

A. INTRODUCTION

The Willets Point Development Plan (“proposed Plan” or “Plan”) entails the comprehensive redevelopment of the approximately 61-acre Willets Point Development District (“the District”) in northern Queens. This Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) considers a maximum development envelope that represents the upper limit of new development that is likely to occur within the District as a result of the proposed Plan.

The maximum development envelope anticipated under the proposed Plan includes up to 8.94 million gross square feet (gsf) of new buildings, which would include residential, retail, office space, a hotel and convention center, as well community facilities and open space. The size and scope of the proposed Plan have led to the determination that the Plan may generate significant environmental impacts and, as a result, that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be prepared.

This chapter provides an overview of the environmental review process and a description of the analytical framework used to guide the technical analyses presented in subsequent chapters of this DGEIS. It also identifies the other projects that have recently been completed, or are expected to be completed, in the area surrounding the District by 2017, the analysis year analyzed in this DGEIS. Where relevant, these background projects are considered in the forecast of future conditions that forms the basis for assessing impacts of the proposed Plan.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

All state, county, and local government agencies in New York, except the State Legislature and the courts, must comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The City of New York established City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) regulations in accordance with SEQRA. This DGEIS has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the 2001 *CEQR Technical Manual*, where applicable. The environmental review process allows decision-makers to systematically consider the environmental effects of a proposed action, to evaluate reasonable alternatives, and to identify measures to mitigate significant adverse environmental effects. The process also facilitates public involvement in the process by providing the opportunity for public comment on the DGEIS. The environmental review process is outlined below.

- **Establishing a Lead Agency.** Under CEQR, the “lead agency” is the public entity responsible for conducting the environmental review. Usually, the lead agency is also the entity primarily responsible for carrying out, funding, or approving a proposed action. For the proposed Plan, the lead agency is the City’s Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development.
- **Determination of Significance.** The lead agency’s first charge is to determine whether a proposed action might have a significant adverse impact on the environment. To make this determination, an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) was prepared. Based on the

information contained in the EAS, the lead agency determined that the proposed Plan could have the potential to result in significant adverse environmental impacts and issued a Positive Declaration on March 30, 2007, initiating the preparation of an EIS.

- **Scoping.** “Scoping,” or creating the scope of work, focuses the environmental impact analyses on the key issues to be studied. In addition to the Positive Declaration, the lead agency issued a Draft Scope of Work for the GEIS on March 30, 2007. This was widely distributed to concerned citizens, public agencies, and other interested groups. A public scoping meeting was held for the proposed Plan on May 1, 2007, at the Flushing Branch of the Queens Public Library at 41-17 Main Street, Flushing, New York. Written comments were accepted through May 14, 2007, and a Final Scope of Work, reflecting comments made during scoping, was issued on April 16, 2008.
- **Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS).** A Generic EIS (GEIS) is an EIS that analyzes the impacts of a concept or overall plan rather than a specific project plan for a development, and should discuss the logic and rationale for the choices advanced. GEISs and the findings based on them should set forth specific conditions or criteria under which future actions will be undertaken or approved, including requirements for any subsequent SEQRA compliance. Since the actual development, if approved, will depend on developer proposals and future market conditions, a DGEIS that analyzes a maximum development envelope has been prepared. The DGEIS, prepared in accordance with the Final Scope of Work, is a comprehensive document that systematically considers the expected environmental effects of a proposed action, evaluates reasonable alternatives, and identifies feasible mitigation measures that, to the maximum extent practicable, address the significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed action. The lead agency reviews all aspects of the DGEIS to determine its adequacy and adherence to the work effort outlined in the Final Scope of Work. Once the lead agency is satisfied that the DGEIS is completed for the purposes of public review and comment, it issues a Notice of Completion and circulates the DGEIS for review among public agencies and the general public. Circulation of the DGEIS marks the beginning of a public review period, during which time a public hearing is held to solicit comments on the DGEIS.
- **Public Review.** Publication of the DGEIS and issuance of the Notice of Completion signal the beginning of the public review period. During this time, which must extend for a minimum of 30 days, the public may review and comment on the DGEIS, either in writing or at a public hearing convened for the purpose of receiving such comments. Where the CEQR process is coordinated with another City process that requires a public hearing, such as Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), described below, the hearings may be held jointly. The lead agency must publish a notice of the hearing at least 14 days before it takes place and must accept written comments for at least 10 days following the close of the hearing. All substantive comments received on the DGEIS, at the hearing or during the comment period, become part of the CEQR record and will be summarized and responded to in the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS).
- **Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS).** Once the public comment period for the DGEIS closes, a FGEIS is prepared. This document includes a summary of, and response to, each substantive comment made about the DGEIS. Once the lead agency determines that the FGEIS is completed, it issues a Notice of Completion and circulates the FGEIS.

