetated lined swales and ditches, detention basins with forebays, maximizing the use of fabrics and natural vegetative measures as ditch protection as opposed to stone or other hard materials, and extensive plantings. Additional soil and rock data is currently being collected to determine the feasibility of infiltrating runoff. If the data shows that infiltration is feasible, this method will be used extensively.

There are no municipal water supply wells within or near the project area and the project is not located over a sole source aquifer. Most residences and businesses within the hamlet of Parksville obtain water from the Village of Liberty, however some obtain part or all of their water supply from wells and/or springs. Three residences located south and east of Parksville (along and near O’Keefe Hill Road) that obtain a portion of their water supply from springs would be impacted, however one is already connected to the municipal water supply and the others could be connected as well. A Toler analysis was conducted to determine potential impacts to groundwater as a result of road salts. Predicted chloride levels of 38 to 48 parts per million (ppm) are well below the water quality standard of 250 ppm.

This project will result in 30 hectares (76 acres) of vegetative cover removal. Removal of vegetative cover will be minimized to only what is needed to construct the project. Efforts will take place to preserve as much existing vegetation as possible and an
extensive planting program will take place to re-vegetate cleared areas as well as the existing NYS Route 17 corridor.

The project is not located within an established New York agricultural district. Impacts to farmland soils are minor (less than one acre) and do not require coordination with the National Resource Conservation Service.

There will be an improvement in air quality over existing conditions due to lower emission levels in the future (ETC+20).

The project will result in noise impacts to 16 residences for the Design Year 2036. The No-Build alternative would have resulted in impacts to 24 residences. An abatement analysis was conducted in accordance with 23 CFR 772 for the sixteen impacted residences. The analysis concluded that noise barriers were not feasible either due to a noise reduction of less than 7 decibels, the need to maintain driveway access, or too few residences benefited versus the cost of a barrier.

The project will slightly decrease (<1%) the vehicle-miles-traveled within the project area and eliminate the traffic signal and other at-grade intersections. Additional energy consumption will occur during the construction of the project however, there will be no significant changes as a result of the new expressway.

Three areas of concern for potentially encountering hazardous or contaminated materials were identified with the Preferred Alternative. They are the abandoned rail bed, a former gas station that was once located approximately opposite the Short Avenue intersection with Main Street, and stream sediments due to past industrial activities. The project will result in three new stream crossing locations, however no piers are proposed within the streams and the lengths of the structures will make it unlikely that the stream beds would be disturbed.

6. Areas of Controversy

There are differing concerns and opinions as to what should be selected as the Preferred Alternative. Some local business owners prefer Alternative B4 over any of the “A” alternatives. Many of the business owners desire to be bought out and have the opportunity to relocate as would be afforded under Alternative B4.
Historic preservation groups and many of the local residents prefer Alternative A4 or one of the other “A” alternatives. The densest concentration of historic resources is near and along the existing Route 17 corridor. Alternative A4 avoids most of the historic resources. Residents prefer the “A” alternatives since the southerly alignment would improve safety, reduce noise and air impacts, and provide opportunity to improve and enhance the hamlet of Parksville.

This Final DR/FEIS includes additional documentation on significant areas of concern including protection and preservation of water quality, potential impacts to the local economy and mitigating measures such as visibility and community planning.

7. Unresolved Issues

This Final DR/FEIS includes additional analysis and documentation of issues that were commented on by the local community, the Army Corps of Engineers, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a result of the Draft DR/DEIS/Draft Section 4(f) distribution. The primary issues of concern included surface water quality/ecology and potential impacts to local businesses.

Chapter V of this Final DR/FEIS includes additional discussions on wetland/seep avoidance, proposed stormwater management, wetland mitigation, and stream restoration relative to the Preferred Alternative.

Chapter V also includes a literature review summary on the subject of highway by-passes and impacts on local economies.

Visual animations were also prepared as a means to better define the extent of visibility expressway travelers would have of the hamlet. The local community had placed an emphasis on the need for high visibility as a means to attract expressway travelers to visit the area business establishments. The animations show that the Preferred Alternative provides the best visibility of the hamlet from the proposed expressway.

8. Anticipated Permits and Approvals

It is anticipated that the following permits and approvals will be required for the project:

- Section 404 Permit (Individual Permit anticipated).
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification.
- Individual EO 11990 Wetlands Finding.
- NYSDEC Protection of Waters Permit (anticipated will be handled through coordination procedures under a NYSDOT/NYSDEC Memorandum of Agreement, rather than a formal permit application).
- SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities.