

Seaside Park and Community Arts Center

Chapter 17: Alternatives

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of an analysis of alternatives to the proposed project, as set forth in the *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, is to provide the decision makers with the opportunity to consider practicable alternatives that are consistent with the project's purpose, and that could potentially reduce or eliminate significant adverse environmental impacts identified in the EIS. As described in the preceding sections, the proposed project is for the development of approximately 2.41 acres of publicly accessible open space including an approximately 5,100-seat seasonal amphitheater and the restoration and adaptation of the landmark former Childs Restaurant building, located on portions of two blocks within the Coney Island neighborhood of Brooklyn Community District 13.

Consideration of a No-Action Alternative is mandated by the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and CEQR, and is intended to provide the lead and involved agencies with an assessment of the consequences of not selecting the proposed actions. Consistent with these requirements this chapter examines a No-Action Alternative (the "future without the proposed project") to the proposed project. The technical chapters presented in this EIS have described the future without the proposed project, and have used it as the basis to assess the potential impacts and associated mitigation for the proposed project. Under the No-Action Alternative, the proposed project would not be built, and the development site would be developed with as-of-right residential, commercial, and open space uses as analyzed in the Coney Island Rezoning FEIS (2009).

B. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The No-Action Alternative examines future conditions on the development site in the absence of the proposed project. Under the No-Action Alternative, it is assumed that the development site would be developed as-of-right with residential, commercial, and open space uses, as analyzed in the 2009 FEIS. There would be a total of approximately 223,000 sf of residential uses (223 dwelling units (DU)) and approximately 33,978 sf of local retail, in addition to an approximately 1.27-acre open space and a 60,000 sf restaurant in the landmark former Childs Restaurant building on the development site under the No-Action Alternative.

As with the proposed project, this alternative would not result in adverse impacts on land use, zoning and public policy; open space; shadows; historic and cultural resources; urban design; hazardous materials; water and sewer infrastructure; air quality; greenhouse gas emissions; noise; public health; neighborhood character; and construction. This alternative would result in fewer traffic impacts than the proposed project. However, the No-Action Alternative would fall short of the objectives of the proposed project to reinvigorate Coney Island with a new recreational and entertainment destination along the Riegelmann Boardwalk on underutilized land and extend pedestrian activity westward along the boardwalk with the development of a year-round expansive neighborhood park.

C. NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

For the currently proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would mean that the proposed Seaside Park and Community Arts Center would not be developed. Instead, the development site would be developed with residential, commercial, and open space uses as analyzed in the 2009 FEIS. Based on the programming for the entire projected development site and the illustrative site plans provided in the 2009 FEIS, the eastern portion of the development site was intended for new residential and commercial development (Lot 142) as well as the restoration and adaptive reuse of the LPC-designated former Childs Restaurant building (Lot 130). The 1.27-acre western portion of the development site was intended to be part of the 1.41-acre Highland View Park.¹

Assuming the upper limits of development allowable under R7-D/C2-4 zoning and the Special Coney Island District regulations, Lot 142 would accommodate approximately 33,978 sf of commercial and 223,118 sf (223 DUs) of residential in the future without the proposed action. As illustrated in the 2009 EIS, commercial development would extend the full length of the boardwalk frontage (approximately 162 feet) and would be built to a depth of 70 feet, as only commercial uses are allowed within 70 feet of the boardwalk pursuant to the special district regulations. As the maximum allowable base height is 40 feet (estimated at 3 floors), approximately 33,978 sf of commercial uses could reasonably be built. Given the lot size of 44,327 sf and the maximum allowable FAR of 5.8 (pursuant to the Inclusionary Housing bonus), Lot 142 could reasonably accommodate approximately 223,118 sf (223 DUs) of residential uses (minus commercial floor area). Additionally, the former Childs Restaurant building on Lot 130 would be restored and adaptively reused at its current floor area of approximately 60,000 sf, and the western portion of the site would be converted to an approximately 1.27 acre public park. Thus, in the future without the proposed action, the development site would be developed with approximately 223,118 sf (223 DUs) of residential, 93,978 sf of commercial, and 1.27 acres of publicly accessible open space. In the future without the proposed project, it is assumed that the two outparcels (Lots 79 and 81) would remain vacant.

Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy

Under the No-Action Alternative, it is anticipated that the development site would be developed with a mix of residential, commercial, and open space uses. In comparison to the future with the proposed project, under the No-Action Alternative, there would be more residential units and local retail (compared to none with the proposed project), and less open space.

Like the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not result in any significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, or public policy. The No-Action Alternative's commercial and open space uses would be consistent with existing land uses in the area, and would not significantly affect the mix of existing land uses in the area. However, as stated in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy," the project area is currently underutilized and does not exhibit the characteristics of a well-developed residential neighborhood. As such, the introduction of approximately 223,000 sf of residential uses, while consistent with zoning and public policy, would be an isolated single development and would stand out in the immediately surrounding area. The No-Action Alternative would not noticeably reinvigorate the surrounding neighborhood nor extend pedestrian activity westward along the boardwalk.

Under this alternative, no changes to zoning or public policy are anticipated. The development site would be developed as-of-right to the maximum allowable FAR under R7-D/C2-4 zoning and Special

¹ The two outparcels, Lot 79 and 81, would have comprised the remainder of the planned Highland View Park.

Coney Island District regulations. Furthermore, the No-Action Alternative would be consistent with applicable public policies. The No-Action Alternative's mix of residential, commercial, and open space uses, as well as the rehabilitation and adaptation of the LPC-designated former Childs Restaurant building would be consistent with the goals of the 2005 Coney Island Strategic Plan to transform the area into a transitional area between destinations and residences, generate recreational uses for community residents, and activate the former Childs Restaurant building. As with the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would further the goals of the 2009 Coney Island Comprehensive Rezoning Plan to foster the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land and develop year-round uses and job opportunities for residents. Furthermore, the No-Action Alternative would similarly be consistent with the New York City Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) Program, the National and New York State Historic Preservation Acts, PlaNYC, Vision 2020, and the Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP).

Open Space

Similar to the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not alter or displace any existing public open space resources. In addition, the No-Action Alternative would result in the development of an approximately 1.27 acre park, 1.14 acres (approximately 47 percent) less than would be developed with the proposed project. It is expected that under the No-Action Alternative, the park would be publicly-accessible and would include a mix of neighborhood-oriented passive and active elements. Based on the assumptions made in the Coney Island Rezoning FEIS, it is assumed that approximately 80 percent, or 1.0 acres, of this open space would be dedicated to active recreational uses, while the remaining 0.27 acres would be for passive use.

The No-Action Alternative would also introduce new residents and more workers to the development site than the proposed project. Because it would introduce more open space users to the area, it would place greater demands on open spaces within a half mile of the development site (the residential open space study area) as well as greater demands on passive open spaces within a quarter mile of the development site (the non-residential open space study area) than the proposed project. However, neither the No-Action Alternative nor the proposed project would result in significant adverse impacts on open space.

In addition, the features and amenities associated with the proposed project's 2.41-acre open space—including gardens, landscaping, play equipment, and restrooms, in addition to a performance venue for concerts and community-oriented events such as farmers' markets, school graduations, and festivals—might not be realized under this alternative.

Shadows

As with the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not result in a significant adverse shadows impact. Under the No-Action Alternative, it is estimated that approximately 223,000 sf (223 DUs) of residential floor area, 93,978 sf of commercial space, and 1.27 acres of publicly-accessible open space would be added to the development site. All residential and commercial development would occur on the eastern portion of the development site (Lots 130 and 142), while the western portion would be developed as Highland View Park.

