

Foreword

This document is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Flushing Commons project, sponsored by Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development (ODMED) as the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) lead agency for the project. A notice of completion of the Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS) was issued on January 20, 2010, at which time the DEIS was made available for public review. Oral and written comments were received during a joint public hearing held by the New York City Planning Commission and ODMED on May 12, 2010, at 22 Reade Street in New York City. Written comments were accepted from issuance of the DEIS through the public comment period, which ended May 24, 2010.

This FEIS reflects all relevant substantive comments made on the DEIS during the public hearing and subsequent written comment period. The comments are summarized and responded to in Chapter 26, “Response to Comments on the DEIS.” This FEIS also reflects changes to the proposed action that were made subsequent to the issuance of the DEIS and all substantive changes to technical analyses resulting from DEIS comments, agency reviews, and material changes in conditions since issuance of the DEIS. Within the technical chapters, new or modified text is identified by a double underline. No double-underlining is used for the Foreword, Chapter 26, “Response to Comments on the DEIS,” or new Appendices D, E, and F, all of which are entirely new. The principal changes found in the FEIS are summarized below.

MODIFIED TWO-WAY PROPOSAL

The FEIS has been revised to accommodate changes in the City’s proposed traffic management plan for Union and Main Streets, assessing the current proposal for a “Modified Two-Way” plan as opposed to the “One-Way with Contra Flow” plan that was analyzed in the DEIS. The new analyses for the proposed modified plan are found in Appendix D while comparative assessments of the change are found in Chapter 9: “Neighborhood Character,” Chapter 14: “Traffic and Parking,” Chapter 15: “Transit and Pedestrians,” Chapter 16: “Air Quality,” Chapter 17: “Noise,” Chapter 18: “Construction,” Chapter 20: “Mitigation,” and, Chapter 21: “Alternatives.”

2010 CEQR TECHNICAL MANUAL

Subsequent to the publication of the DEIS, the City released a revised *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* (May 17, 2010) which updates the methodologies and criteria set forth in the 2001 *CEQR Technical Manual* that was the basis for the analyses contained in this FEIS. In consultation with the lead agency, the FEIS was reviewed for consistency with the new criteria and methodologies of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*.

In general, the guidance criteria of the revised manual would have still led to the preparation of the detailed analyses presented in the Flushing Commons FEIS and would not have substantially altered principal conclusions for many of the FEIS technical chapters. For those technical areas where the updated guidance of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual* specifically identified new

analyses or offered substantially different guidance criteria, the FEIS has been adjusted to accommodate the new information to the extent practicable. The following list summarizes changes to technical chapters that were made in response to the *CEQR Technical Manual* update.

Chapter 2: Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy

Key changes to the guidance in the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual* primarily affect technical analyses and methodologies not relevant for this FEIS (e.g., moving the assessment of Waterfront Revitalization Program policies to this chapter). Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual. For large, publicly-sponsored projects, the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual* requires a sustainability assessment. Although the proposed action is not subject to the assessment—Flushing Commons is a privately-sponsored project and Macedonia Plaza is a small publicly-sponsored project—the FEIS has been revised to include a general discussion of the proposed action’s consistency with the goals and initiatives of PlaNYC, the City’s long-term sustainability plan.

Chapter 3: Socioeconomic Conditions

The level of analysis conducted for the FEIS—preliminary assessments for direct and indirect residential development, direct business displacement, and adverse effects on specific industries and a detailed assessment of indirect business displacement—is consistent with guidance in the revised 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

Chapter 4: Community Facilities

Prior to the issuance of the revised 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*, the City developed new methodologies for the analysis of public schools and publicly-funded child care facilities, and the Flushing Commons DEIS already reflected these new methodologies. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

Chapters 5: Open Space; 6: Shadows; and 7: Historic Resources

The guidance and impact assessment methodologies of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual* are consistent with the analyses presented in the FEIS. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

