



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

**POSITIVE DECLARATION  
NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
STATEMENT**

<b><u>PROJECT:</u></b> East 125 <sup>th</sup> Street Development Site Block 1789, Lot 46; Block 1790, Lots 1, 101, 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 20, 24-31, 40, 45, 46, 49; Block 1791, Lots 1, 25, 34 Borough of Manhattan CEQR: 07DME025M ULURP: PENDING	<b><u>LEAD AGENCY:</u></b> Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding 253 Broadway – 14 <sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY 10007
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**DATE ISSUED:** June 20, 2007

**TYPE OF ACTION:** Type I

**NAME, LOCATION, AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

East 125<sup>th</sup> Street Development Site

East 125<sup>th</sup> to 127<sup>th</sup> Street from Second to Third Avenues, and the southeast corner of East 125<sup>th</sup> Street and Third Avenue

Community District #11, Borough of Manhattan

The mixed-use East 125<sup>th</sup> Street Development project is proposed on three parcels in the “East Harlem Triangle” neighborhood of Manhattan, which total approximately six acres and extend over three blocks from approximately East 125<sup>th</sup> Street to East 127<sup>th</sup> Street, and from Second Avenue to Third Avenue. A rezoning of the Project Site is proposed to enable the development of up to 1,000 units of low, moderate, and middle income housing; approximately 470,000 square feet of retail/entertainment space (including one or more anchor retail tenants, specialty retail/entertainment space, and local retail); 300,000 square feet of commercial office space; 30,000 square feet of not-for-profit performing/media arts space; a 100,000-square foot hotel; and, 12,500 square feet of public open space. The project site currently includes a Metropolitan

Transportation Authority (MTA) at-grade bus storage facility. The proposed project would include an underground replacement for the MTA facility.

The project will promote local economic growth and job creation, encourage private investment, and improve quality-of-life for East Harlem residents by facilitating the replacement of mostly vacant and underutilized land with new affordable housing, media and entertainment businesses, cultural space, and retail uses. Areas of East Harlem surrounding the Project Site have some of the highest remaining concentrations of vacant land and buildings of the overall 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor and its surrounding blocks. The proposed rezoning and its associated actions would upgrade conditions in this area and facilitate mixed-use development on mostly vacant and underutilized land that has excellent access to transit, open space, and commercial services. As a result of the project, long-vacant City-owned land would be returned to the City's tax rolls.

The Project Site is the eastern anchor of retail, residential and media uses along the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, and is adjacent to the Special 125<sup>th</sup> Street District. This district is proposed as part of the City's 125th Street Corridor Rezoning and Related Actions Project, which would allow a wide range of retail, entertainment and cultural uses to physically and economically activate the street, enable building form controls, and support job creation and career opportunities for local residents.

In addition to its commercial and media/art/entertainment components, the project addresses the city-wide need for affordable housing and the local need to reinforce the residential character of East Harlem and foster round-the-clock residential activity on the project site. The housing component (up to 1,000 units of low, moderate and middle income housing are proposed) advances the goals of the City's New Housing Marketplace Plan which seeks to create 165,000 units of affordable housing over ten years. The proposed residential units would include both homeownership and rental units; residents of Manhattan Community District #11 would be given preferential consideration for a minimum of 50 percent of the units.

The MTA is an involved agency under CEQR because it has to approve the replacement of the surface bus parking facility with an underground parking facility. City actions and approvals required include: zoning map amendments; the disposition of City-owned property; Special Permit approval for a public parking garage; approval of a General Large Scale Plan; amendment of the East Harlem Urban Renewal Plan; City Planning Commission certification pursuant to the Special Transit Authority District; and modification of signage requirements.

#### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT EFFECT:**

In accordance with Executive Order 91 of 1977, as amended, and the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review, found at Title 62, Chapter 5 of the Rules of the City of New York (CEQR), the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding, in the Office of the Mayor, lead agency for the referenced project, has reviewed information regarding the proposed actions contained in an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS), dated June 19, 2007 pursuant to Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law and 6 NYCRR, Part 617, and has determined that the proposed action may have a

significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is required to evaluate and disclose the extent to which impacts may occur. Aspects of the project that require evaluation of potential environmental effects include:

- 1) The potential for substantial impacts related to traffic and parking as well as transit and pedestrian circulation.
- 2) The potential for substantial impacts related to mobile and stationary source air quality.
- 3) The potential for substantial impacts on neighborhood character and visual resources.
- 4) The potential for hazardous material conditions to exist at the project site and the potential for the proposed project to affect those conditions.
- 5) The potential for open space impacts in the project area because of increased demand.
- 6) The potential for infrastructure impacts in the project area because of increased demand.
- 7) The potential for the project to generate substantial noise impacts.

**Statement in Support of Determination:**

The above determination is based on a review of the EAS prepared for the action that finds that:

- 1) The proposed actions may generate a substantial number of vehicular and pedestrian trips resulting in significant adverse traffic and pedestrian impacts on the local transportation network;
- 2) The proposed action may result in significant increases in mobile source emissions from project-generated trips and potential increases in stationary source emissions from the MTA bus garage.
- 3) The proposed action may result in significant increases in noise resulting from project-generated vehicular trips.
- 4) The proposed action may affect neighborhood character;
- 5) The proposed action would result in more than 200 new residents at the project site.

Accordingly, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding directs that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement be prepared in accordance with 6 NYCRR 617.9(b) and Sections 6-08 and 6-09 of Executive Order No. 91 of 1977, as amended.

**Public Scoping:**

Public Scoping is a process whereby the public is invited to comment on the proposed scope of analysis planned for the Draft EIS. A draft Scope of Work has been prepared outlining the study areas and analysis methodologies proposed for use in the Draft EIS.

The Public Scoping meeting will be held on Thursday, July 19, 2007 at 6:00 PM at Taino Towers, 2253 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10035. A copy of the draft Scope of Work and the EAS for the project may be obtained from:

Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination  
253 Broadway – 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007  
(212) 788-9956  
[www.nyc.gov/oec](http://www.nyc.gov/oec)

or

Ms. Rachel Belsky, Assistant Vice-President, Planning  
New York City Economic Development Corporation  
110 William Street  
New York, New York 10038  
Telephone: (212) 312-3718  
Fax: (212) 312-3989  
[rbelsky@nycedc.com](mailto:rbelsky@nycedc.com)  
[www.nycedc.com](http://www.nycedc.com)

The documents are also posted on the websites of the New York City Economic Development Corporation and the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination.

Written comments will be accepted through 5:00 PM Monday, July 30, 2007 and may be submitted at the public scoping meeting or to Ms. Rachel Belsky at the above address.

This Positive Declaration has been prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law.



Robert R. Kulikowski, Ph.D., Assistant to the Mayor  
For the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding