
INTRODUCTION

At the request of Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC), with the assistance of the City's technical agencies, has reviewed and updated the CEQR Technical Manual. This 2001 Technical Manual reflects changes in applicable laws, standards and practices that have occurred since the CEQR Technical Manual was originally issued in 1993. It also contains updated information on the City agencies that conduct and participate in CEQR reviews.

As part of the City's efforts to make information available to the public electronically, the updated Technical Manual is available both in print format (through the CityStore, 1 Centre Street, North Lobby, New York, New York 10007, 212-669-8246/8247), the Department of City Planning Bookstore, 22 Reade Street, New York, New York 10007 and in downloadable PDF format on the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC) Web site accessible through New York City's Web site at www.nyc.gov. Users of the Technical Manual are encouraged to consult the MOEC Web site, where further updates to the Technical Manual will be posted periodically.

This CEQR Technical Manual is intended to provide guidance for City agencies, project sponsors, and the public in the procedures and substance of the City's Environmental Quality Review process. The Manual, along with Executive Order No. 91, the Rules of Procedure for CEQR (Rules), and the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) form, describes the CEQR process.

Executive Order No. 91 first framed the CEQR process in 1977. In 1989, the revised City Charter authorized the City Planning Commission to adopt rules of procedure for CEQR. The Commission did so, and the rules became effective October 1, 1991; these rules were superimposed on Executive Order No. 91, fundamentally reforming the City's process. They redefined lead agencies within the City, set forth public scoping procedures for lead agencies to follow when an environmental impact statement (EIS) is to be prepared, and established the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC) to

assist lead agencies and other participants in the process.

As part of its mandate, MOEC provides guidance to lead agencies in undertaking and completing the CEQR process and develops technical guidance and methodologies for environmental review. One of its first steps in fulfilling this mandate was the publication, on October 26, 1992, of a standardized EAS form. This document describes the process and provides methodologies for determining whether an action has the potential to create a significant adverse impact.

This Manual, as updated, provides a detailed and comprehensive discussion of the CEQR process, from simple environmental assessments to the more complex appropriate for EISs. The EAS form and this Manual have been updated to respond to changes in the process over time, development of new methodologies, changes in legislation and any other circumstances that may reasonably affect the form or content of the City's environmental review process. Future changes to this Manual, forms and related documents can be made more easily because of online capability.

The Manual presents its information in three chapters. Chapter 1 describes the regulatory requirements of the CEQR process and the various types of documentation applicable during environmental review. Chapter 2 provides guidance in structuring the environmental analyses. This framework includes defining and characterizing the proposed action so that it can be assessed, and evaluating and comparing environmental conditions for three specific scenarios—the existing condition, the future if the action is not implemented, and the future with the action in place. This chapter also offers a practical approach to deciding which level of documentation is appropriate and when the various CEQR documents—EAS, draft and final scoping documents, and draft and final EISs—are complete.

Chapter 3 describes technical analyses used to identify significant adverse impacts, the process for selecting alternatives, and the development of

measures to mitigate such impacts. It also explains potential assessment methods for each technical area. These methodologies are considered appropriate for assessment of CEQR actions, but are not required by CEQR. Other methodologies also exist and can be used if deemed appropriate by the lead agency.

Chapter 3 also explains the contents of the various summary chapters included in EISs. Where possible lists of sources of information have been added or updated.

A glossary of terms and an appendix containing relevant rules and regulations and other technical information follow Chapter 3. The glossary has been expanded and the appendices have been revised to reflect changes in the Manual.

For environmental reviews commenced before the issuance of this updated edition, and particularly in those cases where substantial work has been performed before the release of this update, lead agencies, in the exercise of their reasonable discretion, may elect to follow the guidance offered in the December 1993 Manual. Subject to their reasonable discretion, for environmental reviews commenced after the issuance of this (or any future) update, lead agencies may choose to follow the guidance offered in the updated edition.