
CHAPTER 11: NATURAL RESOURCES

A. INTRODUCTION

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

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

B. OVERVIEW

The Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse impact on natural resources.

This chapter describes the existing natural resources present in the vicinity of the Project Area and the potential permanent impacts of the Proposed Action on natural resources. The potential for construction-related impacts on natural resources is addressed in Chapter 22, "Construction Impacts."

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

C. METHODOLOGY

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

Broadway Triangle

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

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

E. FUTURE CONDITION WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION

Substantial changes to the study area’s natural resources are not expected to occur under the No Build Condition. The development projects anticipated to occur by 2018 do not include sites that contain features of significance, nor are they located adjacent to any natural resource. Under the No Build Condition, wetlands, floodplains, geology, coastal resources, groundwater, and plant and wildlife species are anticipated to function similar to under Existing Conditions. The study area would remain a densely developed and urbanized area in the No Build Condition.

F. FUTURE CONDITION WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION

Under the Build Condition, 35 projected development sites have been identified. These sites contain no landscaped features with natural resource values, have no subsurface conditions, the disruption of which might affect the function or value of an adjacent or nearby natural resource, and are neither near nor contiguous to any natural resources. Any vegetation on these sites in the existing condition is characterized as typical invasive urban vegetation with no habitat value. Wildlife in the area is characterized by urban mammals and transitory avian wildlife. There are no streams, ponds, or lakes that would provide any habitat for aquatic-related wildlife in the Project Area or 400-foot study area radius. The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to natural resources.

G. CONCLUSION

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

H. NEPA CONSIDERATION

No significant adverse impacts with respect to NEPA considerations are anticipated. Pursuant to HUD’s “NEPA Environmental Assessment Checklist,” areas of concern under NEPA addressed in this chapter include:

- **Wetlands Protection [Executive Order 11990]**

The Proposed Action will not impact wetlands as there are none located within the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Action is in compliance with Executive Order 11990.

- **Sole Source Aquifers [40 CFR 149]**

The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 requires protection of drinking water systems that are the sole or principal drinking water source for an area and which, if contaminated, would create a significant hazard to public health. There is one Sole Source Aquifer located with the study area, the Brooklyn- Queens Sole Source Aquifer. However, groundwater is not used as a source of drinking water in this area. As the majority of the study area is already occupied by buildings or other impervious surfaces, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts on this aquifer.

- **Endangered Species Act [50 CFR 402]**

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 requires protection of listed or proposed endangered or threatened species or critical habitats. Based on information obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, there are no known endangered or threatened species that inhabit the study area nor is there any critical habitat. Therefore, the Proposed Action is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and no significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

- **Wild and Scenic Rivers Act [Sections 7 (b), (c)];**

HUD-assisted activities are subject to the requirements of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.). New construction and the acquisition of undeveloped land for water resources projects (i.e., water and sewer lines, water retention ponds, etc.), which are proposed in areas within one mile of a listed wild and scenic river, have the potential for impacting this natural resource. There are no water bodies defined by the U.S. Department of Interior located within a mile of the Project Area. Therefore, the Proposed Action is in compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and no significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

- **Water Resources**

There are no streams, ponds, or lakes located within the study area. Therefore the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to water resources.

- **Surface Water**

There are no streams, ponds, or lakes located within the study area. Furthermore, as the majority of the development sites are already occupied by buildings or other impervious surfaces (parking lots, etc.), the redevelopment of these already paved parcels would not result in a substantial increase in impervious area or in stormwater runoff. No significant adverse impacts to surface water are anticipated.

- **Unique or Natural Features and Agricultural Lands; and Vegetation and Wildlife**

There are no agricultural lands located within the study area, nor are there unique or natural features that would be impacted by the Proposed Action. As a result, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated related to this issue.

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