

A. INTRODUCTION

Consistent with City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) requirements, this chapter of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) examines alternatives to the proposed project. CEQR requires the examination of a No Action Alternative, in which a proposed project would not be undertaken. CEQR also recommends the examination of alternatives that would have no unmitigated significant adverse impacts, if unmitigated significant adverse impacts are predicted for a proposed project. Therefore, the alternatives examined in this chapter are the No Action Alternative and the No Unmitigated Significant Impacts Alternative.

This analysis first examines the No Action Alternative, which describes the conditions that would exist if the proposed project were not implemented. The second alternative examined below is the No Unmitigated Significant Impacts Alternative, which examines the level of development that would be necessary to avoid all the potential unmitigated impacts associated with the proposed project.

In addition to a comparative impact analysis, the alternatives in this chapter are assessed to determine to what extent they would meet the goals and objectives of the proposed project, which include: 1) returning the large, substantially vacant Armory building to productive use; 2) creating new employment, learning, and recreational opportunities for local residents; and 3) creating economic and fiscal benefits to the City in the form of economic revitalization, increased employment opportunities, and tax revenue (see Chapter 1, “Project Description”).

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of the alternatives analysis is that the No Action Alternative and the No Unmitigated Significant Impacts Alternative would not substantively meet the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Each of the alternatives is summarized briefly below, followed by a more detailed analysis in the following sections.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative assumes that the Armory would not be redeveloped, but rather would remain in its current substantially vacant condition. This alternative would avoid the proposed project’s significant adverse impacts relating to transportation (traffic, pedestrians, and noise). However, under this alternative, the Kingsbridge Armory could deteriorate and its condition could worsen. The Armory would not be cleaned, repaired, or renovated for productive use in this alternative, and the appearance and condition of the building as an architectural resource would not be improved. The No Action Alternative would not create new employment, learning, and recreational opportunities for local residents, nor would it support the economic revitalization goals of the proposed project. Overall, the No Action Alternative would fail to meet the goals and objectives of the proposed project

NO UNMITIGATED SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ALTERNATIVE

The No Unmitigated Significant Impacts Alternative explores modifications to the proposed project that would avoid the unmitigated significant impacts related to traffic, pedestrians, and noise. These modifications include not redeveloping the project site or eliminating events from the proposed project's program, or reducing the maximum capacity of events. To eliminate all unmitigated significant adverse impacts, the proposed project would in some cases have to be modified to a point that its principal goals and objectives would not be realized, and in other cases the modifications would result in an alternative that would be less successful than the proposed project at achieving the principal goals and objectives.

B. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

DESCRIPTION

The No Action Alternative has been discussed as the “future without the proposed project” in the technical chapters of this EIS. The No Action Alternative assumes that the Armory would not be redeveloped, but rather would remain in its current substantially vacant condition. As such, the No Action Alternative would not require the zoning text amendment and special permit to allow for the arena (main ice rink use), the zoning map amendment to rezone the project block to C4-4, the special permit for the proposed wellness center, or the easement for the planned use of the property between West 195th Street and the north façade of the Armory. Conditions resulting from the No Action Alternative as compared with the proposed project are summarized below.

LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

In the No Action Alternative, the Armory building would remain substantially vacant. The Kingsbridge Armory would not be converted into a public recreational amenity with ice rinks and related program space; accessory food, beverage, concession, and retail space; and community facility space under the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative, unlike the proposed project, would not enhance the surrounding Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood by providing local residents with a new recreational resource, nor would it provide new retail or employment opportunities or additional space for community facility uses.

Under the No Action Alternative, no changes to zoning are anticipated for the project site. Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not further the City-wide planning goal, as expressed in PlaNYC, of promoting new development in areas that are well-served by public transportation and repurposing underutilized sites for public enjoyment with commercial and recreational uses.

Neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would result in significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, or public policy, but only the proposed project would renovate the project site, introduce complementary land uses that would enliven the site, and advance public policy goals.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

With the No Action Alternative, the Kingsbridge Armory building would continue to be largely vacant and underutilized, and thus it could deteriorate and its condition could worsen. The Armory would not be cleaned, repaired, or renovated for productive use in this alternative, and the appearance and condition of this architectural resource would not be improved. Unlike the

proposed project, no new elements would be added to the existing structure and no interior or exterior alterations would be made. The pedestrian view of the project site would be of a vacant and underutilized structure, rather than an active use, as it would with the proposed project. Neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would result in significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Under the No Action Alternative, it is assumed that no remediation would occur on the project site and the Armory building would remain substantially vacant. With the proposed project, a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and Health and Safety Plan (HASP) would be implemented, as approved by DEP, which would provide for remedial actions and health and safety procedures, as necessary, to be performed before, during, and/or after construction. These remedial actions would be in conformance with federal, state and city regulatory requirements and would address both already-identified concerns and any concerns unexpectedly encountered during construction.

WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in any increased demand on New York City's water supply, wastewater and sanitary sewage treatment systems. Neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would result in any significant adverse impacts on the City's water supply, wastewater or stormwater conveyance and treatment infrastructure.

SOLID WASTE AND SANITATION

Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not generate additional solid waste. Neither the No Action Alternative nor the proposed project would result in significant adverse impacts on solid waste and sanitation services.

ENERGY

Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not increase demand for electricity. However, the increase in electricity demand generated by the proposed project would be insignificant relative to the capacity of the City's power supply and transmission systems and the current levels of demand in the Consolidated Edison New York City and Westchester County service area. Furthermore, the proposed project is expected to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Silver certification at a minimum; such LEED® certification of the site would not occur under the No Action Alternative. In the future, it is expected that the existing trend toward sustainability would lead to greater energy efficiency in the City. Therefore, neither the No Action Alternative nor the proposed project would result in significant adverse impacts with respect to the transmission or generation of energy.

TRANSPORTATION

Under the No Action Alternative, the project site would remain substantially vacant. As such, the increases in vehicle, transit, and pedestrian trips and parking demand that would occur with the proposed project would not occur with the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative would not result in the significant adverse traffic and pedestrian impacts that would occur with the proposed project; however, these impacts could be largely mitigated with the proposed

project. Neither this alternative nor the proposed project would result in any significant adverse transit impacts or parking impacts.

AIR QUALITY

Unlike with the proposed project, no new mobile or stationary source emissions would be created on the project site with the No Action Alternative. Neither this alternative nor the proposed project would result in any significant adverse mobile or stationary source air quality impacts.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in an increase in energy use, fuel consumption, or vehicle trips, and would therefore not result in the greenhouse gas emissions that would result from the proposed project. However, measures for reducing GHG emissions are included as part of the proposed project, and the proposed project would be consistent with PlaNYC's GHG emissions reduction goals. As part of the measures to reduce GHG emissions, the proposed project is expected to achieve LEED® Silver certification at a minimum; such LEED® certification of the site would not occur under the No Action Alternative.

NOISE

No new sources of noise would be created under the No Action Alternative because the project site would remain substantially vacant and underutilized. As such, the No Action Alternative would not result in the significant adverse mobile source noise impact that would occur with the proposed project.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

The No Action Alternative would not alter the current character of the project site. Like the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not result in any significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character. However, the No Action Alternative would not convert the large, substantially vacant Armory into productive use or create new employment, learning, and recreational opportunities for local residents. Unlike the proposed project, the No Action Alternative would not enliven the site and improve the appearance of the Armory as a visual resource. The No Action Alternative would also not provide local residents with a new recreational resource or support the economic revitalization of the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood. Overall, the benefits to neighborhood character that would result from the proposed project would not be realized under the No Action Alternative.

CONSTRUCTION

No construction would occur on the project site in the No Action Alternative. The Kingsbridge Armory building would continue to be largely vacant and underutilized, and thus it could deteriorate and its condition could worsen.

The No Action Alternative would not result in the additional vehicle trips, traffic lane closures, or increased parking demand generated by the proposed project's construction activities. As such, the No Action Alternative would not result in the temporary significant adverse impacts related to construction vehicular traffic that would occur with the proposed project. The No Action Alternative also would not result in any air pollutant emissions or increased noise levels

that would be associated with the construction of the proposed project. However, neither the proposed project nor the No Action Alternative would result in any significant adverse impacts related to construction-period air quality or noise.

C. NO UNMITIGATED SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ALTERNATIVE

DESCRIPTION

As discussed in Chapter 14, “Mitigation,” the proposed project could result in unmitigated significant adverse impacts related to traffic, pedestrians, and mobile source noise. Therefore, alternatives were developed to explore modifications to the proposed project that would allow for the mitigation of these impacts.

TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC

The proposed project would result in significant adverse traffic impacts at ~~five~~ eight intersections within the study area which cannot be fully mitigated with standard traffic capacity improvement measures in at least one peak hour. Because of the constrained operating conditions at these intersections, even a moderate increase in traffic would result in unmitigated impacts. Thus, almost any substantial redevelopment of the project site could result in unmitigated traffic impacts. No reasonable alternative could be developed to avoid such impacts without substantially compromising the goals of the proposed project.

