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Chapter 25: Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

A. INTRODUCTION

As described in previous chapters of this FGEIS, most of the potential significant adverse impacts of the Proposed Action could be avoided or mitigated by implementing a broad range of measures. However, there are a number of significant adverse impacts for which there are no reasonably practical mitigation measures or reasonable alternatives that would eliminate the impacts and meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Action. These include unavoidable adverse effects on architectural historic resources, archaeological resources, traffic, transit, pedestrians, and construction period air quality and noise.

Between the DGEIS and FGEIS additional and more refined analyses have shown that some of the significant adverse environmental impacts identified in the DGEIS would not occur. Further analyses have been completed between the DGEIS and the FGEIS to identify additional measures that could be implemented to avoid or mitigate significant adverse environmental impacts. As a result of such analyses, the remaining unavoidable adverse impacts from the Proposed Action are identified below.

B. SUMMARY OF UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

1. Architectural Historic Resources

As described in Chapter 9, “Architectural Historic Resources,” construction of the Multi-Use Facility would partially remove sections of the High Line viaduct north of West 30th Street and west of Eleventh Avenue by 2010. Except for partial demolition of the High Line, a structure identified by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) as having historic significance, no adverse impacts to designated (architectural) cultural resources in the Project Area are anticipated by 2010 due to avoidance, protective, and mitigation measures that would be implemented during the design and construction phases of the project. Two separate Letters of Resolution (LORs) with OPRHP specify mitigation for the adverse impacts to the High Line, including photographic documentation and best efforts to salvage the removed portions (see Chapter 9, “Historic Resources”).

By 2025, the Proposed Action would result in an unavoidable adverse impact on one additional architectural resource that would be removed for constructing the open space corridor. Mitigation for this impact could include documentation according to Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) standards.

The Proposed Action would also result in unmitigated significant adverse impacts on eleven architectural resources that could be removed or altered for projected or potential development. These impacts would be unmitigated, because there are no mechanisms for implementing mitigation measures for as-of-right development.

The Proposed Action would result in shadow impacts on the Eighth Avenue façade of the Farley Building, for which there would be no reasonable or feasible means of avoidance or mitigation. Additionally, impacts on St. Raphael’s RC Church could be partially mitigated. There is no feasible mitigation for the impacts on the church’s west transept rose window.

2. Archaeological Resources

As described in Chapter 10, “Archaeological Resources,” the Proposed Action could potentially result in significant unmitigated adverse impacts at two sites where archaeological resources could be present.

3. Traffic Levels

As indicated in Chapter 19, “Traffic and Parking,” in 2010, the Proposed Action would result in unmitigated adverse impacts at four intersections during the weeknight and Sunday Special Event peak hours. In addition, in 2010 a significant impact is identified at the Lincoln Tunnel river crossing.

In 2025, unmitigated traffic impacts could occur at six intersections during AM peak hours, two intersections at Midday peak hours, and seven intersections during the PM peak hour as a consequence of traffic that would be generated by the Proposed Action. Unmitigated adverse impacts would also occur at four intersections during the weeknight and Sunday Special Event peak hours.

4. Transit and Pedestrians

As indicated in Chapter 20, “Transit and Pedestrians,” in 2010 the Proposed Action would result in significant unavoidable adverse pedestrian impacts at two intersections during the weekday AM peak hour, three intersections during the Midday peak hour, and two intersections during the PM peak hour in 2010. In addition, during the weeknight and Sunday Special Event peak hours, the Proposed Action would result in unmitigated pedestrian impacts at six and nine intersections, respectively.

In 2025, unmitigated pedestrian impacts would result at six intersections during the AM peak hour, 21 intersections during the Midday peak hour, and 11 intersections during the PM peak hour. In addition, five intersections would have unavoidable pedestrian impacts during the weeknight and Sunday Special Event peak hours. Fewer Special Event peak hour impacts are projected for 2025 than for 2010, because the completion of the East Side Access project by 2025 would reduce the number of Long Island Rail Road passengers projected to walk from the Multi-Use Facility to Penn Station.

One unavoidable adverse subway station element impact would result in the AM peak hour in 2010 at Stairway PL6 at Grand Central-42nd Street station, which provides access from the lower mezzanine to the No. 7 line platform. This unmitigated impact would not occur in 2025 due to increased transit services (i.e., Second Avenue subway line and East Side Access), which would shift demand to different locations.

5. Construction Period Noise

The Proposed Action has the potential to cause significant noise impacts during construction at five locations. Noise impacts would be mitigated or avoided to the maximum extent possible through adherence to the NYC Noise Control Code, good engineering practices, and other noise reduction measures. ❖