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## CHAPTER 10: NATURAL RESOURCES

### A. INTRODUCTION

*CEQR* defines a natural resource as plant and animal species and any area capable of providing habitat for plant and animal species or capable of functioning to support environmental systems and maintain the City's environmental balance. Such resources include surface and groundwater, wetlands, dunes and beaches, grasslands, woodlands, landscaped areas, gardens, and built structures used by wildlife. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of natural resource impacts is not required under the following conditions:

- The site is substantially devoid of natural resources;
- The site contains no "built resource" used as a habitat by a protected species;
- The site contains no subsurface conditions that might affect the function or value of a nearby resource;
- The site is near or contiguous to natural resources, but no activity associated with the proposed action would disturb them; and,
- The proposed action involves the disturbance of a natural resource, but that impact has been deemed insignificant by a government agency with jurisdiction over that resource and conditions have not changed significantly since the permit was issued.

### B. OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the existing natural resources present in the vicinity of the rezoning area and the potential permanent impacts of the proposed project on natural resources. The potential for construction-related impacts on natural resources is addressed in Chapter 21, "Construction Impacts."

The rezoning area is primarily a developed urban area and does not contain any surface waterbodies, floodplains, wetlands, rare, endangered or threatened species, or important wildlife habitat. The proposed project would result in an insignificant change in subsurface and groundwater conditions in the localized area of the foundations of the proposed buildings. These changes would not alter important landforms or the overall pattern of groundwater flow within the rezoning area, or in the natural resources study area. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant adverse impact on natural resources.

### C. METHODOLOGY

The *CEQR Technical Manual* states that the study area for the natural resources assessment should include "the project site and resources (including adjacent areas, as applicable) that may be affected by activities on the project site." The study area for the natural resources evaluation for the proposed project was defined as the area encompassing a distance of approximately 400 feet from the perimeter of the rezoning area.

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### **D. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The rezoning area is urbanized and densely developed, does not contain natural features of significance, nor is it located immediately adjacent to any natural resources. Plant communities within the rezoning area consist of cultivated gardens, yards, and street trees, and are not significant natural resources. No habitat for rare or endangered species exists within the rezoning area (refer to Appendix A, “Agency Correspondence”). The rezoning area does not include any of the following ecological resources: surface waterbodies, wetlands, beaches, dunes, bluffs, thickets, significant grasslands, meadows, woodlands, or forests. Ground water in this part of Queens is not used for potable water supply, which is provided by reservoirs located in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds. The *CEQR Technical Manual* lists a number of areas that contain natural resources designated by a governmental agency as significant, sensitive, or worthy of protection. The rezoning area is not located within or immediately adjacent to any of these natural resources areas.

### **E. FUTURE CONDITION WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS**

Substantial changes to the study area’s natural resources are not expected to occur under the No Build Condition. The development projects anticipated to occur by 2017 do not include sites that contain features of significance, nor are they located adjacent to any natural resource. Under the No Build Condition, wetlands, floodplains, geology, coastal resources, groundwater, and plant and wildlife species are anticipated to function similar to under Existing Conditions. The study area would remain a densely developed and urbanized area in the No Build Condition.

### **F. FUTURE CONDITION WITH THE PROPOSED ACTIONS**

Under the Build Condition, 40 projected and [192](#) potential development sites have been identified. All of the development sites, projected and potential, are essentially built and devoid of natural resources. The sites contain no landscaped features with natural resource values, have no subsurface conditions, the disruption of which might affect the function or value of an adjacent or nearby natural resource, and are neither near nor contiguous to any natural resources. Any vegetation on these sites in the existing condition would be typical urban invasive vegetation with no vegetation or wildlife habitat value. Wildlife in the area is also urban mammals and transitory avian wildlife. There are no streams, ponds, or lakes that would provide any habitat for aquatic-related wildlife. The proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to natural resources.

### **G. CONCLUSION**

The rezoning area is a densely developed urban area that does not contain natural features of significance, nor is it located immediately adjacent to any natural resources. As a result, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to natural resources.