

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) summarizes and responds to the oral and written comments received during the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Rockefeller University New River Building and Fitness Center project. The chapter also summarizes comments submitted by Manhattan Community Board 8 and the Manhattan Borough President in February 2014. In addition, this chapter includes pertinent comments on the DEIS made by the City Planning Commissioners at the public hearing. The public hearing on the DEIS was held concurrently with the hearing on the project's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) draft application on February 19, 2014 at Spector Hall at the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) located at 22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007. The comment period for the DEIS remained open through March 3, 2014.

Section B identifies the organizations and individuals who provided comments relevant to the DEIS. Section C contains a summary of comments and a response to each. These summaries convey the substance of the comments made, but do not necessarily quote the comments verbatim. Written comments received on the DEIS and a transcript of the public hearing are included in **Appendix H**.

B. LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMENTED ON THE DEIS**ELECTED OFFICIAL**

1. Gale A. Brewer., Manhattan Borough President, written submission dated February 12, 2014; oral comments delivered by Michael Sandler, February 19, 2014 (Brewer)

COMMUNITY BOARD

2. Manhattan Community Board 8; Nicholas Viest, Chair, written submission dated January 9, 2014 (CB8)

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

3. Angela M. Battaglia, Commissioner, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Battaglia)
4. Michelle de la Uz, Commissioner, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (de la Uz)
5. Maria M. Del Toro, Commissioner, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Del Toro)
6. Orlando Marín, Commissioner, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Marín)
7. Betty Y. Chen, Commissioner, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Chen)

¹ This entire chapter is new to the FEIS.

8. Irwin G. Cantor, P.E., Commissioner, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Cantor)
9. Kenneth J. Knuckles, Esq., Vice Chairman, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Knuckles)
10. Joseph Douek, Commissioner, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Douek)
11. Anna Hayes Levin, Commissioner, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Levin)

ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERESTED PUBLIC

12. Marise Hausner, Green Park Gardeners, oral comments, February 19, 2014 (Hausner)

C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

GENERAL

Comment 1: In the DEIS, Rockefeller has repeatedly ignored the esplanade's integration with the surrounding neighborhood by choosing to [define] the community as either its own campus and/or only the area west of York Avenue. (Hausner)

Response: Consistent with the recommendations of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the EIS considers the area surrounding the campus in its analyses, generally defined as the area within a 400-foot radius of the University campus. As noted in Chapter 6, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," the 400-foot study area is expanded to include views from Roosevelt Island, the Roosevelt Island tram, and the Queensboro Bridge. Therefore, the study areas analyzed in the EIS include the portion of the neighborhood located immediately west of the Rockefeller University campus across York Avenue, as well as the East River Esplanade.

Comment 2: The University has committed to a public design process for the esplanade, and for a financial contribution to ongoing maintenance. This design process should be undertaken now. And the financial commitment needs to be made far more specific. (Brewer)

Response: As described in Chapter 13, "Mitigation," between the DEIS and FEIS, the University made changes to the design of the improved esplanade in response to community comments, in consultation with DCP and DPR. Specifically, this has included two design charrettes to solicit community input on the esplanade design. The final design is subject to approval by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) and the Public Design Commission (PDC). In addition, the University has committed to make a contribution toward maintaining the plantings on the rebuilt East River Esplanade adjacent to the project site, details of which are currently under discussion. As described in the 'Shadows' section of Chapter 13, "Mitigation," these measures would serve as partial mitigation for the significant adverse shadows impact on the esplanade.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Comment 3: We believe it would be appropriate for Rockefeller to make a strip along the eastern edge of their new platform publicly accessible. This should allow them to preserve the conditional seclusion of their campus, while also honoring the

spirit of the Waterfront Revitalization Plan (WRP) by offering new open space to a neighborhood, which will otherwise see its waterfront open space irretrievably diminished. The roof of the building could also be publicly accessible. (Hausner)

The University is negatively impacting one of the only signature open spaces in the area, while significantly improving their own, private open space. The University's campus has beautifully manicured open spaces that are separated from the community by a large fence. With the need for the University to maintain its fence in mind, however, it should work with the community to find ways to be a good neighbor and allow limited access to the green spaces on the site. The new laboratory building in particular will have a large open area with wide open views of the East River, and the University should find ways to share this space with the surrounding community. (Brewer)

Is the rooftop area of the laboratory building intended for public or private use? Do you have the opportunity to create a limited access to that roof for the public on a year-round basis? (Cantor)

