

Technical Memorandum 001
Lenox Terrace
CEQR Number 18DCP084M
ULURP Nos. C 200052 ZMM, N 200051 ZRM, C 200050 ZSM, C 200054 ZSM, N
200053 ZAM
January 31, 2020

A. INTRODUCTION

The Lenox Terrace project is the subject of a Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) application currently under consideration by the New York City Planning Commission (CPC). On January 23, 2020 a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was completed for the Lenox Terrace project, and a Notice of Completion was issued. The FEIS analyzed the rezoning of Block 1730 and additional land use actions necessary to facilitate the construction of five new mixed-use buildings on the Lenox Terrace property, a superblock bounded by West 132nd and 135th Streets and Lenox and Fifth Avenues in the Central Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan, Community District (CD) 10.

The proposed actions include a zoning map amendment from R7-2/C1-4 to R8 and R8 with a C1-5 commercial overlay; a zoning text amendment to establish the affected area as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area; a large-scale special permit pursuant to Zoning Resolution (ZR) Section 74-743(a)(2); an authorization pursuant to ZR Section 25-631(f)(2) to modify curb cut requirements under ZR Sections 36-532 and 25-631; and a parking reduction special permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-533 (the “proposed actions”). The proposed actions also would include recordation of a Restrictive Declaration and (E) Designation (E-547) to commit future development of the site in accordance with approvals and any necessary mitigations.

Under the proposed actions, the FEIS considered the construction of five new mixed-use buildings on the existing Lenox Terrace property. The new buildings would be constructed on portions of the property that are currently vacant or contain one-story retail structures. One site not owned by the applicant but located within the rezoning area was analyzed as a projected future development site (Block 1730, Lot 65); one site was analyzed as a potential development site (Block 1730, Lots 16 and 19); and one site, which is owned by the City, was not analyzed as a potential or projected development site. **Table 1** presents a summary of the program analyzed in the FEIS.

Table 1
FEIS Program and No Action/With Action Increment

Use (gsf)	With Action Scenario (2026)	No Action-With Action Increment (2026)
Proposed Development Site		
Use Group 2 (Residential) / DUs	2,925,532 gsf / 3,358	±1,430,258 gsf / ±1,642
Use Group 6 (Retail)	135,500 gsf	±39,845 gsf
Community Facility	15,055 gsf	±15,055 gsf
Accessory Parking	525-660	±68-203
Total gsf (Proposed Development Site)	3,076,087 gsf	±1,485,158 gsf
Projected Future Development Site (Lot 65)⁹		
Use Group 2 (Residential) / DUs	±58,500 gsf / ±69	±58,500 gsf / ±69
Community Facility	6,968 gsf	0
Accessory Parking	19	±19
Total sf (Projected Future Development Site)	65,468 gsf	58,500 gsf
Potential Development Site (Lots 16 and 19)		
Community Facility	34,616 gsf	0
Accessory Parking	21	0
City-Owned Site (Lot 55)		
Community Facility	31,475 gsf	0

Table 1 (cont'd)
FEIS Program and No Action/With Action Increment

Totals for Rezoning Area		
Use Group 2 (Residential) / DUs	2,984,032 gsf / 3,427	±1,488,758 gsf / ±1,711
Use Group 6 (Retail)	135,500 gsf	±39,845 gsf
Community Facility	88,114	±15,055 gsf
Accessory Parking	565-700 <i>total</i>	±87-222
Total gsf (Rezoning Area)	3,207,646	1,543,658

Changes to the project are now under consideration at the City Planning Commission, as described below. This Technical Memorandum considers the potential for these changes to result in environmental impacts not previously identified.

B. CHANGES UNDER CONSIDERATION BY CPC

The first change under consideration by CPC is the addition of a requirement that the northern pedestrian pathway through the proposed development site be publicly accessible. This pathway extends from Lenox Avenue through the site to the west side of Lenox Terrace Place, and then again from the east side of Lenox Terrace Place to Fifth Avenue. No changes to the site plan itself would be necessary. In addition, the configuration of the driveway at Lenox Avenue would be slightly different than what was analyzed in the FEIS; in connection with this change approximately 8 parking spaces would be relocated from the driveway area to below-grade parking facilities on site. Lastly, CPC would make a technical modification to the proposed zoning map amendment, modifying the location of the C1-5 overlay zoning district along West 132nd Street so that the proposed site plan may comply with existing loading requirements. The C1-5 overlay along West 132nd Street would be extended an additional 25 feet from Lenox Avenue and Fifth Avenue, for a total of 225 feet from Lenox Avenue and a total of 150 feet from Fifth Avenue at a depth of 100 feet from West 132rd Street.

