

INTRODUCTION TO THE TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

CHAPTER 3

Chapters 4 through 22 of this Manual provide guidance with respect to methodologies for assessment, identification of significant adverse impacts, and development of mitigation measures for each technical area typically considered in environmental review. These methodologies generally are considered appropriate for assessment of projects undergoing CEQR, but are not required by CEQR. There may be specific projects that warrant different or additional analyses. For those projects requiring an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the technical analysis chapters also describe the types of alternatives that are typically considered, and describe the EIS summary chapters that help focus the conclusions of the technical studies. Applicable regulations, coordination, and the location of background information are also described for each technical area.

It is important to note that the nature of the proposed project helps determine the level of analysis appropriate for each technical area. In some cases, the characteristics of a proposed project may allow for it to ‘screen out’ or be subject only to preliminary assessment for a technical area, while for other technical areas a detailed analysis may be necessary. In other cases, analysis may be warranted only if the proposed project fits within certain threshold criteria (*e.g.*, see Chapter 18, “Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change”), or has the potential for significant adverse impacts in other areas (*e.g.*, see Chapter 20, “Public Health”).

The technical analysis chapters are:

- Chapter 4: Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**
- Chapter 5: Socioeconomic Conditions**
- Chapter 6: Community Facilities and Services**
- Chapter 7: Open Space**
- Chapter 8: Shadows**
- Chapter 9: Historic and Cultural Resources**
- Chapter 10: Urban Design and Visual Resources**
- Chapter 11: Natural Resources**
- Chapter 12: Hazardous Materials**
- Chapter 13: Water and Sewer Infrastructure**
- Chapter 14: Solid Waste and Sanitation Services**
- Chapter 15: Energy**
- Chapter 16: Transportation**
- Chapter 17: Air Quality**
- Chapter 18: Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change**
- Chapter 19: Noise**
- Chapter 20: Public Health**
- Chapter 21: Neighborhood Character**
- Chapter 22: Construction**



OVERVIEW AND APPROACH TO IMPACT ANALYSES

The guidance provided in each technical analysis chapter sets forth specific methods for assessing potential impacts of a proposed project. The guidance leads the analyst through a series of steps with ascending level of detail, aimed at permitting the lead agency to determine whether the potential for significant impact can be ruled out or confirmed. If at any point, a determination can be made that no significant impacts would occur with the project, then the analysis is complete.

Each chapter is organized so that existing conditions are determined first, followed by determinations of the No-Action and With-Action scenarios, in order to ascertain the incremental difference due to a proposed project. It is this incremental difference that is used when determining whether the project has the potential to cause significant adverse environmental impact.

As mentioned throughout the Manual, it is important for an applicant to work closely with the lead agency during the entire environmental review process. In addition, the lead agency may determine it is appropriate to consult or coordinate with the City’s expert technical agencies for a particular project. It is recommended that the lead agency consult with the expert agencies as early as possible in the environmental review process. The table below lists the expert agencies that are often consulted in CEQR assessments. This table is illustrative, and should not be considered an exhaustive list of City agencies involved in CEQR assessments.

Technical Areas	Expert Agencies
Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy	New York City Department of City Planning
Socioeconomic Conditions	
Shadows	
Urban Design and Visual Resources	
Neighborhood Character	
Community Facilities and Services	New York City Department of City Planning New York City Administration for Children’s Services New York City School Construction Authority New York City Fire Department New York City Police Department New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation
Open Space	New York City Department of City Planning New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
Historic and Cultural Resources	New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
Natural Resources	New York City Department of Environmental Protection New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
Hazardous Materials	New York City Department of Environmental Protection
Water and Sewer Infrastructure	
Air Quality	
Noise	
Solid Waste and Sanitation Services	New York City Department of Sanitation
Energy	New York State Energy Research & Development Authority Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination
Transportation	New York City Department of Transportation (traffic, parking, or pedestrians) Metropolitan Transit Authority and New York City Transit (transit)
Public Health	New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Construction	New York City Department of Environmental Protection New York City Department of Transportation New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene



STRUCTURE OF THE TECHNICAL ANALYSES CHAPTERS

Most CEQR technical analyses apply a similar step-wise approach as described below:

APPROPRIATENESS OF AN ASSESSMENT (SECTION 200 OF EACH TECHNICAL CHAPTER):

The first step is a simple screen or series of questions aimed at determining whether a given technical area assessment is appropriate for a given proposed project. The preliminary screening questions are also presented in the [Short EAS Form](#) and the [Full EAS Form](#) to assist the lead agency in determining whether further analysis is needed for a given technical area.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT (OFTEN LOCATED AT THE BEGINNING OF SECTION 300 OF EACH TECHNICAL CHAPTER):

The next step is usually a qualitative or semi-quantitative analysis again aimed at determining whether an impact in the given technical area can be ruled out. These analyses are necessarily conservative—the rationale being that if the proposed project shows no significant adverse impact using simplified, but conservative, assumptions a detailed analysis would only confirm this conclusion. An assumption is considered conservative if the analysis tends to result in the overstatement of an impact.

DETAILED ANALYSIS (LOCATED IN SECTION 300 OF EACH TECHNICAL CHAPTER):

If a proposed project appears to have some potential for significant adverse impact based on the first two steps, then a more detailed analysis is undertaken. The purpose of this analysis is to be as realistic as possible in making assumptions so that an impact is neither over- nor under-predicted, and so that, should mitigation be warranted, appropriate, feasible, and workable measures may be developed. At this stage it is always appropriate to gather as much relevant project-specific data as possible. When information is unavailable, or the effort to gather the information appears unwarranted, reasonable, but conservative, assumptions should be made.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SECTION 400 OF EACH TECHNICAL CHAPTER):

When the analysis identifies that the project would cause a change in conditions, the next step is to determine whether that change would be adverse and significant. In technical areas that utilize quantitative thresholds (air quality, noise, and traffic are good examples), the presence of a significant impact generally can be determined with relative definiteness by applying objective criteria. However, in other areas, such as neighborhood character or urban design, a change may be identified, but its significance requires a more subjective evaluation. For these determinations, a series of questions may be posed that, if answered in the affirmative, typically signal significance. The lead agency may carefully consider public policy and public comments in addition to the technical studies in determining whether an impact may be considered significant and adverse.

MITIGATION (SECTION 500 OF EACH TECHNICAL CHAPTER):

Once it is determined that an impact is adverse and significant, mitigation to reduce or eliminate the impact must be considered. The technical analysis of mitigation must be sufficient to allow the lead agency to understand how effective the mitigation would be, what effort would be involved in implementing it, and whether it would produce any new significant impacts of its own. Usually, the technical analysis used to identify an impact provides sufficient information to develop and assess the mitigation of that impact. Various options for mitigation of a given impact may be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). In the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the lead agency must choose from among these options the mitigation measures that reduce the impact to the greatest extent practicable. Where mitigation is not available, is not practical, is not implementable on schedule with the proposed project, or requires further discretionary projects, then the lead agency must disclose that the significant adverse impact may be unmitigated.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROJECT (SECTION 600 OF EACH TECHNICAL CHAPTER):

Where a potential significant adverse impact has been identified, alternatives to the proposed project to reduce or eliminate that impact should also be considered. As noted in Chapter 23, “Alternatives,” CEQR alternatives are selected from among those that meet project objectives. The analysis of alternatives in the technical area in which a signifi-



cant adverse impact has been identified should contain sufficient detail to clearly indicate the reduction in impact or in the need for mitigation.