Similar to the proposed project, development under the No-Action Alternative would cast shadows on two sunlight-sensitive open space resources: Riegelmann Boardwalk and Coney Island Beach. However, as the No-Action Alternative would have resulted in the construction of structures with larger bulk

(approximately 5.8 FAR) and height (maximum height of approximately 160 feet). As such, while incremental shadows would be cast on those resources under both the No-Action Alternative and with the proposed project, the shadows resulting from development under the No-Action Alternative would be larger and of greater duration than the incremental shadows from the proposed project. It should also be noted that, unlike the proposed project's shadows, which would occur only during the event season (May to October), the No-Action Alternative would cast incremental shadows on those resources throughout the year.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Under the No-Action Alternative, as with the proposed project, it is anticipated that the LPC-designated former Childs Restaurant building would be reactivated and rehabilitated, enhancing the historic resource and the surrounding area. As the building is a designated New York City Landmark (NYCL), any restoration would be approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), in accordance with the New York City Landmarks Law, which required LPC review and approval before any alteration or demolition of privately-owned NYCL.

Further development associated with the No-Action Alternative—including the construction of mixed-use residential and commercial buildings immediately adjacent to the landmark former Childs Restaurant building—could also affect the setting of this historic architectural resource and/or accidentally damage the building during construction, causing it to lose historic integrity. The New York City Building Code provides some measures of protection for all properties against accidental damage from adjacent construction by requiring that all buildings, lots, and service facilities adjacent to foundation and earthwork areas be protected and supported. In addition, under the No-Action Alternative, the New York City Department of Building's (DOB's) Technical Policy and Procedure Notice (TPPN) #10/88 would apply. Among other things, the TPPN 10/88 requires a monitoring program to reduce the likelihood of construction damage adjacent to LPC-designated or S/NR-listed resources (within 90 feet) and to detect at an early stage the beginnings of damage so that construction procedures can be changed.

As alteration of the LPC-designated former Childs Restaurant building would require LPC review and approval before any alteration could occur, and construction within 90 feet of the historic architectural resource would be in accordance with TPPN #10/88 under the No-Action Alternative, as with the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not result in a significant adverse impact on historic and cultural resources.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

It is anticipated that the development site would be developed with residential, commercial, and open space uses under the No-Action Alternative. Specifically, Lot 142 would accommodate approximately 33,978 sf of commercial uses and 223,000 sf (223 DU) of residential uses. Commercial development would extend the full length of the boardwalk frontage (approximately 162 feet) and would be built to a depth of 70 feet, as only commercial uses are allowed within 70 feet of the Riegelmann Boardwalk, pursuant to the Coney Island Special District regulations. These new structure would replace currently vacant and underutilized land with freestanding buildings with large footprints, altering the streetscape of the project area. Additionally, under the No-Action Alternative, the former Childs Restaurant building on Lot 130 would be restored and adaptively reused at its current floor area of approximately 60,000 sf,

and the western portion of the development site would be converted to an approximately 1.27-acre park.

Compared to the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would result in a taller structure – a mixed-use building with a maximum height of 160 feet, compared to the amphitheater tensile cover’s height of 94 feet (80 feet above the boardwalk); as such, the No-Action Alternative would be more visually prominent. Moreover, the mixed-use building developed under the No-Action Alternative would be a permanent structure, whereas the tensile roof cover would be seasonal, and removed during the off-season, thereby creating unobstructed views through the development site.

As with the proposed project, development under the No-Action Alternative would be an improvement over existing conditions, replacing currently vacant and underutilized land and enhancing pedestrian experiences in the project area. In addition, as with the proposed project, development under the No-Action Alternative would not limit access to the historically and architecturally significant eastern and southern facades of the landmark former Childs Restaurant building, a visual resource in the study area, and would create new visual corridors between the project area and the Coney Island Beach.

Hazardous Materials

As with the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not result in significant adverse hazardous materials impacts.