The University should carefully examine how it can increase the amount of open space available to the general public. Along York Avenue and 68th Street there are a number of green spaces with mature trees that are not particularly needed as open space on campus. These spaces are separated from the rest of campus by buildings and parking lots, and are therefore likely unused by staff and scientists. The University should explore moving the perimeter fence in these locations to create places along York Avenue that the community could access as passive open space. (Brewer)

Response: As described in Chapter 3, "Open Space," the open space analysis considered the potential direct impacts of the proposed project on the East River Esplanade as a result of the demapping of a total area of 236 square feet for the support columns for the new platform structure. Because the proposed project would not introduce a new population to the Rockefeller University campus that could potentially burden existing open space resources, per the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an indirect effects analysis of open space was not warranted and was not performed. The direct impact analysis concluded that there would be no permanent significant adverse open space impact on the esplanade.

As described in Chapter 4, "Shadows," the proposed project would result in significant adverse shadows impacts on the esplanade. As partial mitigation for the shadows impact, significant improvements to waterfront open space have been identified. These would include repair of the bulkhead, as well as redesign and rebuilding of a portion of the East River Esplanade adjacent to the project site with improved spatial organization of the walkway/bikeway and new seating areas, new planting beds, and new plantings. In addition, the University has committed to make a contribution toward maintaining the plantings on the

rebuilt East River Esplanade adjacent to the project site, details of which are currently under discussion.

As noted in a letter by the Applicant dated February 28, 2104 (included in Appendix B), following the publication of the DEIS the University considered alternative mitigation measures that would increase the amount of publically accessible open space on the campus, and determined that these measures would be unfeasible due to the security and operational requirements of the University. As noted in the Purpose and Need section of Chapter 1, "Project Description," the University utilizes an open campus that encourages an atmosphere of collaboration and free-flowing interactions within a highly secure biomedical research facility. Unlike other urban campuses, most of the University buildings are not individually secured, which is essential to enabling the University's open culture to thrive. Allowing unregulated public access would require locking individual buildings, significantly increasing security, and implementing usage regulations that would restrict the collaborative scientific research that is fundamental to the University's mission. As noted above, the University has made a commitment to continue to explore opportunities for residents of the community to attend programs and events on campus. The University has no plans to change the campus boundary or to relocate the perimeter fence.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the proposed project would be consistent with the policies of the WRP.

Comment 4: In terms of research space, will the proposed project take care of the University's needs for the next 10 or 20 years? (de la Uz)

Response: As noted in the 'Purpose and Need' section of Chapter 1, "Project Description," the University has stated that the proposed project is expected to serve its needs for 20 to 30 years.

Comment 5: Are there any plans for signage on the structure at all? (de la Uz)

Response: The Applicant has stated that at this time there are no plans regarding signage. However, it is likely that there will be signage on the proposed buildings recognizing the potential donors; all of the financing for the project will be from private fundraising. Signage would be permitted on an as-of-right basis, with signage regulations allowing for the proposed buildings to contain illuminated and/or non-illuminated signage. Signage could not exceed a combined total surface area of 25 square feet.

Comment 6: Rather than put forward a plan to develop as much floor area as possible on their site, the University has left open much of its campus and has concentrated its bulk away from its neighbors across York Avenue. (Brewer)

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 7: Would the fitness center be open to the public? (Battaglia)

Response: As described in the ‘Purpose and Need’ section of Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the proposed fitness center has been sized for and is intended for use by the University faculty, staff, and students. It would function partially as a replacement for existing facilities on campus.

Comment 8: There are some support columns, which protrude into the esplanade; is there any other space taken away? (Chen)

Response: No. As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the footings of the columns would take up approximately 236 square feet of the existing East River Esplanade.

Comment 9: What kind of physical impediment is there between the highway and the columns? (Knuckles)

Response: The space between the FDR Drive and the columns supporting the platform structure on both the east and west sides of the roadway will contain concrete barriers that conform to the applicable state and federal design standards.

LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

Comment 10: The University has repeatedly ignored the spirit of the WRP by insisting that the project is not even on the waterfront. This position is only true in the most literal sense because the project happens to be separated from the waters of the East River by the narrow esplanade. (Hausner)

Response: As described in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” the project area is located within the boundaries of the Coastal Zone. Therefore, the proposed project was assessed for compliance with the WRP and found to be consistent with those policies.

