



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

POSITIVE DECLARATION

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

PROJECT: CornellNYC Tech Project Block 1373, Lot 20 Block 1373, Lot 1 (portion) Borough of Manhattan CEQR Number: 12DME004M	LEAD AGENCY: Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development 253 Broadway, 14 th Floor New York, New York 10007
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DATE ISSUED: April 18, 2012

TYPE OF ACTION: Type I

NAME, LOCATION, AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

CornellNYC Tech
Community District 8, Borough of Manhattan

Cornell University (the applicant) is seeking a number of discretionary approvals (the “proposed actions”) to support and allow for the development of an applied science and engineering campus on Roosevelt Island.

The project site is located on the southern portion of Roosevelt Island, south of the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge. A majority of the site (Block 1373, Lot 20) is owned by the City of New York and is occupied by the Coler-Goldwater Specialty Hospital and Nursing Facility’s Goldwater Memorial Hospital, which is operated by the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (NYCHHC). The remainder of the site (Block 1372, part of Lot 1) is vacant and owned by the City of New York and leased to the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIO). Independently of, and prior to, the proposed actions, NYCHHC will vacate the Goldwater Memorial Hospital site and relocate patients and services elsewhere.

The first phase of the CornellNYC Tech project, which Cornell University (Cornell) would undertake in collaboration with Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, is expected to be constructed and begin operations on Roosevelt Island in Summer 2017; 2018 will be the first full year of operation. Phase 1 would consist of up to 790,000 gross square feet (gsf) of development consisting of approximately 200,000 gsf of academic research space; 300,000 gsf of residential space (442 units); 100,000 gsf of partner research and development space; and 170,000 gsf for an academic-oriented hotel with conference facilities. Up to another 20,000 gsf would be developed as a central energy plant. Phase 2, expected to be completed by 2037, would add a maximum of 1.34 million gsf consisting of approximately 420,000 gsf of academic research space; 500,000 gsf of residential space (652 units); 400,000 gsf of partner research and development space; and

another 20,000 gsf central energy plant. In total, the maximum potential CornellNYC Tech project program is assumed to comprise 2.13 million gsf of development consisting of 620,000 gsf of academic research space; 800,000 gsf of residential space (1,094 units); 500,000 gsf of partner research and development space; 170,000 gsf of an academic-oriented hotel with conference facilities; and 40,000 gsf for the central energy plants. Up to approximately 25,000 gsf of campus-oriented retail would be provided within this program.

DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS SUBJECT TO CEQR AND SEQRA

The proposed project would require multiple City approvals. Some of these approvals are discretionary actions requiring review under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR). ODMED will be the lead agency for CEQR. The potential discretionary actions that would be required for the proposed project include:

- 1) Amendment of the NYCHHC operating agreement with the City by the Corporation Board in order to surrender a portion of the project site.
- 2) Disposition of City-owned property from the City of New York to the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for a subsequent proposed long-term lease and potential future sale to Cornell.
- 3) Mayoral approval of the lease and sale terms of the disposition parcels pursuant to Section 384(b)(4) of the New York City Charter.
- 4) RIOC approval of a modification of the City's lease with RIOC.
- 5) Zoning Map amendment to change the project site and surrounding area zoning from R7-2 to C4-5.
- 6) Zoning Text amendment to create the Special Southern Roosevelt Island District and to establish special bulk, use, parking and waterfront controls for the rezoning area.
- 7) City Map Amendment to map the one-way ring road surrounding the project site as a City street.

Other potential approvals, such as approvals from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), may also be required. It is also possible that an approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) would be required with respect to a geothermal well system that may be part of the project.

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, lead agency for the referenced project, has determined that the proposed project may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required to evaluate and disclose the extent to which impacts may occur.

Aspects that may require evaluation of potential environmental impacts include:

- 1) The potential for substantial impacts related to land use, zoning, and public policy;
- 2) The potential for substantial socioeconomic impacts;
- 3) The potential for substantial impacts to community facilities and services;
- 4) The potential for substantial open space impacts;

- 5) The potential for substantial impacts as a result of shadows;
- 6) The potential for substantial impacts related to historic and cultural resources;
- 7) The potential for substantial urban design/visual resource impacts;
- 8) The potential for substantial impacts related to natural resources;
- 9) The potential for substantial impacts related to hazardous materials;
- 10) The potential for substantial impacts related to the water and sewer infrastructure;
- 11) The potential for substantial impacts related to solid waste and sanitation services;
- 12) The potential for substantial energy use;
- 13) The potential for substantial impacts related to transportation;
- 14) The potential for substantial impacts related to air quality;
- 15) The potential for substantial greenhouse gas emissions;
- 16) The potential for substantial impacts related to noise;
- 17) The potential for substantial impacts related to public health;
- 18) The potential for substantial impacts related to neighborhood character; and
- 19) The potential for substantial construction impacts.