- **Statement of Findings.** To demonstrate that the responsible public decision-makers have taken a hard look at the environmental consequences of a proposed action, any agency taking a discretionary action regarding an action must adopt a formal set of written findings, reflecting its conclusions about the significant adverse environmental impacts, potential alternatives, and potential mitigation measures. Findings based on GEISs should set forth specific conditions or criteria under which future actions will be undertaken or approved, including requirements for any subsequent SEQR compliance. The findings may not be adopted until 10 days after the Notice of Completion has been issued for the FGEIS. Once findings are adopted, the lead and involved agencies may take their actions (or take “no action”).
- **Subsequent Proposed Action.** If a subsequent action or actions are proposed after the FGEIS Notice of Completion has been issued, further SEQR compliance would be required if the action is not in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established in the FGEIS or its findings statement. If the subsequent proposed action was adequately addressed in the FGEIS but not in the findings statement, an amended findings statement must be issued. If the subsequent proposed action is not adequately addressed in the FGEIS and would not result in any significant adverse impacts, a Negative Declaration must be prepared. If the subsequent proposed action could result in significant adverse impacts not adequately addressed in the FGEIS, a supplement to the FGEIS must be prepared.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER REVIEW PROCESSES

The CEQR environmental process is intended to provide decision-makers with an understanding of the environmental consequences of actions undertaken by an agency. Often, the environmental review process is integrated and coordinated with other decision-making processes utilized by government agencies. There are two key public processes involved in implementation of the proposed Plan: ULURP; and potential property acquisition under the Eminent Domain Procedure Law (EDPL).

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE (ULURP)

Several of the proposed actions are subject to ULURP, which is mandated by Sections 197-c and 197-d of the City Charter. ULURP was enacted to allow public review by the local Community Board, the Borough President, the City Planning Commission (CPC), and—for certain applications—the City Council and Mayor, of certain types of proposed actions, including rezonings and purchase of property by the City. ULURP procedures set time limits for review at each stage to ensure a maximum review period of approximately seven months.

The process begins with certification by the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) that the ULURP application is complete. The certified ULURP application must be accompanied by the DGEIS and its Notice of Completion, and marks the commencement of the ULURP process. The application is then forwarded to the local Community Board, which has up to 60 days to review and discuss the proposal, hold public hearings, and adopt a resolution regarding its advisory recommendation on the application. The Community Board will then forward the application to the Borough President, who has up to 30 days to review the application and issue a recommendation. Next, CPC has up to 60 days to review the application, during which time a ULURP public hearing will be held. This hearing is typically in conjunction with the CEQR public hearing on the DEIS or DGEIS. Following the hearing, CPC may approve, approve with modifications, or deny the application. CPC then forwards the application to the City Council.

With respect to the proposed Plan, review by the City Council of the proposed zoning map amendment and property disposition is mandatory. The City Council has up to 50 days to act on the application. Following the Council's vote, the Mayor has five days in which to approve or veto the Council's action. The City Council may override a mayoral veto within 10 days.

CITY ACQUISITION THROUGH EMINENT DOMAIN

The proposed Plan includes the creation of a URP by HPD. To facilitate implementation of the proposed Plan, the City may acquire property through the use of the eminent domain process. There has been no determination at this time to acquire property by means of eminent domain. Any such acquisition of property would be done in compliance with the provisions of the Eminent Domain Procedure Law.

C. FRAMEWORK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

As set forth in the Positive Declaration, the lead agency has determined that the proposed Plan may result in one or more significant adverse environmental impacts and, thus, preparation of this DGEIS is required. This document uses methodologies and follows the guidelines set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual*. These are considered to be the most appropriate technical analysis methods and guidelines for environmental impact assessment of discretionary actions in the City.

For each technical analysis in the DGEIS, the assessment includes a description of existing conditions, an assessment of conditions in the future without the proposed Plan for the year that the action would be completed, and an assessment of conditions for the same year with the proposed Plan.

ANALYSIS YEAR

An EIS analyzes the effects of a proposed action on its environmental setting. Since development under the proposed Plan, if approved, would be completed in the future, the environmental setting is not the current environment but the environment as it would exist at the Plan's completion, in the future. Therefore, future conditions must be projected. This prediction is made for a particular year, generally known as the "analysis year" or the "Build year," which is the year when a proposed action would be substantially operational. It is assumed that the proposed Plan would be constructed incrementally starting in late 2009, and would be built out by 2017. Thus, 2017 has been selected as the analysis year for the proposed Plan. Conditions in the future with the proposed Plan have been evaluated in comparison to conditions in the future without the proposed Plan for this analysis year.

DEFINITION OF STUDY AREAS

Study areas relevant for each analysis category are defined. These are the geographic areas most likely to be potentially affected by the proposed Plan for a given category. Appropriate study areas differ depending on the type of analysis. Because of the magnitude of the proposed Plan, it is appropriate for some analyses contained in this DGEIS to use primary and secondary study areas. The primary study area is closest to the District and therefore is most likely to be potentially affected. The primary study area receives the most thorough analysis. The secondary study area is farther away and, with respect to some technical areas, receives less detailed, more qualitative analysis. Generally, the Plan's effects can be predicted with greater certainty in the primary study

area, while the secondary study area could experience indirect effects. It is anticipated that the principal direct effects of the Plan would occur within the District. The specific methods and study areas are discussed in the individual technical analysis chapters.

