



Gowanus Facilities Upgrade
Negative Declaration, CEQR#01DEP087K
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**DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

59-17 Junction Boulevard
Flushing, New York 11373

NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

February 26, 2009

Gowanus Facilities Upgrade
CEQR No. 01DEP087K

Steven W. Lawitts
Acting Commissioner

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This Negative Declaration has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process as set forth in Executive Order 91 of 1977 and amendments, Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law establishing the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and its regulations as set forth in 6NYCRR Part 617, and the State Environmental Review Process (SERP) as required to obtain financing under the State Revolving Fund Program. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), as lead agency, had determined that the proposed action described below would not have a significant effect on the environment and is herein publishing a Negative Declaration. An Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) form and attachments were distributed on December 15, 2008.

Angela Licata
Deputy Commissioner

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) proposes to upgrade the flushing tunnel system and wastewater pumping station at the Gowanus Facilities located at 201 Douglass Street, south of Butler Street and northwest of the head of the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn, New York. Improvements at other associated sites are also required as part of the proposed action. The Gowanus Facilities Upgrade is proposed to improve the capacity, function, efficiency, and reliability of the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system and wastewater pumping station with the aim of improving the water quality in the Gowanus Canal over the long term.

As part of the Waterbody/Watershed Facility Plan submitted to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) in August 2008, the proposed action, along with the expected recommendations of the Gowanus Canal Long Term Control Plan (LTCP), is expected to continue to improve and maintain water quality in the Canal through the reduced frequency and intensity of CSOs by 34 percent, reduction of floatables, improvement of DO levels, and elimination of odors. The proposed action is scheduled to commence construction in July 2009 and be completed by March 2013.

The proposed action consists of upgrades and improvements to the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system and wastewater pumping station, both of which are vitally important in the effort to improve the water quality in the Gowanus Canal over the



long term. The upgrade of the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system incorporates significant modifications to increase the peak flow and the average daily flow of the existing system. In addition, the proposed action would include the installation of a temporary interim canal centralized oxygen transfer system (OTS) to help maintain acceptable dissolved oxygen (DO) levels in the Gowanus Canal during the construction period for the proposed action.

The proposed action also includes mechanical upgrades at the Gowanus Canal wastewater pumping station to increase the flow capacity of the station and enclosure of the influent chamber. In addition, the Gowanus Facilities wastewater pumping station building and the service building would be replaced by the proposed combined Gowanus Facilities service building/wastewater pumping station building and include the removal and replacement of all mechanical, electrical and HVAC equipment. The proposed action also includes the installation of a combined sewer overflow (CSO) screening system, the replacement of the wastewater force main and the construction and operation of an interim Gowanus Canal wastewater pumping system and force main to maintain wastewater flow throughout the duration of construction.

Under SEQRA guidelines, the proposed action is classified as an Unlisted action¹.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As presented in detail in the December 15, 2008 EAS, the proposed project would not result in the potential for significant adverse impacts to occur to any aspects of the environment. Detailed discussions of all impact categories are presented in the December 2008 EAS; key conclusions are summarized below.

Historic Resources

New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with a 2004 report completed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) suggesting that the Gowanus Canal and vicinity comprises a National Register-eligible historic district. Based on a review of the proposed action and related design drawings, SHPO identified the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system building, built 1905-1911, as a "contributing resource." As such, final construction plans and design drawings for the proposed action were forwarded to SHPO to determine whether construction would impact the interior or exterior of the flushing tunnel system building. Based on this review, SHPO determined that the project would have no adverse impact on historic resources as long as water pressure work on masonry does not exceed 250 psi. This specification is included in the contract documents for the proposed action. If any future design changes are implemented, revised drawings will be forwarded to SHPO for additional review and approval. Therefore, the proposed action would present no potential significant adverse impacts to historic resources in the vicinity of the Gowanus Canal.

Natural Resources

The long-term enhanced performance and reliability of the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system, the increased capacity of the wastewater pumping station and new force main, and the resulting reduction of

¹ According to SEQRA and set forth in 6NYCRR Part 617, Unlisted actions are those actions or projects that are do not meet or exceed a threshold contained in the Type I list and is not identified as a Type II action.