As stated in Chapter 7, “Hazardous Material,” the former Childs Restaurant building (Lot 130), which occupies the eastern portion of the development site, has an (E) designation for hazardous materials, which may require special activities coordinated through the New York City Office of Environmental Remediation to be performed at the time of site redevelopment. The (E) designation on the former Childs Restaurant building would require that, prior to development under the No-Action Alternative, the property owner conduct a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) in accordance with the American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM) E1527-05, prepare and implement a soil and groundwater testing protocol, and conduct remediation where appropriate, to the satisfaction of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) before issuance of construction-related building permits by the DOB. The (E) designation also requires mandatory construction-related health and safety plans (approved by DEP), as well as a Phase II report at the completion of the site investigation if potential contamination is identified and remediation, as necessary, based on the Phase II during construction. The (E) designation on Lot 130 would reduce or avoid the potential for an adverse impact to human health and the environment resulting from development under the No-Action Alternative.

Development of the open space and amphitheater on the remainder of the site would require a similar level of excavation and subsurface disturbance under both the No-Action Alternative and the proposed project. However, unlike the proposed project, no (E) designations would be placed on the remainder of the project site under the No-Action Alternative, and this mechanism for reducing or avoiding the potential for an adverse impact to human health and the environment would not occur.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Under the No-Action Alternative, the development site would be developed with a mix of residential, commercial, and open space uses. In addition, as with the proposed project, development under the No-Action Alternative would involve the relocation and termination, installation, and/or replacement of

underground utilities within the development site. All improvements would be in accordance with the Amended Drainage Plan (ADP).

Under this alternative, demands on water and sewer infrastructure would be greater than with the proposed project. Water demand associated with development under the No-Action Alternative would total approximately 91,216 gallons per day (gpd), approximately 40 percent more than with the proposed project; wastewater generation on the development site would total approximately 75,240 gpd under the No-Action Alternative, approximately 30,840 gpd more than with the proposed project. However, as stated in Chapter 8, “Water and Sewer Infrastructure,” with the anticipated infrastructure improvements on the development site and in the greater Coney Island area, development under the No-Action Alternative, like the proposed project, would not result in significant adverse impacts to water supply and pressure or sanitary sewers.

Development under the No-Action Alternative would also result in an increase in the amount of impervious surfaces on the development site compared to existing conditions, and would therefore result in minor increases in stormwater runoff to adjacent storm sewers. However, similar to the proposed project, as the No-Action Alternative would result in only minor increases in stormwater runoff and would improve stormwater infrastructure on the development site, the No-Action Alternative would not result in a significant adverse impact to stormwater drainage and management.

Transportation

The No-Action Alternative would result in the development of a mix of residential, commercial, and open space uses on the development site. There would also be increased volumes from background growth and demand from other known and anticipated development projects in the vicinity of the project area. It should be noted that the NYCDOT conversion of West 19th Street between Surf and Neptune Avenues from one-way northbound to one-way southbound operation, would result in network changes under both the No-Action and With-Action conditions. In addition, under the No-Action Alternative, as with the proposed project, the loop comprised of West 23rd Street, Highland View Avenue and West 22nd Street south of Surf Avenue would be eliminated, resulting in two-way operations of both West 22nd and West 23rd Streets.

Traffic

Under the No-Action Alternative, some intersections that are congested (Level of Service (LOS) D or worse) under existing conditions would worsen and some intersections that are not congested (LOS C or better) would become congested during one or more analyzed peak hour. Specifically, the Shore Parkway westbound off-ramp and on-ramp at Cropsey Avenue/Bay 50th Street, the Shore Parkway eastbound service road at Shell Road, Neptune Avenue at West 20th Street, Neptune Avenue at Cropsey Avenue/West 17th Street, Mermaid Avenue at West 20th Street, Surf Avenue at West 22nd Street, and Surf Avenue at West 17th Street would be congested (Level of Service (LOS) D or worse) in 2016 under the No-Action Alternative. As such, the No-Action Alternative would result in congested traffic conditions at seven intersections, compared to ten intersections with the proposed project (refer to Tables 9-15 and 9-17 in Chapter 9, “Transportation”). Furthermore, it is anticipated that DOT will monitor the modified traffic flows along West 20th Street resulting from the reversal of West 19th Street and implement necessary traffic improvement measures to decrease delays under the No-Action condition.