DEFINING BASELINE CONDITIONS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This DGEIS provides a description of “existing conditions” for 2007 and assessments of future conditions without the proposed Plan (“future without the proposed Plan”) and with the proposed Plan (“probable impacts of the proposed Plan”). The assessment of existing conditions establishes a baseline—not against which the proposed Plan is measured, but from which future conditions can be projected. The prediction of future conditions begins with an assessment of existing conditions because these can be measured and observed. Studies of existing conditions are generally selected based on the anticipated future reasonable worst-case conditions. For example, traffic counts are taken during the periods when the greatest numbers of new vehicular, pedestrian, and transit trips to and from the District would occur. The Plan’s impacts are then assessed for those same traffic peak periods.

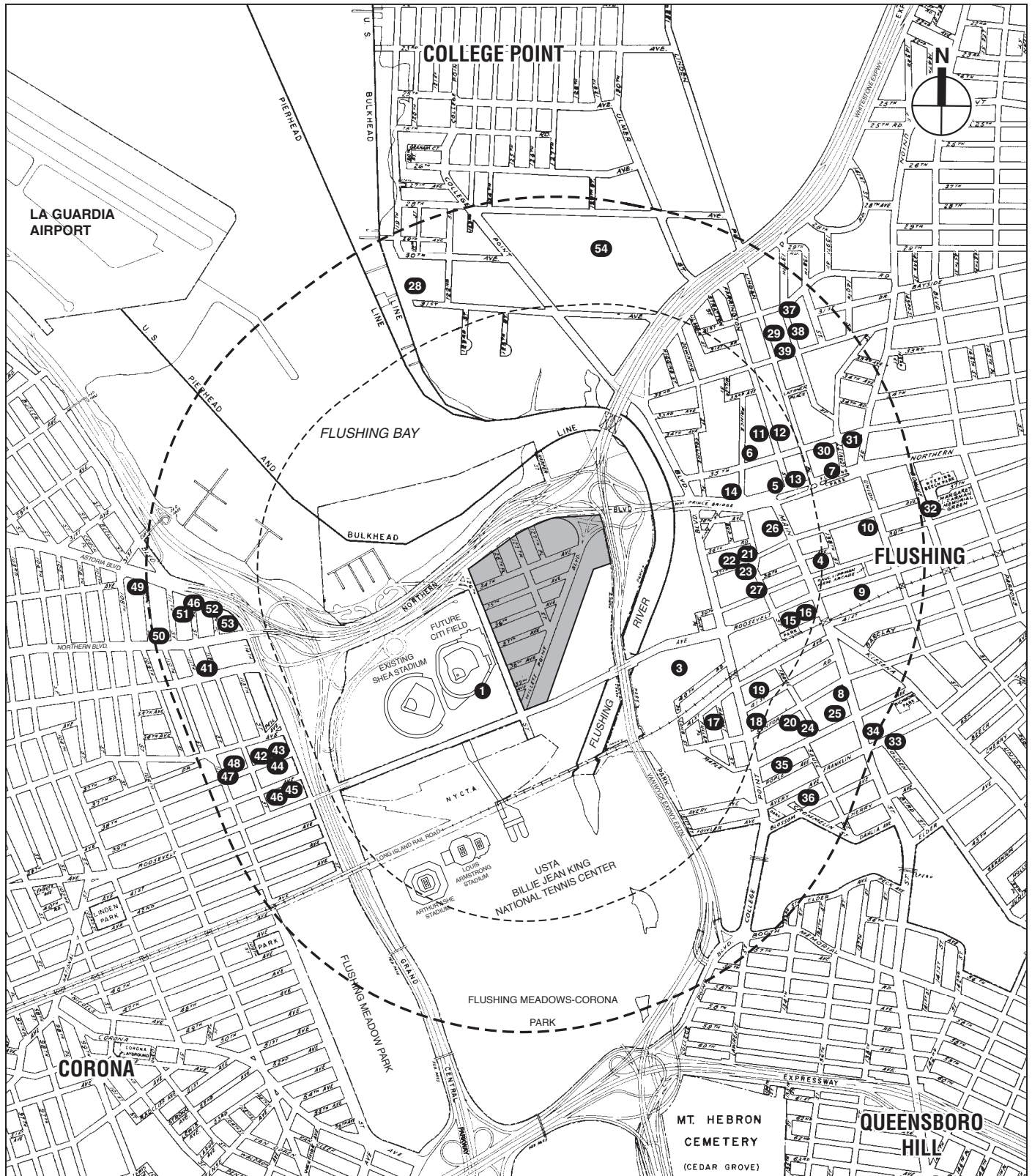
DEFINITION OF FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PLAN

The future without the proposed Plan condition provides a baseline condition that is evaluated and compared with the incremental changes due to the proposed Plan for the 2017 analysis year.