CSO, floatables, sediment, and other debris associated with the Gowanus Facilities Upgrade are expected to improve overall water quality and ecological conditions for benthic and other organisms in the Gowanus Canal. After the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system improvements are completed, NYCDEP shall submit a fish entrainment study for the Buttermilk Channel intake structure to NYSDEC's Division of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources. The purpose of the study would be to assess entrainment after the reactivation of the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system and the scope of work, including any monitoring or sampling required, would be coordinated with NYSDEC. Therefore, this action would present no potential significant impacts to natural resources.

Hazardous Materials

The proposed action would require disturbance and excavation of underlying soils during the construction of the flushing tunnel system elements, wastewater pumping station and related force mains. The proposed action would involve below-grade construction within previously disturbed areas. To determine the potential for hazardous materials at this location, Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments were performed for the proposed construction areas. As a result of these assessments, a project-specific Soil Management Plan (SMP) and a Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP) shall be developed. The SMP and CHASP shall address the protection of on-site workers from potential exposure to site-related contaminants; protection of adjacent properties, off-site personnel, and the environment from site contaminants through air monitoring and the control of dust and vapor migration; provision for additional soil analysis in order to determine appropriate disposal methods; and necessary permits for dewatering. Therefore, the proposed action would present no potential significant impacts related to hazardous materials.

Energy

The proposed action would require a substantial increase in the total equipment connected load to operate the proposed increased capacities of both the flushing tunnel pumping system and the wastewater pumping station, and to achieve the desired water quality improvements. In order to minimize energy consumption for the proposed action, the use of energy efficient equipment including the latest available microprocessor controlled heating and cooling equipment and site and perimeter lighting design in compliance with the New York State Energy Conservation Code would be utilized. While the pumps for the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system and the wastewater pumping station would be larger and use more energy, the pumps would have an increased overall pump efficiency of 75% or more. The motors specified will be of special design to achieve the required conditions of service and with an approximate motor efficiency of 90% or more to ensure the most efficient available technology during pump operating conditions. Variable speed drives are specified, in part, to improve (wire to water) efficiency of the pumping units compared to constant speed drives. Therefore, the proposed action would present no potential significant impacts related to energy.

Noise

While much of the operation of the Gowanus Facilities resulting from the proposed action would take place deep underground in plenums and chambers or isolated in buildings behind heavy doors or shaft covers, the potential for noise impacts due to roof-mounted HVAC units at the Gowanus Facilities service building was assessed. The proposed action shall include attenuating noise enclosures on HVAC equipment located on the roof of the Gowanus Facilities service building. Enclosures available from either the equipment manufacturers or enclosure manufacturers will be installed for certain exhaust fans.

In addition, the operation of the Gowanus Facilities would comply with the New York City Noise Control Code (Local Law 113). Therefore, the proposed action is not expected to result in potential significant adverse impacts to noise.

Construction

The proposed construction period is expected to be approximately 4 years. While the majority of the proposed action would take place within the boundaries of the Gowanus Facilities property between Butler and Douglass Streets, off-site work associated with the proposed action would be required adjacent to Butler Street, at the intersection of Tompkins Place and Degraw Street, and at the property adjacent to and at the intersection of Degraw and Columbia Streets (including a portion of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey property and at the Buttermilk Channel bulkhead).

