

A. INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes and responds to comments on the Kingsbridge Armory National Ice Center Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Oral and written comments were received during the public hearing held by the New York City Planning Commission, on Wednesday, October 9, 2013. Written comments were accepted through the public comment period, which ended on Monday, October 21, 2013.

Section B lists the elected officials, organizations, and individuals who provided comments on the DEIS. Section C contains a summary of these comments and responses to relevant comments. As is standard practice, these summaries convey the substance of the comments made, but do not necessarily quote the comments verbatim. Comments are organized by subject matter and generally parallel the chapter structure of the DEIS. Where more than one commentator expressed similar views, those comments have been grouped and addressed together. Some comments offered concerns, issues, and recommendations about the overall project itself, but not specifically on EIS technical issues. In these instances, the responses include either an acknowledgment of the comment (“Comment noted.”) or an indication that the comment raised issues beyond City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) and the technical scope of the DEIS.

B. LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMENTED ON THE DEIS**ELECTED OFFICIALS**

1. Ruben Diaz, Jr., Bronx Borough President, written submissions dated September and October 9, 2013 (Diaz)
2. G. Oliver Koppell, Councilmember, 11th Council District, Bronx, oral comments (Koppell)

ORGANIZATIONS

3. Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance, oral comments and written submission by Desiree Pilgrim-Hunter dated October 9, 2013 (KARA)

INTERESTED PUBLIC

4. Reverend Que English, oral comments (English)
5. Michael Odenthal, oral comments (Odenthal)

¹ This entire chapter is new to the FEIS.

C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

GENERAL

Comment 1: I have no hesitation in stating that what will be constructed in the Kingsbridge Armory will be of great benefit to the Bronx, financially successful, offer living wage employment, and will provide local businesses with contractual opportunities while offering a venue for educational and professional ice sports related recreational events heretofore not possible in our great city. (Diaz)

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 2: This project will transform an iconic landmark into a destination for thousands, all while revitalizing an entire community and offering permanent, “living wage” jobs for Bronx residents. (Diaz)

It is a wonderful proposal for a deteriorating building and will give a tremendous boost to the neighborhood. (Koppell)

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 3: When the Kingsbridge National Ice Center is opened it will create opportunities to transform our children, our youth and our adults with the creation of a new state-of-the-art community center, innovative sports foundation programs, small business incubators to turn our Bronx residents into entrepreneurs and business owners, while providing training, financial support and technical assistance for local businesses and community groups. (KARA)

The project will provide living wage jobs and opportunities for children. It’s been proven to work in Philadelphia, in a similar program and community. (English)

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 4: My administration is committed to projects that respect the surrounding community and our shared environment. To this end I am therefore very pleased to acknowledge that the applicant is committed to achieving a LEED-Silver designation for the development of the Kingsbridge Armory. (Diaz)

Response: Comment noted.

Comment 5: Lighting specifically designed to highlight the exterior of the Kingsbridge Armory should be included, so as to enhance the building’s unique architecture. (Diaz)

Response: As discussed in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the project includes lighting mounted at the ground-level open space areas and around the site’s perimeter, which would enhance the Armory’s exterior

Comment 6: This is a wolf in sheep's clothing, just a way to get control of zoning changes. Bronx kids need education, not hockey. (Odenthal)

Response: Comment noted. The potential effects of the proposed zoning changes were analyzed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy," and no significant adverse impacts were identified.

TRANSPORTATION

Comment 7: I am satisfied that because this project offers direct access to both subway and bus transportation, this fact minimizes the potential of traffic congestion. The availability of on-site parking, coupled with a well designed off-street lot for truck and media vehicles, diminishes the likelihood of persistent congestion on the neighborhood's street network. With further regard to vehicular traffic, it remains my conviction that unlike retail centers that attract people with cars in order that they may more easily purchase large quantities of merchandise, those bound for a sport event at the proposed ice center would be more inclined to rely on mass transit. Our experience with this issue at the new Yankee Stadium confirms that people may in fact prefer the mass transit option. Reviewing traffic figures associated with the previous retail proposal for the Armory showed that during peak hours a retail use would generate twice the vehicular trips than those anticipated by the KNIC project; 1,400 vehicular trips, vs. 700 vehicular trips. On Saturdays, the retail use would prompt 1,307 vehicular trips, as compared with the ice center hosting a major event, the vehicular trip number is 860. As to the observation that a sport event discharges fans within a specific amount of time thereby prompting traffic congestion, again, with appropriate congestion management and if necessary the use of traffic control agents, I am certain any congestion would be minimal and short in duration. Similarly, retail centers require voluminous truck deliveries. Conversely, vehicular traffic prompted by the KNIC proposal is characterized by automobiles. Deliveries of supportive goods to the ice center will be manageable and can be scheduled to reflect the traffic patterns and associated demands on the local street network. (Diaz)

Response: Comment noted. As discussed in Chapter 14, "Mitigation," the KNIC team has committed to implement a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for major events. The TMP will use Traffic Enforcement Agents (TEAs) to regulate traffic and pedestrian circulation and would also include the use of Variable Message Signs (VMS) to guide patrons to appropriate off-street parking locations, thereby eliminating the recirculation of vehicles on neighborhood streets and reducing congestion. Additionally, public announcements, social media, and advertising would be used to provide advance guidance to patrons during major events. With regard to truck traffic, a delivery plan would be implemented to schedule the deliveries during off-peak hours of traffic activity to minimize potential congestion in the local study area.

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Comment 8: Simply stated, any productive use of the Armory will prompt an increase in vehicular and pedestrian activity. Therefore, I would propose we continue to explore ways by which such activity can be best managed, as for example extending existing bus routes to the Armory. KNIC should reach out to bus-service providers such as New York City Transit and Westchester County’s BEE Line to explore the possibility of offering transportation to the Kingsbridge Armory or including a specific stop as part of an existing route. (Diaz)

Response: As discussed in Chapter 14, “Mitigation,” the KNIC team has committed to develop and conduct a detailed traffic monitoring plan once the proposed project is operational. Based on the results of traffic monitoring plan, if needed, the KNIC team would consult with New York City Transit and Westchester County’s Bee Line to explore the possibility of offering extended bus service/routes to the Kingsbridge Armory.

Comment 9: We encourage the Department of Transportation to work with KNIC to enroll a portion of a mapped street located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Reservoir Avenue at West Kingsbridge Road in the agency’s Public Plaza Program. (Diaz)

Response: Comment noted. *