

POLICY 4: ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

Protect and restore the quality and function of ecological systems within the New York City coastal area.

GOALS OF REVISIONS

- To promote industrial development in concert with ecological preservation along the West Shore of Staten Island, create and map a new designation to be called the Ecologically Significant Maritime and Industrial Area (ESMIA).
- Identify additional ecologically-significant sites as Recognized Ecological Complexes (RECs), and promote their protection, remediation, and restoration.
- Promote a wider range of restoration goals throughout the Coastal Zone.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

- Policy 4.1 outlines the prioritized policies for SNWAs. New additions include the utilization of best management practices for stormwater management, pollution prevention, and other sustainable development strategies to reduce impacts of development on natural resources (4.1D); protection of non-invasive plants from excessive loss or disturbance and encouragement of a greater quantity and diversity of non-invasive plants (4.1 E); the requirement for a resource assessment for projects in SNWAs over 1 acre (4.1 F); and guidelines for public investment (4.1 G).
- Policy 4.2 outlines the prioritized policies for natural resource protection in the ESMIA. This includes provisions for avoiding activities, to the extent practicable, that may cause permanent adverse impact to the ecological complexes (4.2 A); avoidance of fragmentation and protection of ecological communities (4.2 B); remediation and restoration of ecological communities to the extent practicable (4.2 C); stormwater best management practices and pollution prevention (4.2 D); protection of non-invasive species (4.2 E); site-specific restoration (4.2 F); balance between ecological and developmental enhancements based on site characteristics (4.2 G); requirement of a natural resource assessment for projects over 1 acre (4.2 H); and guidelines for public investment (4.2 I)
- Policy 4.4 outlines the priority policies for RECs. Projects located within a Recognized Ecological Complex should consider the following: further identification of natural resources through consulting relevant science-based plans and studies; the use of design features to incorporate restoration objectives; and remediation, protection, and restoration of ecological complexes.
- Policy 4.5, on wetland restoration, adds, "Promote restoration of City-owned wetlands" (4.5 D) and "Encourage the creation of wetland mitigation strategies, such as banking or in-lieu fee programs, in order to further the preservation, remediation, or restoration of key sites." (4.5 E)
- The new sub-policy 4.6 integrates regional restoration policies and includes a list of potential strategies: "In addition to wetlands, seek opportunities to create a mosaic of habitats with high ecological value and function that provide environmental and societal benefits. Restoration projects should strive to incorporate multiple habitat characteristics to achieve the greatest ecological benefit at a single location."