OPEN SPACE

Comment 11: The area around Rockefeller University's campus is particularly starved for open space. The nearest large park, Central Park, is almost a mile away. The neighborhood has Twenty-Four Sycamores Park and St. Catherine's Park, but both are small and fully programmed with playgrounds and sports fields. (Brewer)

The esplanade adjacent to the Rockefeller campus has been a refuge for us and for thousands of others who use it year round. We are appalled by the lack of sensitivity of the Rockefeller University to the true value of this open space to our community. (Hausner)

Response: As described in the ‘1973 Agreement and Section 74-682 Special Permit (Air Rights)’ section of Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the original agreement with the City included a provision to extend the public walkway south from Gracie

Park as part of the elevated platform. The City abandoned the idea of an elevated pedestrian walkway prior to any construction in the rights over the FDR Drive, and the walkway—which is the current East River Esplanade—was developed at the elevation of the FDR Drive.

As described in Chapter 3, “Open Space,” the proposed project would not introduce any new residents or workers to the Rockefeller University campus; therefore, the proposed project would not have any indirect effects on area open space resources. As noted in the analysis, while a total area of approximately 236 square feet within of the East River Esplanade would be demapped to accommodate columns supporting the platform spanning the Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Drive, this would not interfere with the walkway/bikeway, which is the East River Esplanade’s most heavily used feature. As noted in the ‘Construction—Open Space’ section of Chapter 13, “Mitigation,” the esplanade would be partially closed during construction; as partial mitigation of the construction—open space impact, an eight-foot pathway would always be maintained to allow for pedestrian and bike movement, except for the very limited night time closures during specific construction activities requiring the lifting of construction materials over the walkway/bikeway from barges located in the East River to the project site.

As described in Chapter 4, “Shadows,” the proposed project would result in significant adverse shadows impacts on the esplanade. As partial mitigation for the shadows impact, significant improvements to waterfront open space have been identified. These would include repair of the bulkhead, as well as redesign and rebuilding of a portion of the East River Esplanade adjacent to the project site with improved spatial organization of the walkway/bikeway and new seating areas, new planting beds, and new plantings.

Comment 12: We are keenly aware of the lack of open space in this area, which the Partnerships for Parks open space index identified as having the lowest amount of open space per person in New York City. (Hausner)

Response: As noted above, the proposed project will not increase the population of the area and will, therefore, not result in new users of publicly-accessible open space.

Comment 13: I gather the campus is open only for special events. However, at other times, if somebody wanted to walk into your beautiful campus and have lunch and sit on a bench, could they do that? (Del Toro)

Response: As noted above, due to the security and safety needs of the University, public access to the campus is limited to special events. The University has made a commitment to continue to explore opportunities for residents of the community to attend programs and events on campus.

Comment 14: Is the decision to have the public/private boundary at [the various gates] rather than at the door of each building somehow tied to the nature of the research that's done there, and/or for security reasons? (Chen)

Response: All University employees have to receive special safety training based on the nature of the work. As noted above, current security policy prohibits the general public from accessing the campus due to the sensitive nature of the biomedical research that takes place there.

SHADOWS

Comment 15: This project will wall off a sunny, open section of the esplanade between 64th and 68th Streets, replacing views of open sky and a rich urban landscape with a 66-foot tall fortress-like structure. The effect is amplified by its connection to existing medical structures over the FDR Drive at 64th and between 68th and 71st Streets. The end result will be over a third of a mile of dark tunnels, giant pylons, and towering walls adjacent to the esplanade. (Hausner)

For passive recreation, the esplanade is essentially the only available space, and the proposed building will cast shadows for as much as five and a half hours a day in some months. (Brewer)

Response: The DEIS includes an analysis of shadows falling on the East River Esplanade, in accordance with the guidelines of the *CEQR Technical Manual*. As discussed in Chapter 4, "Shadows," the shadow analysis concludes that the proposed project would result in significant adverse shadow impacts on the East River Esplanade. The shadow analysis concludes that the proposed laboratory building and North Terrace would cast between approximately three and five and a half hours of new shadows on portions of the East River Esplanade in the afternoons in the spring, summer, and fall, and 33 minutes on the winter analysis day. These new incremental shadows would eliminate the remaining areas of direct sunlight on the East River Esplanade adjacent to the project site for between 50 minutes in the early spring and fall and up to two hours and 40 minutes on the summer solstice.