The future without the proposed Plan condition uses existing conditions as a baseline and adds to it changes that are known or expected to be in place at various times in the future. For many technical areas, the future without the proposed Plan condition incorporates known development projects that are likely to be built by the analysis year and provides a baseline against which the incremental changes generated by the proposed Plan can be evaluated. This includes development currently under construction or that can be reasonably anticipated due to the current level of planning and public approvals. This DGEIS assumes that the conditions currently present within the District would remain the same in the future without the proposed Plan.

The analyses of the future without the proposed Plan for some technical areas, such as traffic, add a background growth factor as a further measure, to account for a general increase in activity unrelated to known projects in addition to anticipated future projects. The analyses of the future without the proposed Plan must also consider other future changes that will affect the environmental setting. These could include technology changes, such as advances in vehicle pollution control and roadway improvements, and changes to City policies, such as zoning regulations.

This DGEIS analyzes and incorporates other projects expected to be completed and that would affect conditions in any of the relevant study areas by 2017. The future baseline in all technical chapters—the future without the proposed Plan—assumes that none of the discretionary approvals proposed as part of the proposed Plan would be adopted. Development in the future without the proposed Plan would be limited to those projects that are developed independently of the proposed Plan. Known development projects within ½ mile and ¾ mile of the District are listed in Table 2-1 and presented in Figure 2-1.



- Willets Point Development District
- Primary Study Area Boundary (1/2-Mile Perimeter)
- Secondary Study Area Boundary (3/4-Mile Perimeter)
- 1 No Build Project Location (See Table 2-1 for reference)

0 1000 2000 FEET
SCALE

Table 2-1
Projects in the Study Area Expected to be Completed by 2017

Map No.¹	Project Name/Address	Development Proposal/Program	Study Area	Build Year
1	Shea Stadium Redevelopment	New 44,100-seat stadium (to replace existing 56,000-seat stadium) and redistribution of 8,800 existing parking spaces	primary	2009
2	Downtown Flushing One-Way Pair	Transportation project - Main Street to become one-way northbound; Union Street to become one-way southbound	primary/ secondary	2010
3	Sky View Parc - College Point Blvd and 40th Road	1,200 residential units, 750,000 sf retail, 3,000 parking spaces (the residential component may be developed in phases)	primary	2008 (UC)
4	Queens Crossing - Main Street and 39th Avenue	144,400 sf office, 110,000 sf retail, 29,600 sf community facility, 400 parking spaces	primary	2007 (UC)
5	RKO Keith Theater - Main Street and Northern Boulevard	200 residential units, 10,000 sf retail, 12,500 sf community facility, 229 parking spaces	primary	TBD
6	New Millennium - 134-03 35th Avenue	84 residential units, 33,600 sf community facility, 3,600 sf retail, 222 parking spaces	primary	2008
7	New Millennium Northern Boulevard - 137-61 Northern Boulevard	91 residential units, 60 hotel rooms, 35,722 sf community facility, 17,167 sf retail, 223 parking spaces	secondary	2008
8	Victoria Tower - 41-60 Main Street	178 residential units	secondary	2007-8 (UC)
9	Caldor Site - 136-20 Roosevelt Avenue	155,000 sf retail	secondary	TBD
10	Flushing Commons (Municipal Parking Lot 1) - 138th Street, 37th Avenue, 39th Avenue, and Union Street	500 residential units; 200,000 sf of retail; 100,000 sf of office; 100,000 sf of community facility space; 1,600 parking spaces, including 760 accessory spaces; and either 250 hotel rooms or an additional 120,000 sf of office	secondary	2011
11	33-34 Farrington Street	20,469 sf storage facility	primary	2007 (UC)
12	33-35 Farrington Street	9,887 sf hotel	primary	2007 (UC)
13	137-07 Northern Boulevard	38 residential units	primary	2007 (UC)
14	134-39 Northern Boulevard	12,212 sf expansion to existing office building	primary	2007 (UC)
15	135-11 40th Road	14 residential units, 55,170 sf office	primary	2007 (UC)
16	40-22 Main Street	17,015 sf retail	primary	2007 (UC)
17	41-18 Haight Street	6 residential units	primary	
18	41-55 College Point Boulevard	50 residential units	primary	2007 (UC)
19	132-27 to 132-61 41st Road	43 residential units	primary	2007 (UC)
20	5-10 Summit Court	18 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
21	133-53 37th Avenue	47 residential units	primary	2007 (UC)
22	133-51 37th Avenue	9,050 sf office	primary	2007 (UC)
23	133-40 37th Avenue	12,742 sf office	primary	2007 (UC)
24	132-73 Maple Avenue	8 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
25	134-43 Maple Avenue	23 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
26	36-36 Main Street	26,936 sf office	primary	2007 (UC)
27	133-47 39th Avenue	12,270 sf office, 11,420 sf retail, 9,755 sf medical office	primary	2008