Chapter 8: Urban Design and Visual Resources

The updated methodologies of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual* provide for two levels of analysis of urban design and visual resources—preliminary and detailed analysis—depending on the characteristics of a proposed action. Additional information is required for the methodology associated with the detailed analysis. Consistent with the revised manual, the FEIS presents a detailed analysis of urban design and visual resources. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

Chapter 9: Neighborhood Character

Based on the updated methodologies of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*, certain components of the neighborhood character analysis would be presented in a different manner. However, all of these components are included and addressed in the FEIS analysis and presentation of the information would not change the conclusions. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

Chapter 10: Hazardous Materials

The guidance and impact assessment methodologies of the *2010 CEQR Technical Manual* are consistent with the analysis presented in the FEIS. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

Chapter 11: Infrastructure

The *2010 CEQR Technical Manual* provides additional guidance and impact assessment methodologies, particularly with the assessment of sanitary sewer and stormwater management. As described in Chapter 11, the proposed action would require an Amended Drainage Plan, to be completed in accordance with New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) requirements. Therefore, the FEIS analyses reflect coordination with the NYCDEP and additional information under the revised manual. For sites located in specific drainage areas, including Flushing Bay and Creek, the revised manual requires a preliminary assessment, which includes the preparation of a NYCDEP volume calculation worksheet to determine the change in flows and volumes to the combined sewer system from the existing to proposed conditions. Since this matrix postdates publication of the Flushing Commons DEIS, it has been prepared for inclusion in the FEIS as Appendix E. The additional information provided in the NYCDEP volume calculation worksheet does not change the principal conclusions associated with the analysis. Therefore, no additional changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

Chapter 12: Solid Waste and Sanitation Services

The FEIS provides a disclosure of the amount of waste generated by the project in a manner consistent with the *2010 CEQR Technical Manual*. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

Chapter 13: Energy

The FEIS provides a disclosure of the amount of energy demand generated by the project in a manner consistent with the *2010 CEQR Technical Manual*. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual.

It is noted that the revised manual specifically identifies a new EIS chapter that discloses the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions generated by a project and provides an assessment of opportunities to include design elements that minimize GHG generation or other energy-saving and green building measures. This information has been provided in Appendix F of the FEIS.

Chapter 14: Traffic and Parking

The background traffic growth rates provided in the *2001 CEQR Technical Manual* are in general twice as high as those in the *2010 CEQR Technical Manual*, thereby resulting in higher projected traffic volumes for a more conservative impact analysis. Additionally, the impact and mitigation thresholds in the *2010 CEQR Technical Manual* would make it easier in general to mitigate identified traffic impacts. Therefore, the use of the 2001 manual's methodologies was maintained for the FEIS as they would provide a more conservative analysis in identifying potential significant adverse traffic impacts.

Chapter 15: Transit and Pedestrians

Similar to traffic, the higher background growth rates provided in the *2001 CEQR Technical Manual* would yield higher transit usage and pedestrian volumes than those in the *2010 CEQR*

Technical Manual. The revised manual also includes numerous changes in analysis parameters, impact thresholds, and mitigation requirements. Overall, the analysis findings are expected to be comparable when applying the methodologies prescribed in the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*. It should be noted that the revised manual combines the traffic, parking, transit, and pedestrian analyses into one new chapter entitled “Transportation.”

Chapter 16: Air Quality

Consistent with the methodologies of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*, this chapter has been revised to provide detailed information on mobile source PM_{2.5} emissions related to the proposed project. As described above, to be consistent with the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*, the FEIS has also been revised to include a Greenhouse Gas analysis in Appendix F

Chapters 17: Noise; 18: Construction; 19: Public Health; 20: Mitigation; 21: Alternatives; 22: Unavoidable Adverse Impacts; 23: Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources; 24: Growth-Inducing Aspects of the Proposed Action; and 25: Short-Term Vs. Long-Term Productivity

The guidance and impact assessment methodologies of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual* would result in the same analysis as presented in the FEIS. Therefore, no changes have been made in response to the issuance of the revised manual. *