PEDESTRIANS

The proposed project would result in significant adverse pedestrian impacts on two sidewalks and one crosswalk near the project site during event conditions that cannot be fully mitigated. A sensitivity analysis determined that to fully mitigate these pedestrian impacts, events at the proposed project would need to be limited to approximately 3,500 attendees. However, hosting high attendance events at the site is a key component of the project goal of returning the large, substantially vacant Armory building to productive use. Therefore, this alternative would be less successful than the proposed project at supporting this goal of the project.

NOISE

The proposed project would result in a significant adverse noise impact at residences along the west side of Reservoir Avenue between West 195th Street and West Kingsbridge Road. Mitigation measures that would partially mitigate this impact would be made available to the affected receptors, if determined necessary based on a New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)-approved post-construction monitoring program. This unmitigated significant adverse noise impact could be mitigated by eliminating events at the site, restricting vehicular access to the site during events, or moving the project’s primary vehicle access off of Reservoir Avenue. Each of these options is discussed below:

- Eliminate high attendance events at the project site: As noted in Chapter 11, “Noise,” the significant adverse noise impact is expected to occur only during the hour preceding and following high attendance events at the proposed project, when most of the participants and spectators would be arriving and departing. Eliminating high attendance events at the project

Kingsbridge Armory National Ice Center

site would substantially reduce vehicular traffic, and thus noise levels, before and after events. However, hosting high attendance events at the site is a key component of the project goal of returning the large, substantially vacant Armory building to productive use. The hosting of events also would contribute to the project goal of economic revitalization in the form of visitor spending. Therefore, eliminating high attendance events under the proposed project would not be consistent with project goals and objectives.

- Restrict vehicular access to the site during high attendance events: As noted in Chapter 11, “Noise,” the significant adverse noise impact would occur due to the volume of project-generated traffic along Reservoir Avenue. Restricting vehicular access to the site during high attendance events would eliminate this impact. However, this type of operational restriction would not be feasible due to the need to keep Reservoir Avenue open for public traffic and the need to provide access to the site and parking garage during events for other activities that may be occurring at the Armory concurrently with the high attendance event.
- Move the primary vehicle access off of Reservoir Avenue: As currently proposed, most vehicle access to the site would occur via the proposed access drive off of Reservoir Avenue (with alternate access from West 195th Street). Shifting vehicle access from Reservoir Avenue to another street frontage would not be feasible for a variety of reasons. Using West 195th Street as the primary vehicle access point would not be expected to reduce noise levels along Reservoir Avenue, as most vehicles would continue to travel up Reservoir Avenue to reach West 195th Street. West Kingsbridge Road could not be utilized as the primary vehicle access point because it is unlikely that new garage entrances could be created on this façade without affecting its historic character. Lastly, Jerome Avenue, which operates with one travel lane in each direction between the columns that support the subway viaduct overhead, would be unsuitable for the primary garage entrance. This corridor would not be able to accommodate project-generated traffic during events, nor would the street be able to accommodate passenger drop-offs. In addition, the use of Jerome Avenue for the primary vehicle entrance would require the elimination of program space within the structure to accommodate a ramp down to the garage level.

Therefore, there is no reasonable alternative that could avoid the significant adverse noise impact related to mobile source noise without substantially compromising the goals of the proposed project.

~~Also as discussed in Chapter 11, “Noise,” the level of interior noise within the commercial portion of the proposed project along the south façade of the Armory building resulting from exterior sources may be greater than the 50 dBA $L_{10(1)}$ level considered acceptable for commercial use according to CEQR interior noise level guidelines. Between the DEIS and FEIS, noise levels were measured inside the Armory building along the south façade in order to determine whether interior $L_{10(1)}$ noise levels resulting from exterior noise sources do actually exceed 50 dBA. The interior $L_{10(1)}$ noise levels resulting from exterior noise sources do not exceed 50 dBA, and thus do not constitute a significant adverse impact based on CEQR interior noise level criteria.~~

This unmitigated significant adverse impact could be mitigated by removing and replacing the windows on the façade facing West Kingsbridge Road with well-sealed double-glazed windows, providing a composite OITC for the southern building facade of at least 26. However, as discussed in Chapter 14, “Mitigation,” the removal and replacement of these windows would not be feasible because the Kingsbridge Armory is listed on the State/National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR), and the windows on the façade along West Kingsbridge Road are a significant

element of the structure's design. Therefore, there is no reasonable alternative that could avoid the significant adverse noise impact related to building attenuation without substantially compromising the goals of the proposed project. *