Statement in Support of Determination:

The above determination is based on the finding that:

- 1) The project would require several actions, including a zoning map amendment, zoning text amendment, special permits, and mapping actions, among others. The proposed actions would directly affect the land use on the project site, which is located within the City's coastal zone. Therefore, the potential for the proposed project to affect land use, zoning, and public policy will be examined.
- 2) The project would result in substantial new development on the project site, warranting an assessment of the potential indirect socioeconomic effects of the project. Therefore, the potential of the proposed project to result in indirect residential displacement, indirect commercial displacement, and indirect adverse impacts on specific industries will be assessed.
- 3) The proposed actions would introduce a new residential population that would increase demands on public elementary and intermediate schools and on libraries, and an analysis of the project's indirect effects on these facilities will be undertaken.
- 4) The proposed actions will exceed CEQR thresholds for a detailed open space analysis. Therefore, a detailed open space analysis will be conducted, and will include a discussion of the creation of new publicly accessible open space within the project site.
- 5) The proposed project would result in new buildings that would be greater than 50 feet in height. Therefore, a screening-level analysis will be performed to identify the project's potential to result in shadow impacts on light-sensitive resources, including public open space as well as historic resources with light-sensitive features. If project-generated shadows would reach any such resources, a full shadows analysis would be performed for those resources.
- 6) There are a number of architectural resources located in the vicinity of the project site: the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge (New York City Landmark [NYCL] and listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places [S/NR]), Strecker Laboratory (NYCL and S/NR-listed), and the ruins of the Smallpox Hospital (NYCL and S/NR-listed). Therefore, an analysis of potential effects on architectural resources will be performed.

- 7) Development of the proposed project would result in new buildings on the project site of various heights and would create a change to the pedestrian experience. Therefore, an analysis of the proposed actions' effects on urban design and visual resources will be undertaken.
- 8) Because the project site contains a number of trees that would be removed, a natural resources assessment will be provided.
- 9) Because the proposed project would result in soil disturbance activities, and because site assessments have indicated that certain measures should be implemented during project construction, an analysis of hazardous materials will be provided.
- 10) The proposed project would exceed the CEQR thresholds for wastewater and stormwater analysis. Therefore, an analysis of potential effects of the proposed project on wastewater and stormwater infrastructure will be provided.
- 11) The proposed project would introduce new development that would require sanitation services and, therefore, an analysis will be provided.
- 12) Although the proposed project is not anticipated to have effects on energy transmission or off-site generation, the project may include on-site energy plants, cogeneration, photovoltaic panels throughout the site, and a system of up to 400 geothermal wells. Therefore, the EIS will describe these systems as well as any planned measures to reduce energy consumption, and will disclose the proposed project's potential energy demand.
- 13) The proposed project would exceed the thresholds in Table 16-1 of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, and consequently could have significant traffic, parking, pedestrian, and transit impacts. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the potential transportation impacts of the proposed project is warranted and will be provided.
- 14) The proposed project would result in new stationary and mobile sources of pollutant emissions. The stationary source air quality impact analysis will address the effects of emissions from combustion sources of emissions, such as the energy plant systems, on pollutant levels. Mobile sources would include increased traffic. Therefore, an analysis of the potential air quality impacts of the proposed project is warranted and will be provided.
- 15) The proposed project would exceed the CEQR analysis threshold for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Therefore, a GHG consistency assessment will be provided.
- 16) The proposed project would introduce new residential and academic uses; therefore, the noise analysis will examine the effects of ambient noise sources on the proposed residential and academic uses. In addition, the noise analysis will examine the potential for traffic to result in noise impacts.
- 17) According to the guidelines of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a public health assessment may be warranted if an unmitigated significant adverse impact is identified in other CEQR analysis areas, such as air quality, water quality, hazardous materials, or noise. If unmitigated significant adverse impacts are identified in any one of these technical areas and a public health assessment is warranted, an analysis will be provided for that specific technical area.
- 18) Neighborhood character is determined by a number of factors, including: land use, zoning, and public policy; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; transportation; and noise. As the project represents a substantial change

that could affect the character of the surrounding area, an assessment of neighborhood character will be provided.

- 19) Construction of the project would occur in two phases over an extended period of time between approximately 2014 and 2038, and could effect: transportation systems; air quality; noise; hazardous materials; and other technical areas. Therefore, an analysis of potential construction impacts is warranted and will be provided.

Accordingly, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development directs that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement be prepared in accordance with 6 NYCRR 617.9 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 analysis methodologies proposed for use in the Draft EIS.

A public meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 22, 2012 to provide a forum for public comments on this Draft Scope of Work. The public meeting will be held at the Manhattan Park Community Center, 8 River Road, Roosevelt Island. The scoping meeting will commence at 6:30 P.M. Written comments on the Draft Scope of Work will be accepted until 5:00 P.M. on Friday, June 8, 2012.

Copies of the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS), Positive Declaration, and Draft Scope of Work for the project may be obtained by any member of the public from:

Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination
253 Broadway, 14th Floor
New York, New York 10007
Telephone: (212) 788-9956

These documents are also available on the websites of the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination and the New York City Economic Development Corporation: www.nyc.gov/oec and www.nycedc.com, respectively.

Requests for additional information may be directed to:

New York City Economic Development Corporation
Matt Mason, Vice President
110 William Street
New York, NY 10038
mmason@nycedc.com

Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 P.M. on Friday, June 8, 2012, and may be submitted at the public scoping meeting or to Mr. Matt Mason at the above address.

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



Robert R. Kulikowski, Ph.D.
Assistant to the Mayor

April 18, 2012