As described in greater detail in Chapter 13, "Mitigation," as partial mitigation for the shadow impact to the East River Esplanade, the University—in consultation with DPR—will undertake a substantial upgrade to the portion of the East River Esplanade adjacent to the project site and will rebuild the bulkhead adjacent to the project site, which is badly in need of repair and for which no city funds have been allocated. In addition, an approximately 150-foot-long area of the East River Esplanade south of the project site would also be substantially upgraded as partial mitigation for the shadow impact. The University will also undertake maintenance of new plantings being provided for the East River Esplanade, for four years, as partial mitigation for the shadow impact. In addition, the University has committed to make a contribution toward

maintaining the plantings on the rebuilt East River Esplanade adjacent to the project site, details of which are currently under discussion.

Comment 16: The proposed laboratory building creates an unmitigatable significant adverse impact on an open space, because of the building's shadows. (Brewer)

Response: As noted above, while the proposed project would result in a significant adverse shadow impact on the East River Esplanade, mitigation measures have been identified and are currently being finalized in consultation with DPR.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Comment 17: What if the barrier is raised to eight feet looking from the East River? If the barrier is high, that really changes the visual impact, doesn't it? (Del Toro)

After the DEIS was completed, the application was revised to include an eight-foot rather than a five-foot sound barrier. The proposed eight-foot barrier would separate the East River Esplanade from the FDR Drive. Views to the project site and the visibility of the sound barrier from public vantage points—including views from the East River Esplanade, and longer views from Roosevelt Island, the Roosevelt Island tram, and the Queensboro Bridge—were considered in Chapter 6, “Urban Design and Visual Resources.” The analysis concluded that while the taller sound barrier would obstruct views to the FDR Drive and portions of the schist retaining wall, these changes would not result in any significant adverse impacts to urban design and visual resources.

NOISE

Comment 18: What is the value of extending the crash barrier up, in terms of sound attenuation? (Cantor)

Response: The eight-foot barrier will provide a meaningful reduction in noise levels at adjacent locations along the East River Esplanade, as described in Chapter 9, “Noise,” and would result in noise levels on the esplanade that would be less than existing noise levels.

AIR QUALITY

Comment 19: Does raising the barrier trigger any additional requirement for venting? (de la Uz)

Response: As described in Chapter 8, “Air Quality,” and in Appendix G, the eight-foot barrier would not have the potential to result in significant air quality concerns for motorists on the FDR Drive in the event of a significant traffic event on the roadway. Raising the height of the barrier above eight feet would increase the potential for adverse air quality concerns on the roadway.

CONSTRUCTION

Comment 20: The University should commit to having available at least an eight-foot wide walkway on the esplanade during construction and hoisting the structural elements of the platform over the FDR Drive at night. (CB8)

Response: As discussed in Chapter 12, “Construction,” and Chapter 13, “Mitigation,” the University has made a commitment to maintaining an eight-foot-wide walkway on the esplanade during construction of the proposed project as partial mitigation for the construction—open space impact. This would allow for pedestrian and bike movement, except for the very limited night time closures during specific construction activities requiring the lifting of construction materials over the walkway/bikeway from barges located in the East River to the project site.

Comment 21: Where will the staging area be for the building construction? (Knuckles)

Response: As described in the ‘Construction Phasing and Schedule’ section of Chapter 12, “Construction,” during construction of the platform structure over the FDR Drive, the staging would be done primarily from the East River Esplanade and from barges on the East River. During later construction phases, the staging would be done mostly from within the existing University campus.

Comment 22: What effect on the FDR Drive is there going to be? (Douek)

Response: As discussed in Chapter 12, “Construction,” at limited times during construction, FDR Drive lane closures would be required. All FDR Drive lane closures would follow the schedule currently permitted by the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) and would occur at night. Coordination with NYCDOT’s Office of Construction Mitigation and Coordination (OCMC) would be undertaken to ensure proper implementation of Maintenance and Protection of Traffic (MPT) plans and requirements for any FDR Drive lane closures. The MPT plan will be in the Restrictive Declaration. The Applicant does not anticipate that FDR lane closures would be required once construction of the platform structure is complete.