Table 2-1 (cont'd)
Projects in the Study Area Recently Completed or
Expected to be Completed by 2017

Map No. ¹	Project Name/Address	Development Proposal/Program	Study Area	Build Year
28	North Shore Marine Transfer Station - 31st Avenue & 122nd Street	Converted facility will receive and containerize DSNY-managed waste from Queens Community Districts 7 through 14	secondary	2011
29	31-33 Linden Place	8 residential units	primary	2007 (UC)
30	136-16 35th Avenue	28 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
31	138-06 35th Avenue	9 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
32	143-21 38th Avenue	25 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
33	P.S. 244 - 137-20 Franklin Avenue	441-seat primary school	secondary	2007 (UC)
34	42-33 Main Street	66 residential units	secondary	2007-8
35	132-25 Pople Avenue	14 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
36	133-20 Avery Avenue	26 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
37	137-04 31st Road	3 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
38	31-27 137th Street	9 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
39	31-38 137th Street	16 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
40	32-01 112th Street	4 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
41	111-17 34th Avenue	2 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
42	112-31 38th Avenue	18 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
43	112-37 38th Avenue	8 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
44	112-26 38th Avenue	18 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
45	112-34 39th Avenue	8 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
46	112-32 39th Avenue	8 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
47	111-03 38th Avenue	3 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
48	111-13 38th Avenue	8 residential units	secondary	2007 (UC)
49	108-04, 14, 16 Astoria Blvd ²	84 residential units, 69,930 sf community facility	secondary	2013
50	110-09 Northern Boulevard ²	31 residential units, 15,500 sf of commercial use	secondary	2013
51	111-10, 12, 16 Astoria Blvd; 32-20 112th Street; 32-19 111th Street ²	78 residential units, 65,242 sf community facility, 51 parking spaces	secondary	2013
52	112-12, 18, 24 Astoria Blvd ²	38 residential units, 32,068 sf community facility	secondary	2013
53	Block bounded by Astoria Blvd, Northern Blvd, and 112th Place ²	147 residential units, 73,329 sf of commercial use	secondary	2013
54	College Point Police Academy - 129-05 31st Avenue	450,000-square-foot physical training area, 250 beds for visiting law enforcement agencies, 250 classrooms, firing range and fields for emergency-vehicle and other training exercises	secondary	2012
Notes: UC = Under Construction when data used for analysis purposes was compiled. ¹ See Figure 2-1. ² Projects anticipated as a result of the North Corona Rezoning (CEQR No. 03DCP058Q). Sources: AKRF, Inc., New York City Department of City Planning, New York City Department of Buildings.				

The analysis of traffic impacts includes a larger study area and additional developments in predicting future baseline conditions besides those listed in Table 2-1. These additional developments are described in Chapter 17, "Traffic and Parking."

ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed Plan would change the development potential of sites within the District in a manner consistent with the proposed Willets Point Urban Renewal Plan (URP) as well as the proposed Special Willets Point zoning district. As a result, a range of new development could occur within the District. While the actual development will depend on developer proposals and future market conditions, among other things, the URP would establish a maximum development envelope for the District, which is used as a framework to assess potential impacts in the DGEIS. To the extent that actual development proposals differ from this framework, they would be subject to additional environmental review as appropriate.

This DGEIS assesses the impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed Plan. The URP prescribes a maximum permitted total floor area of 8.94 million gross square feet (gsf) in the District. However, the URP allows flexibility in the combination of uses to be developed in the District, and prescribes separate maximum permitted floor areas for residential and commercial uses in the District, including 5,850,000 gsf of residential use and 3,160,000 gsf of commercial use. Since the flexibility provided in the URP could result in a variation in the uses included in the maximum development envelope, this DGEIS analyzes two development scenarios—the proposed Plan, which includes an approximately 400,000-square-foot convention center, and the No Convention Center Scenario, in which the convention center is replaced with an additional 350,000 square feet (sf) of residential use and 50,000 sf of retail use (see Table 2-2).

Table 2-2
Willets Point Development Plan

Use	Urban Renewal Plan	Proposed Plan	No Convention Center Scenario
Residential	Up to 5,850,000 gsf	5,500,000 gsf (5,500 units)	5,850,000 gsf (5,850 units)
Retail	Up to 3,160,000 gsf	1,700,000	1,750,000
Office		500,000	500,000
Convention Center		400,000	0
Hotel		560,000 (700 rooms)	560,000 (700 rooms)
Community Facility	—	150,000 gsf	150,000 gsf
School (K-8)	—	130,000 gsf (Approx. 850 Seats)	130,000 gsf (Approx 900 Seats)
Parking Spaces**	—	Approx. 6,700	Approx. 6,000
Publicly Accessible Open Space	Minimum 8 Acres	Minimum 8 Acres	Minimum 8 Acres
Total gsf	8,940,000 gsf Maximum	8,940,000 gsf	8,940,000 gsf
Notes: * The capacity of the proposed school would meet the project-generated shortfall in school seats. A 130,000-sf school would accommodate up to approximately 900 seats; the square footage of the new school may be smaller if the project-generated shortfall in seats is less than anticipated. ** The number of proposed parking spaces would be determined based on anticipated project-generated demand. Parking floor area is exempt from the gross floor area calculations, per the Special Willets Point zoning district.			