Transit

Under the No-Action Alternative, transit demand generated on the development site would increase compared to existing conditions. However, as shown in Chapter 9, "Transportation," under the No-Action Alternative, as with the proposed project, all subway station elements would operate at LOS B or better during the analysis peak period. As such, the No-Action Alternative would similarly not result in a significant adverse transit impact.

Pedestrians

It is anticipated that development under the No-Action Alternative would result in increased pedestrian flow volumes in the project area and the surrounding area. Under the No-Action Alternative, the western sidewalk along West 21st Street between Surf Avenue and Riegelmann Boulevard would operate at LOS B during the Saturday pre-event analysis period (compared to LOS A under existing conditions); and the east crosswalk at the intersection of Surf Avenue and West 21st Street would operate at LOS B during the weekday pre-event analysis period and LOS B during the Saturday pre-event analysis period (compared to LOS A during both analysis periods under existing conditions); all other analyzed sidewalk elements would continue to operate at LOS A under the No-Action Alternative.

However, as with the proposed project, all analyzed sidewalks, crosswalks, and corners would operate at LOS C or better under the No-Action Alternative and therefore would not result in a significant adverse impact to pedestrian conditions.

Parking

As with the proposed project, background growth in the study area is expected to increase the demand for on-street and off-street parking under the No-Action Alternative. However, the parking demand generated by the No-Action Alternative would be substantially less than for the proposed project, and on-street and off-street parking facilities in the ½-mile area surrounding the development site would have sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional parking demand anticipated under the No-Action Alternative. Therefore, the No-Action Alternative would not result in a significant adverse parking impact.

Air Quality

The No-Action Alternative would introduce new residential, commercial, and open space uses to the currently underutilized development site. As with the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not result in any stationary source or mobile source air quality impacts. The No-Action Alternative, like the proposed project, would increase traffic on roadways near the development site, but to a lesser degree. Like the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not exceed the 8-hour carbon monoxide (CO) standard. The maximum concentrations of 3.05 under the No-Action Alternative and 3.12 with the proposed project would both be below the NAAQS of 9 ppm. Unlike the proposed project however, the No-Action Alternative would result in more truck trips and more PM_{2.5} emissions than the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Overall, the No-Action Alternative would result in the development of an additional 223,000 sf of residential uses and 33,978 sf of local retail, as well as the net reduction in 1.14 acres of publicly

accessible open space, compared to the proposed project. As a result of the additional development under the No-Action Alternative, total project annual GHG emissions (including operational and mobile emissions) would be approximately 1,727,597 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents more than with the proposed project. Operational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from building energy use—including on-site emissions from fuel consumption as well as emissions associated with the production and delivery of the electricity to be used on site—would be approximately 2,355,783 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents per year, 1,727,999 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents more than operational GHG emissions associated with the proposed project. However, as the number of additional annual weekday vehicles that would be generated under the No-Action Alternative would be less than with the proposed project, mobile source emissions related to development under the No-Action Alternative would be approximately 402 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents less than with the proposed project.

Unlike the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would result in increased construction operation emissions, increase the carbon footprint of new development, and introduce vulnerable residential uses as well as associated building project systems on the flood prone development site. Further, under the No-Action Alternative, the elements of the proposed project that would reduce GHG emissions from the development site and therefore be consistent with the City GHG reduction goal—including seeking LEED® certification, with a commitment to attain a Silver rating for the renovated former Childs Restaurant building—would go unrealized.

As is the case with any as-of-right development, under the No-Action Alternative, a detailed analysis aimed at reducing energy use and GHG emissions would not be undertaken. However, development under the No-Action Alternative would be required to meet the current building energy code and the NYC Building Code, and would be treated as any existing building under future efforts by the City to meet PlaNYC energy and GHG goals. Therefore, development under the No-Action Alternative is not anticipated to result in a significant adverse impact to GHG emissions.

