INTRODUCTION

The CEQR Technical Manual (hereinafter "the Manual") provides guidance for city agencies, project sponsors, the public, and other entities in the procedures and substance of the City's Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process. CEQR requires city agencies to assess, disclose, and mitigate to the greatest extent practicable the significant environmental consequences of their decisions to fund, directly undertake, or approve a project. The environmental assessment analyzes the project that is facilitated by the action or actions. An action is a discretionary agency decision (approval, funding, or undertaking) needed in order to complete a project. As part of the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC) mandate to assist agencies and other participants in the process, the Manual provides guidance to agencies in undertaking and completing the CEQR process and develops technical guidance and methodologies for environmental review. The Manual, as updated, provides a detailed and comprehensive discussion of the CEQR process, from simple environmental assessments to the more complex analyses appropriate for Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). Consequently, the Manual reflects changes in the environmental review process over time, development of new methodologies, changes in legislation, and other circumstances that affect the form or content of the City's environmental review process. In addition, city policies, environmental conditions, and the level of information available for assessing a project have changed since the last revision and the technical analyses have been updated and revised accordingly.

STRUCTURE OF THE MANUAL

The Manual presents its information in twenty-four chapters. Chapter 1 describes the regulatory requirements of the CEQR process and the various types of documentation applicable during environmental review. This chapter also offers a practical approach to determining the appropriate level of documentation. Chapter 2 provides guidance in structuring the environmental analyses. This framework includes defining and characterizing the proposed project so that it may be assessed, as well as evaluating and comparing environmental conditions for three specific scenarios—the existing condition, the future without the project, and the future with the project in place.

Chapter 3 introduces the technical analyses used to identify potential significant adverse impacts, the development of measures to mitigate such impacts, and the process for selecting alternatives. The technical analyses are presented in Chapters 4 through 22. Each chapter explains potential assessment methods for that technical area. These methodologies are considered appropriate for assessment of projects undergoing CEQR review, but are not required by CEQR. There may be specific projects that require additional analyses.

Chapter 23 describes the types of alternatives to be assessed and Chapter 24 explains the contents of the various summary chapters to be included when an EIS is required. A glossary and appendices containing relevant rules and regulations and other technical information are located in online appendices to the Manual.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STATEMENT (EAS) SHORT AND FULL FORMS

The Environmental Assessment Form provides a template for the conduct of the environmental assessment. An EAS Short Form has been developed for the assessment of Unlisted actions only. This form provides a detailed checklist to assist the project proponent and lead agency in determining whether further detailed assessment is needed and whether the potential exists for significant adverse impacts. If no further assessment is needed, the EAS Short Form incorporates a template for issuance of a Negative Declaration. Note that the lead agency may require supplementation of information requested in the EAS Short Form in order to make its determination of significance.

The EAS Full Form, to be completed for assessment of all Type I actions and certain Unlisted actions, as appropriate, includes a more detailed checklist for determining the potential for significant adverse impacts.

ACCESS TO THE ELECTRONIC CEQR TECHNICAL MANUAL

As part of the City's efforts to make information available to the public electronically and reduce the use of paper, the Manual is available in downloadable PDF format on the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC) website. The Manual will not be printed. Where possible, hyperlinks to additional information are included in each chapter, including links to external websites, as well as to additional information such as charts, tables, and further guidance regarding a specific topic. Please note that internet access is required to follow any of the externally referenced links in the chapters.

MOEC reviews the CEQR Technical Manual periodically to determine whether updates or revisions are needed. Notices of revisions or updates are announced on MOEC's website and reflected in the appropriate chapter(s) in the Technical Manual. If necessary, MOEC will also update the Manual between scheduled reviews. For these reasons, it is recommended to always use the online chapters located on MOEC's website. Earlier versions of the Manual are also available on MOEC's website, but should not be used as guidance for environmental reviews.

APPLICABILITY OF THE CEQR TECHNICAL MANUAL AND SUBSEQUENT UPDATES

The updated CEQR Technical Manual should be used as guidance for any environmental review commenced on or after the date of the release of the update. In the case of impact analyses commenced prior to this date of release that are not considered complete as of such date—through the issuance of a Negative Declaration, a Conditional Negative Declaration, or a Final Environmental Impact Statement—the lead agency should consider, taking into account as necessary the scheduled timing of completion of environmental review under the applicable regulatory approval process, whether supplementation of the impact analyses to reflect a methodology of the updated CEQR Technical Manual should be conducted.