PROPOSED PLAN

The proposed Plan includes the following components:

- *Residential*: It is anticipated that up to 5.5 million sf, or up to 5,500 units, would be developed. Approximately 20 percent of the units in the District would be set aside for low- and moderate income households.
- *Retail*: The District would include up to 1.7 million sf of retail, including a multi-screen movie theater with up to 2,700 seats, and approximately 150,000 sf of neighborhood retail and services, which would primarily serve the new residential population.
- *Office*: The District would contain up to 500,000 sf of office space.
- *Convention Center*: It is anticipated that a convention center of up to 400,000 sf would be developed. As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” there are two possible locations for the convention center.
- *Hotel*: A full-service hotel of approximately 560,000 sf, with up to 700 rooms and ancillary banquet and restaurant facilities, would be developed.
- *Community Facility*: The District would include community facility uses up to a total of 150,000 sf.
- *School*: Although the details of the proposed school building have not yet been determined, for purposes of analysis, the facility is assumed to be approximately 130,000 sf in size and would serve grades K–8. The program and capacity of the school would be developed in consultation with the Department of Education and would be designed to alleviate the shortfall in seats projected to be generated by the proposed Plan within Zone 2 of Community School District 25.
- *Parking*: Off-street parking would be provided to meet the demand expected to be generated by the proposed uses, which is estimated to be approximately 6,700 spaces with the proposed Plan, or 6,000 spaces with the No Convention Center Scenario.
- *Open Space*: A minimum of eight acres of new publicly accessible open space would be required.

The proposed Plan would also include the creation of a new connection between the Van Wyck Expressway and the District, as described in Chapter 1. Modification of access to and from the Van Wyck Expressway requires the preparation of a Freeway Access Modification Report, and review and approval by the Federal Highway Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). Information from the Freeway Access Modification Report—to the extent that it is available—will be considered within the relevant sections of the GEIS.

NO CONVENTION CENTER SCENARIO

Since the URP would allow flexibility in the combination of uses to be developed in the District, the GEIS analyzes a development scenario in which the convention center is replaced with additional residential and retail development (i.e., the No Convention Center Scenario). In this development scenario, the approximately 400,000-sf convention center would be replaced with approximately 350,000 sf of residential use (approximately 350 units) and 50,000 sf of retail use. The parking demand associated with the No Convention Center Scenario is anticipated to be

approximately 6,000 spaces. As described above, the URP's maximum development envelope of 8.94 million gsf would also apply to the No Convention Center Scenario.