Noise

The No-Action Alternative would introduce new residential uses (a sensitive receptor), as well as commercial uses and open space to the currently underutilized development site. Under the No-Action Alternative, as with the proposed project, traffic on roadways near the development site would increase, and consequently noise levels at and adjacent to the development site would increase compared to existing conditions. The relative increases in noise levels would range from 0.1 to 0.8 dBA under the No-Action Alternative, and would not be perceptible. Therefore, as with the proposed project, noise impacts due to increases in traffic are unlikely under the No-Action Alternative.

However, as the proposed amphitheater would not be constructed under the No-Action Alternative, associated elevated noise levels from concerts would not occur. Despite the elevated noise levels resulting from the proposed project, neither the No-Action Alternative nor the proposed project would result in significant adverse noise impacts.

Public Health

As the No-Action Alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts to any of the technical areas applicable to public health (hazardous materials, water quality, air quality, and noise), the No-Action Alternative would not result in potentially significant adverse impacts on public health.

Neighborhood Character

Like the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would result in beneficial effects to neighborhood character by enlivening the development site with new uses. However, unlike the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not include the construction of an amphitheater, and would result in the development of 1.27 acres of publicly-accessible open space, compared to 2.41 acres with the proposed project. In addition, under the No-Action Alternative, approximately 223,000 sf (223 DU) of residential uses and approximately 93,978 sf of commercial uses would be development on the development site.

As stated in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the technical areas relevant to a neighborhood character analysis are Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy; Socioeconomic Conditions; Open Space; Shadows; Historic and Cultural Resources; Urban Design and Visual Resources; Transportation; and Noise. As shown in the preceding sections, apart from transportation, the No-Action Alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts in any of the technical areas that could cause a neighborhood character impact. As with the proposed project, the scale of the significant adverse transportation impact would not affect any defining feature of neighborhood character, nor would a combination of moderately adverse impacts affect the neighborhood's defining features. As such, the No-Action Alternative would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

Construction

As with the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative would not result in any significant adverse impacts with respect to construction. However, development under the No-Action Alternative would involve a longer construction period with increased excavation and foundation work as a result of the additional building construction. Overall, construction would take place over a period of up to 24 months under the No-Action Alternative, compared with 15 months with the proposed project. All construction activities would be conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations, including TPN #10/88 and the New York City Noise Control Code, as well as the New York City DOB and DEP, US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and New York State Solid Waste regulations, among others.

Development under the No-Action Alternative would involve the rehabilitation of the existing 60,000 sf former Childs Restaurant as well as the construction of a park. As with the proposed project, in addition to interior demolition and fit-out work, the rehabilitation would be limited to the building envelope of the landmark building, including fenestration, restoration of the masonry façade and replacement of the entire roof system. Construction activities for the 1.27 acres of open space developed under the No-Action Alternative would include demolition of existing pavement and small temporary structures and the relocation and termination of underground utilities, in accordance with the ADP. As the open space plan for the site is unknown, the specific subsurface excavation work, grading, and above ground construction activities are unknown.

In addition, under the No-Action Alternative, an approximately 256,978 sf mixed-use residential and commercial building would be constructed on Lot 142. It is anticipated that construction on Lot 142 would last approximately 24 months, and would therefore be considered short term. Construction of new buildings is typically comprised of three phases: the first phase would encompass demolition, excavation, and foundation work and would last one to two months; the second phase would encompass the building superstructure and would last approximately six months; and the third phase would be comprised of façade and roof construction, mechanical installation, and interior and finishing

work, and would last approximately 12 months. As Lot 142 is located immediately adjacent to the LPC-designated former Childs Restaurant building, construction of the approximately 256,978 sf would be conducted in accordance with TPPN #10/88, thereby minimizing potential impacts to this historic resource.

Due to the more intensive construction activities associated with the development of the mixed-use building on Lot 142, it is expected that the No-Action Alternative would generate more construction-related noise, traffic, and air emissions, thereby resulting in potential construction-period impacts. However, given the short-term nature of the construction activities under the No-Action Alternative, and the assumption that all construction activities would be conducted in accordance with the relevant governmental regulations, potential construction-related impacts would be limited. Therefore, as with the proposed project, the No-Action Alternative is not expected to result in significant adverse construction impacts.