There would be no change to the amount of development or to the proposed uses within the rezoning area, which would remain the same as those analyzed in the FEIS. None of the program elements would change, including the square footage, number of residential units, or amount of commercial or community facility space, or the number of parking spaces provided. Therefore, there would be no changes to the assessment presented in the FEIS with regard to most of the technical areas analyzed. These include: land use, zoning and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; community facilities; shadows; historic and cultural resources; natural resources; hazardous materials; water and sewer infrastructure; solid waste and sanitation services; energy; greenhouse gas emissions and climate change; air quality; noise; public health; neighborhood character; and construction.

Technical areas with the potential to be affected—land use, zoning and public policy; open space; urban design and visual resources, and transportation—are considered below.

LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

The FEIS concluded that the proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse indirect impact to land use, zoning and public policy. The proposed zoning would increase the density of the proposed development site through the addition of buildings whose bulk is comparable to other buildings within the study area, in particular the Harlem Hospital Center across West 135th Street from the proposed development site, and the proposed and projected residential, commercial, and community facility uses would be comparable to existing and planned developments in Central Harlem.

With the extension of the C1-5 overlay under consideration by CPC, the type, location, and amount of new uses to be created on the proposed development site would not change. Therefore, the changes being contemplated would not result in significant adverse impacts on land use, zoning and public policy, and the conclusions presented in the FEIS would be unchanged.

OPEN SPACE

The FEIS concluded that the proposed actions would result in a significant adverse indirect impact to open space in the 2026 analysis year due to the anticipated reduction in open space ratios, as well as a significant adverse shadows impact on Howard Bennett Playground on the December 21 analysis day. From a qualitative perspective, the FEIS noted that the proposed project would introduce a substantial amount (more than six acres) of new private open space on the proposed development site that would be available to both existing and new Lenox Terrace residents and their guests. This new private open space would limit the incremental demand on study area public open space resources generated by the proposed actions.

With the changes under consideration by CPC, the amount of new open space to be provided on the proposed development site would not change; however, a portion of this open space—landscaped pedestrian pathways—would be publicly accessible, instead of private as assumed in the FEIS. The provision of these publicly accessible pathways would slightly lessen the identified reduction in open space ratios due to the proposed actions. Therefore, the changes being contemplated would not result in new significant adverse open space impacts, and the conclusions presented in the FEIS would be unchanged.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

The FEIS concluded that the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources. The analysis determined that the height of the new buildings on the proposed development site would be much taller than the existing one-story retail structures they would replace, but would be consistent with the height of the mechanical bulkhead of the Harlem Hospital Center, directly north of the proposed development site. The majority of new construction would take the place of existing one-story commercial buildings, allowing for the conversion of surface parking areas to open space, and the new private open space would enhance the visual character of the proposed development site as compared to existing conditions and No Action scenario, and thus would enhance the pedestrian experience of the surrounding area. The existing driveway off Lenox Avenue—which provides access to the existing residential building at 470 Lenox Avenue—would be maintained. In addition, the proposed actions would not obstruct any existing view corridors in the study area and would not affect views of important visual resources.

The change in public accessibility of the pedestrian pathways through the proposed development site, the slight change in configuration of the Lenox Avenue driveway, and the extension of the C1-5 overlay would not affect the conclusions of the FEIS. The location of the existing driveway off Lenox Avenue would be maintained, and the new open space would still be expected to enhance the visual character of the proposed development site.

Therefore, the changes being contemplated would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual resources in the rezoning area or the study area, and the conclusions presented in the FEIS would be unchanged.

TRANSPORTATION

The FEIS concluded that the proposed actions would result in significant adverse impacts to traffic and pedestrians. No significant adverse impacts were identified for transit, parking, or vehicular and pedestrian safety.

The change in public accessibility of the pedestrian pathways through the proposed development site, the slight change in configuration of the Lenox Avenue driveway, and the extension of the C1-5 overlay would not affect the conclusions of the FEIS. The relocation of the 8 surface parking spaces to the below-grade garage would not alter the conclusions of the transportation analysis.

Therefore, the changes being contemplated would not result in new significant adverse transportation impacts, and the conclusions presented in the FEIS would be unchanged.

C. CONCLUSIONS

As described above, the modifications under consideration by the City Planning Commission would not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts that were not previously identified in the FEIS.