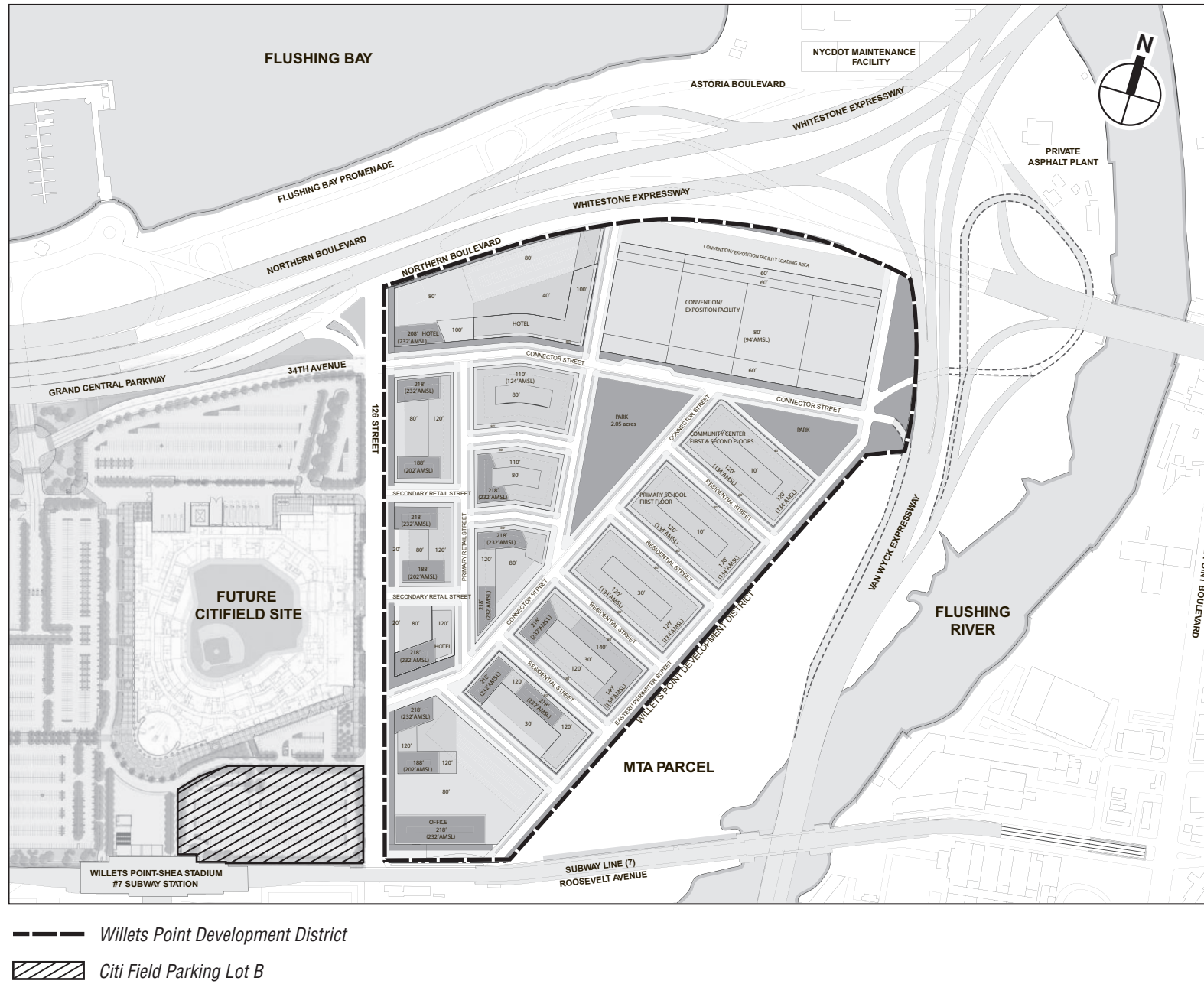
CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS—POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON CITI FIELD LOT B

The Willets Point Development District is located directly across 126th Street from the new Citi Field currently under construction, as well as Citi Field surface parking lots B and C, located to the south and north of the new stadium, respectively. It is anticipated that if the proposed Plan is approved and the District is redeveloped into a new mixed-use community and regional destination, additional development could occur on Citi Field parking lot B (Lot B). Figure 2-2 shows the location of Lot B. Any program for Lot B would be developed as a collaborative effort between the City and Queens Ballpark Company, LLC ("QBC")—a development entity for the New York Mets—or an affiliate. While specific development plans for Lot B have not yet been proposed, it is anticipated that approximately 280,000 sf of office, 184,500 sf of retail, and 970 parking spaces could potentially be developed at this location. This development could include a two-story parking garage and a 14-story office building, surrounded by two stories of retail use. The potential development of Lot B would complement Citi Field and the mix of new uses proposed as part of the Willets Point Development Plan, furthering the synergy between Citi Field and the proposed Plan.

As part of the Citi Field development project, Lot B was initially planned to contain approximately 660 parking spaces after construction of the new stadium is completed. Lot B is currently being used as a staging area for construction activities associated with Citi Field, and the parking uses previously at that location have been relocated to a parking lot south of Roosevelt Avenue. If Lot B is redeveloped with new structured parking and office and retail uses, it is expected that the parking uses on the site would be replaced, and additional parking would be provided to serve the new office and retail uses. During construction of the new office, retail, and parking development, the parking uses at this site would be temporarily relocated to a nearby location.

Lot B, which is located on property owned by the City, is currently under the jurisdiction of the New York City Industrial Development Agency (NYCIDA) and under lease to QBC, which in turn has entered into a sublease with the New York Mets. Any future development on Lot B would be undertaken by QBC or an affiliate and would require an amendment to the current lease agreement and discretionary approval by the NYCIDA, acting through the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), which administers the NYCIDA lease. These actions would be the subject of a separate environmental review process subject to CEQR.

Lot B could be independently developed with a new office, retail, and parking program and is not dependent upon the Willets Point Development Plan. However, because of the proximity of Lot B to the Willets Point Development District, and because additional commercial development on Lot B could enhance the synergy between the Citi Field premises and the proposed Plan, this site's development would be more likely to occur as a result of the proposed Plan. While each project would require separate actions—each with its own approvals and environmental review processes—together they would add substantial new development to the immediate area. Therefore, in addition to evaluating the proposed Plan's potential to have environmental impacts, this DGEIS has been prepared to incorporate the cumulative impacts of both projects (the Willets Point Development Plan and the potential development on Lot B) under the Probable Impacts of the Proposed Plan. The purpose of this analysis is to ensure that the full extent of potentially required mitigation is identified for any significant adverse impacts.