MITIGATION

Comment 23: The Applicant has committed to involving the community in the design of the improved esplanade and increasing the period of time it will maintain this space from two to four years. Additionally, the University agreed to donate a sum of money to an authorized group for further maintenance of the esplanade beyond this four year period. These commitments are commendable and go a long way towards remedying the adverse shadow impact. They should be further fleshed out, however, before final approval is given on this application. (Brewer)

Response: As noted above and as described in Chapter 13, “Mitigation,” the University made changes to the design of the improved esplanade in response to community comments, in consultation with DCP and DPR. Specifically, this has included two design charrettes to solicit community input on the esplanade design. The final design is subject to approval by DPR and PDC. In addition, the University has committed to make a contribution toward maintaining the plantings on the rebuilt East River Esplanade adjacent to the project site, details of which are currently under discussion. As described in the ‘Shadows’ section of Chapter 13, “Mitigation,” these measures would serve as partial mitigation for the significant adverse shadows impact on the esplanade.

Comment 24: The commitment should equal the amount needed to maintain this portion of the esplanade at a high level of quality, including seasonal plantings. The University and the DCP can work with the DPR to figure out what a reasonable sum would be. The timing and recipient of this payment needs to be resolved as well. DPR would be a reasonable beneficiary of this financial commitment, as long as the University is given reasonable assurance that the money will be used in this location. If these issues cannot be resolved, it would also be appropriate for the University to directly maintain the esplanade for an additional number of years. (Brewer)

The University has a fantastic track record of maintaining excellent open space on its own campus. There is an in-kind opportunity here, rather than just a funding opportunity. (Levin)

Response: As described in Chapter 13, “Mitigation,” and noted above, the University has committed to maintain the plantings on the improved portion of the esplanade for a period of at least 12 years.

Comment 25: An eight-foot barrier will vastly improve the experience of pedestrians on the esplanade not just by reducing noise, but by improving air quality at the pedestrian level. The University's current plan for air quality on the FDR Drive is based around natural, rather than mechanical, venting of the space. (Brewer)

Response: Comment noted. The University has made a commitment to provide an eight-foot barrier which would be recorded in the Restrictive Declaration (see Chapter 1, “Project Description”). The DEIS analyzed a five-foot-tall barrier that was sufficient for the purposes of addressing CEQR environmental requirements. It should be noted that with the five-foot-tall barrier analyzed in the DEIS, no significant adverse noise impacts would occur on the esplanade as a result of the proposed project. However, after the DEIS was completed, based on comments received from the Community Board, the barrier height was increased to eight feet, which would result in noise levels on the esplanade that would be less than existing noise levels. A memorandum was prepared to consider the effect of a change in height of a sound barrier on air quality (see **Appendix G**, “Air Quality”). The memorandum concluded that the potential effect of a low barrier

between the covered roadway and the esplanade would not substantially effect air circulation other than to increase dispersion of pollutants emitted. The noise analysis, as described in Chapter 9, “Noise,” concluded that this barrier would reduce noise levels on the esplanade

Comment 26: The University should study the water pressure and availability and help facilitate the use of water on parts of the esplanade that are not part of this project. (CB8)

Response: As described above and in Chapter 13, “Mitigation,” the significant adverse shadows impact on the esplanade would be partially mitigated by the rebuilding and upgrade of the East River Esplanade, which includes inground hydrants to provide the improved portion of the East River Esplanade (the area adjacent to the project site and the area 150 feet south of the project site) with necessary water for irrigation. Water requirements for other locations on the East River Esplanade are not the responsibility of the University.

Comment 27: We believe that the mitigation offered is not in proportion to the impacts on open space associated with the proposed project, especially taking into consideration what the University stands to gain in new private open space and private amenities compared to what the community stands to lose. (Hausner)

Response: As noted in Chapter 13, “Mitigation,” mitigation measures to address the significant adverse shadows and construction—open space impacts of the proposed project on the East River Esplanade have been developed and reviewed in consultation with DPR. The design of the East River Esplanade improvements adjacent to the project site, including an additional 150 linear foot segment south of the project site, has been further developed in consultation with DPR and in response to community comments between the DEIS and the FEIS. The University is also committing to maintain the new plantings that are part of the enhanced design for a period of twelve years. In addition, the University is undertaking repairs to the bulkhead along the edge of the esplanade adjacent to the project site and to a point 222 feet south of the site. These measures would partially mitigate shadows impacts. To partially mitigate construction—open space impacts, the University has committed to maintain a minimum eight-foot pathway during construction, except for the limited times when the esplanade must be completely closed to the public on certain Sunday mornings (between 2:00 AM and 7:00 AM) during specific construction activities to allow for the installation of columns and girders at the esplanade for laboratory building and North Terrace steel structure erection activities. No other feasible mitigation measures for the significant adverse shadows and construction—open space impacts have been identified.

