



**The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 1**

Anthony Notaro, Jr. CHAIRPERSON | Lucian Reynolds DISTRICT MANAGER

Comment on the Draft Scope of Work for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Phased Development of Governors Island:

Development of the South Island (CEQR. No. 11DME007M)

Testimony by Diana Switaj, Director of Planning & Land Use

1 Centre Street, Manhattan Municipal Building

Wednesday, September 26, 2018, 6:00PM

On September 25, 2018, Manhattan Community Board 1 adopted the following resolution regarding the Phased Development of Governors Island and the Development of the South Island. The resolution below serves as our comment on the Draft Scope of Work for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

**COMMUNITY BOARD #1 – MANHATTAN
RESOLUTION**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: LAND USE, ZONING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COMMITTEE VOTE:	11 In Favor	0 Opposed	1 Abstained	1 Recused
BOARD VOTE:	43 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	1 Recused

RE: Governors Island Draft Scope of Work for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement

WHEREAS: Governors Island is 172 acres of publicly owned land in the New York Harbor just 800 yards from Lower Manhattan. Governors Island is within the boundaries of Community District 1; and

WHEREAS: The majority of the island is under the jurisdiction of the Trust for Governors Island (“the Trust”), a not-for-profit corporation and instrumentality of the City of New York; and

WHEREAS: Numerous deed restrictions require that Governors Island be used as open space that is accessible to the public and for educational uses. The deed permits other uses such as arts and culture, recreation and entertainment, hospitality and retail, health, and commercial offices and mixed use. The deed prohibits a number of uses such as casinos, industrial activity, parking, and permit residential use; and

WHEREAS: The island is zoned R3-2 throughout, with a Special Governors Island District mapped over the northern part of the island to permit a wide range of commercial, recreational, cultural, and educational uses that provide flexibility in the adaptive reuse of the historic buildings; and

WHEREAS: The Trust has a strategic vision to make the operation of the island financially independent of the City of New York’s budget cycle. This would require the Trust

to further activate the southern part of the island with major development partners and create a destination that is accessible and open to the public throughout the year; and

WHEREAS: The Trust is proposing two Zoning Map and Text Amendments to expand the Special Governors Island District to the southern development sites on the east and west sides of the island, with new controls that pertain to the undeveloped zones and to change the underlying zoning on the southern part of the island from R3-2 to a mid-density commercial zoning district, such as C4-5; and

WHEREAS: The Trust intends to use the redevelopment of the East and West Side development zones to raise create an elevated buffer as a pedestal for future development to protect the southern end of the island from future storm surges with a similar design strategy as was used by the West 8 Landscape Architecture firm in their now-complete, multi-phase plan for the redevelopment of parkland areas that include The Hills and Hammock Grove; and

WHEREAS: In addition to being a vital place for active and passive recreation, Governors Island is a vital habitat for important keystone species of avian and aquatic wildlife. Introducing even non-permanent housing on the island brings the possibility of the introduction of domesticated animals such as dogs and cats, which have a known impact on permanent and migratory animals. The Draft Scope of Work (DSOW) should include a study of how the construction and operation of commercial or academic buildings at the proposed density and the freight and passenger vehicle movements and pets will impact migratory bird species and marine wildlife, including critical bivalves such as oysters; and

WHEREAS: Personal vehicles are currently banned from Governors Island and at present the movement of goods, services, and people are minimal. If the East and West development sites are built out to the maximum degree, the current and future users of the island must know the impacts of the resulting increase in vehicular traffic, motorized and electric, on the island impact the associated increase in vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists of all ages. The DSOW must also include the environmental impacts on air quality and with the storage of fuel, batteries, and the vehicles themselves; and

WHEREAS: The development of the East and West sites for academic or office/hotel use are very different scenarios as the number of people who would be living on the island for days, weeks, or months on end would differ, as would their needs and impacts on the island. The DSOW should study the increase in ferry service that would be necessary to support the number of office workers, students, and those making Governors Island their temporary home and how that increase would impact air and water quality and how it could deter New York City from achieving compliance with the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. The impact of the ferry service levels would also impact the use of the New York Harbor's navigable waterways and the indirect impacts on trade and freight transport should be analyzed as well; and

WHEREAS: The construction of non-residential buildings will significantly change the landscape of Governors Island. The impacts of the modifications to the landscape, including urban heat island effect, inefficient non-passive house construction techniques that leak heating and cooling during their respective seasons, and the expansion of energy distribution systems should all be included in the DSOW; and

WHEREAS: The Trust for Governors Island has stated that the natural beach will be untouched and not developed, which is a priority for CB1; now

THEREFORE

BE IT

RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 is very troubled by the scope and magnitude of development being assessed for the Southern island and believes that it is excessive. CB1 does not endorse many aspects of the DSOW and we look forward to working with the Trust for Governors Island to modify the final scope; and

BE IT

FURTHER

RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 believes there are unconsidered impacts and the DSOW should be modified to include them as stated above.