The cumulative projected maximum development for both the Willets Point Development Plan and the Lot B development is a total of 9,404,500 gsf of new development (see Table 2-3). Each section of this DGEIS addresses the environmental effects associated with the Lot B development. For most technical areas in this DGEIS, impacts associated with the Lot B development program are assessed under Probable Impacts of the Proposed Plan, based on the cumulative development scenario presented in Table 2-3. These technical areas include Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy; Socioeconomic Conditions; Community Facilities and Services; Open Space; Shadows; Historic Resources; Urban Design and Visual Resources; Neighborhood Character; Natural Resources; Hazardous Materials; Waterfront Revitalization Program; Infrastructure, Solid Waste and Sanitation Services; Energy; Traffic and Parking; Transit and Pedestrians; Air Quality; Noise; and Public Health. Since the development program and precise timing of development for Lot B is unknown, the construction impacts associated with Lot B cannot be addressed in this DGEIS. However, given that any future development on Lot B would require separate approval and environmental review processes, these impacts would be examined in greater detail as part of any subsequent environmental review process for Lot B. The scope of the environmental review would depend on how the specific project design and other future conditions compare with the reasonable worst case scenario analyzed in this DGEIS.

Table 2-3
Cumulative Development for Analysis

Use	Lot B Development (gsf)	Proposed Plan (gsf)	Cumulative - Proposed Plan and Lot B (gsf)	No Convention Center Scenario (gsf)	Cumulative - No Convention Center Scenario and Lot B (gsf)
Residential		5,500,000	5,500,000	5,850,000	5,850,000
<i>Number of Units</i>		<i>5,500</i>	<i>5,500</i>	<i>5,850</i>	<i>5,850</i>
Retail	184,500	1,700,000	1,884,500	1,750,000	1,934,500
Office	280,000	500,000	780,000	500,000	780,000
Convention Center		400,000	400,000	0	0
Hotel		560,000	560,000	560,000	560,000
<i>Number of Rooms</i>		<i>700</i>	<i>700</i>	<i>700</i>	<i>700</i>
Community Facility		150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
School (K-8)		130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000
<i>Number of Seats*</i>		<i>Approx. 850*</i>	<i>Approx. 850*</i>	<i>Approx. 900*</i>	<i>Approx. 900*</i>
Parking	970 spaces	6,700 spaces**	7,670 spaces	6,000 spaces**	6,970 spaces
Publicly-Accessible Open Space		Minimum 8 acres	Minimum 8 acres	Minimum 8 acres	Minimum 8 acres
Total	464,500 gsf	8,940,000 gsf	9,404,500 gsf	8,940,000 gsf	9,404,500 gsf
Notes: * The capacity of the proposed school would meet the project-generated shortfall in school seats. ** The number of proposed parking spaces would be determined based on expected project-generated demand. Parking floor area is exempt from the gross floor area calculations, per the Special Willets Point zoning district.					

MITIGATION

Potential mitigation measures for all significant adverse impacts identified in this DGEIS are described in Chapter 23, “Mitigation.” CEQR requires that any significant adverse impacts identified in the EIS be minimized or avoided to the fullest extent practicable. In the DGEIS, options for mitigation can be presented for public review and discussion, without the lead agency having selected those that will be implemented. Where no practicable mitigation is available, the EIS must disclose the potential for unmitigated significant adverse impacts.

ALTERNATIVES

Chapter 24, “Alternatives,” assesses several alternatives to the proposed Plan. CEQR and SEQRA require that a description and evaluation of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action be included in an EIS at a level of detail sufficient to allow a comparative assessment of the alternatives. Alternatives and the rationale behind their selection are important in the disclosure of environmental effects of a proposed action. Alternatives provide options to the proposed action and a framework for comparison of potential impacts. If the environmental assessment and consideration of alternatives identify a feasible alternative that eliminates or minimizes adverse impacts while substantially meeting an action’s goals and objectives, the lead agency considers whether to adopt that alternative as the proposed action. CEQR/SEQRA also requires consideration of a “No Action Alternative,” which evaluates environmental conditions that are likely to occur in the future without the proposed action.

The alternatives analyzed in this DGEIS were identified, in part, based on comments received during the scoping process, and include the No Action Alternative as well as a No Unmitigated Impact Alternative, which assesses a change in density or program design in order to avoid the potential for any unmitigated significant adverse impacts that may be associated with the proposed Plan. The DGEIS also includes a Flushing Pedestrian Bridge Alternative, which evaluates conditions associated with the creation of a new pedestrian bridge connecting the District and Downtown Flushing; a No Action with Additional Services Alternative, which evaluates conditions that would be likely to occur in the future without the proposed Plan if additional municipal services and infrastructure were provided to the District; and a Staged Acquisition Alternative, which would entail the City’s initial acquisition of the western portion of the redevelopment site, followed by the acquisition of the eastern portion of the site. *