Natural Resources

During the construction period of the proposed action, the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system at the Butler Street site would be temporarily deactivated. Due to historical degradation of water quality and aquatic ecology within the Gowanus Canal during the prior deactivation of the Gowanus Canal flushing tunnel system, an interim centralized oxygen transfer system (OTS) would be constructed prior to the shutdown of the flushing tunnel system. The proposed interim centralized OTS is designed to intake water from the Gowanus Canal at a rate of approximately 6,750 gpm and an intake velocity of less than 1 foot per second (fps) to prevent juvenile and adult fish entrainment. The water drawn from the Gowanus Canal would be mixed with pure oxygen, which would be generated within the interim centralized OTS located in the right-of-way adjacent to the Butler Street site. The oxygen loading provided to the Gowanus Canal by the OTS was based on meeting the New York State Class SD dissolved oxygen (DO) criterion of 3 mg/l in the Gowanus Canal. However, 3 mg/l may not be maintained at all times and locations such as during wet weather events resulting in CSO discharges to the Gowanus Canal which would impact minimum DO levels. Without the OTS, the temporary impacts during tunnel shutdown could include reduced DO levels and increased sulfide, affecting the aquatic ecology of the Gowanus Canal and possibly producing nuisance odors and aesthetics during hot and humid weather conditions. Therefore, with the operation of the OTS during the shutdown of the flushing tunnel system, no potential impacts on natural resources are expected during construction.

Traffic

Construction of the proposed action would generate fewer additional peak hour vehicle trip ends than the *CEQR Technical Manual* threshold. In addition, the contractor would be required to provide parking for construction workers' personal vehicles at one or more off-site and off-street locations. However, the proposed action would have short-term, intermittent, adverse effects on local traffic due to lane or partial street closures; temporary suspension of parking on directly affected local streets; and/or possible detours at intersections during construction. Specifically, the proposed action would involve the closure of one parking lane on Butler Street for approximately 44.5 months; closure of one parking lane on Degraw Street for approximately 26 months; and closure of the west end of Degraw Street, near the intersection with Columbia Street, for approximately 12 months and one lane of Degraw Street at this location for an additional 14 months. Traffic management plans have been forwarded to New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) for review and approval for each construction site to minimize traffic impacts during construction. All traffic stipulations and requirements identified by DOT based on their review will be incorporated into the proposed action before proceeding with construction.

Furthermore, should DOT require alternative hours of construction, DEP will review the EAS to determine if further environmental review is needed. Therefore, no potential significant impacts on traffic are expected during construction.

Air Quality

Construction activities have the potential to impact air quality as a consequence of emissions from on-site construction engines including an emergency generator operating intermittently as well as emissions from on-road construction-related vehicles. All equipment will comply with New York City Local Law 77, which requires the use of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD) and installation of the Best Available Technology (BAT) including air quality filters on non-road equipment used in City construction. These requirements would reduce the emissions of fine particulate matter from the construction equipment by at least 85%. Furthermore, the number of construction truck trips during the peak construction period is estimated at less than 5 trips per hour at all three sites, which is well below the NYCDEP PM2.5 screening thresholds for mobile sources. To minimize fugitive dust from becoming airborne during construction operations, appropriate measures would be implemented under the proposed action in accordance with the requirements of the New York City Air Pollution Control Codes (Section 1402.2-9.11). Therefore, no potential significant impacts on air quality are expected during construction.

Noise

The contractor would be required to comply with the New York City Noise Control Code by certifying all equipment used is maintained according manufacturers' specifications. In addition, appropriate low-noise emission equipment, operational procedures, and appropriate noise control approaches including safety barriers shall be implemented to mitigate noise impacts. Furthermore, construction activities would be restricted to weekdays, between the hours of 7 AM and 6 PM. If after hours work is scheduled, the above mentioned EAS would be reviewed by NYCDEP to ensure all analyses and findings completed for the environmental review remain applicable and the contractor would be required to develop a Noise Mitigation Plan that reflects the extended hours of construction. Therefore, no significant noise impacts are expected during construction.

STATEMENT OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

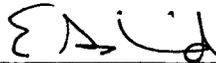
The NYCDEP has determined that, as proposed, the Gowanus Facilities Upgrade is not anticipated to have any potential significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. No significant adverse impacts on natural resources, hazardous materials or other impact categories would occur as a result of the proposed action. No significant adverse impacts on natural resources, traffic, air quality or noise during construction of the proposed action is anticipated and construction activities associated with the proposed action will follow appropriate governing regulations and therefore are not considered significant effects on the environment or public health. These conclusions are based on the analyses and determinations provided within the EAS of December 15, 2008.

Supporting Statements

The above determination is based on an environmental assessment that finds that the project, as proposed, would not result in significant effects on the environment that requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

For further information, please contact:

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