Comment 28: There’s indication in the environmental report that the esplanade plan will be completed. Further mitigations will be figured out by the time this land use

review process is going to be complete. How is that going to match up with the charrette process and the community designing process? When is the design for this going to be finished? (Levin)

Response: As described above and in Chapter 13, “Mitigation,” between the DEIS and FEIS, the University made changes to the design of the improved esplanade in response to community comments, in consultation with DCP and DPR. Specifically, two design charrettes were undertaken between the DEIS and FEIS to solicit public input on the design. **Figures 13-1 through 13-5** in the FEIS illustrate the design resulting from this process. The final design of the improved esplanade is subject to DPR and PDC approval.

Comment 29: This landscaping will be challenging to maintain. How much effort will it take to maintain it, or are you choosing plantings that can be ignored?

In terms of the extent of the maintenance obligation for the esplanade: what is the anticipated maintenance commitment and how will it be implemented? Is it anticipated that the University’s requirement would be to fund maintenance, but not necessarily to carry it out themselves? (Levin)

I hope, in the course of the proposed project, there can be a much longer-term funding commitment to support of this space. The proposed project is being done [with mitigation of the significant adverse shadows impacts] that are going to be there in perpetuity. (Levin)

Response: As part of the design of the East River Esplanade upgrades, plant species will be selected from DPR’s list of approved street trees. Selections are based on the plants’ visual attractiveness, hardiness and ability to withstand the river and road-side microclimate, as well as their ability to thrive with little maintenance. Shade-tolerant species will be planted in areas that will be affected by shadows. The University has committed to maintain the plantings on the portion of the esplanade adjacent to the project site and the area 150 feet south of the project site for a minimum period of at least 12 years. Maintenance will include weeding, watering, pruning, mulching, applying fertilizer, treating plant disease and insect problems, removing debris and dead plant material, and replacing dead, damaged, or irreversibly declining plants. As provided in the Restrictive Declaration to be recorded, the University will enter into a Maintenance and Operations agreement with DPR that will govern the maintenance requirements. These commitments are described in Chapter 13, “Mitigation.”

Comment 30: What material is the barrier? (Knuckles)

Response: At this time, subject to further refinements in design, it is expected that the barrier would be made of concrete. The barrier is subject to NYCDOT approval.

Comment 31: The barrier’s purpose is to attenuate sound, correct? Or, is it also meant to serve as a crash barrier? (Douek)

Response: As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the barrier would both provide sound attenuation and serve as a crash barrier between the FDR Drive and the East River Esplanade.

COMMENTS NOT RELATED TO THE EIS

Comment 32: The University has agreed to open up the campus on Fridays in the spring through the fall so that the public may enjoy lunch in the gardens. The Applicant should continue to explore programs like this so that the general public can enjoy the amenities of the Rockefeller campus. (Brewer)

The University expands the programs for special events and various activities for the residents of the Community to attend. The University tries to make a portion of the campus open to the residents of the Community for their enjoyment. (CB8)

Response: The Applicant has stated that the University is committed to containing to explore opportunities for residents of the community to attend programs and events on campus, including events in the amphitheater that will serve as a new venue opportunity for events open to the public. As described above and in the ‘Purpose and Need’ section of Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the University has an open campus that encourages an atmosphere of collaboration and free-flowing interactions within a highly secure biomedical research facility. Allowing unregulated public access to the campus would require locking individual buildings, significantly increasing security, and implementing usage regulations that would restrict the collaborative scientific research that is fundamental to the University’s mission. These factors limit public accessibility.

Comment 33: This proposed development underscores a citywide issue surrounding the relationship between universities and the local community. While universities are important to the economic and civic life of our city, every effort must be made to integrate the local community into university development plans, rather than foster plans that isolate neighbors. (Brewer)

Response: As noted above, the Applicant has stated that the University is committed to continuing to explore opportunities for residents of the community to attend programs and events on campus. This is not a comment on the DEIS.

Comment 34: The events that you're saying are open to the public: how often do those occur? Would that involve use of the amphitheater? (Marín)

Response: The Applicant has stated that public events occur every week during the academic year, which is from September to June. This includes approximately 40 free concerts per year, which account for about 17,000 visitors, as well as a for-pay concert series that brings in several hundred more. Other visitors come to the campus through the University’s program for high school students. Additionally, the University has participated in the Open House New York

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program (which provides access to sites of architectural, design, engineering and cultural interest) in the last several years and will continue to do so. After completion of the project, the University anticipates having events that are open to the public in the new amphitheater. *