



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
CITY OF NEW YORK

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW DIVISION

Carl Weisbrod, *Director*  
Department of City Planning

April 22, 2016

**NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF  
THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**102-05 Ditmars Blvd. Parking Garage**

**Project Identification**

CEQR No. 15DCP160Q  
ULURP Nos. 160246ZSQ, 160283ZSQ,  
160284ZSQ, M790347(A)ZMQ  
10271SEQRA Classification: Type I

**Lead Agency**

City Planning Commission  
120 Broadway, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, New York

**Contact Person**

Robert Dobruskin, AICP, Director (212) 720-3423  
Environmental Assessment and Review Division  
New York City Department of City Planning

---

Pursuant to City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), Mayoral Executive Order No. 91 of 1977, CEQR Rules of Procedure of 1991 and the regulations of Article 8 of the State Environmental Conservation Law, State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) as found in 6 NYCRR Part 617, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been prepared for the action described below. The proposal involves actions by the City Planning Commission and Council of the City of New York pursuant to Uniform Land Use Review Procedures (ULURP). Copies of the DEIS are available for public inspection at the office of the undersigned. A public hearing on the DEIS will be held at a later date to be announced. Advance notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. Written comments on the DEIS are requested and would be received and considered by the Lead Agency until the 10th calendar day following the close of the public hearing.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The applicant, LGA Parking, LLC, proposes to construct a new approximately 2,200 space parking garage structure at 102-05 Ditmars Boulevard (Block 1641, Lot 1) in the East Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens Community District 3. The proposed garage would contain three components: 420 parking spaces accessory to the Marriott hotel (also located on the project site), 1,775 parking spaces available to the public, intended for air travelers from LaGuardia Airport in need of long-term parking, and approximately 600 square feet (sf) of ground-level retail space along

Robert Dobruskin, AICP, *Director*  
Olga Abinader, *Deputy Director*  
120 Broadway, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor, New York, N.Y. 10271  
(212) 720-3200 FAX (212) 720-3219  
<http://www.nyc.gov/planning>

Ditmars Boulevard (the “proposed project”). The project site is located predominantly in a C4-2 commercial zoning district with a small portion located in a R3X residential district and contains an existing 10-story transient hotel with 410 total parking spaces on-site between the existing three level (including roof parking) parking garage and a surface parking lot.

The proposed actions include a Special Permit pursuant to Section 74-512 of the Zoning Resolution of the City of New York (“Zoning Resolution” or “ZR”) to permit a garage with more than 150 spaces and to permit roof parking; a Special Permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-743(a)(2) to modify height, setback, side and rear yard requirements for buildings in a Large Scale General Development (“LSGD”); a Special Permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-744(c) to permit the modification of sign regulations for buildings in a LSGD, and a modification to an existing Declaration (D-43) which limits development permitted on the project site pursuant to paragraph 8 of the. The proposed actions would facilitate the construction of an approximately 547,687 gross square foot (gsf), 128-foot-tall (including bulkheads) parking garage structure that would consist of approximately 2,195 parking spaces and an approximately 600 sf ground-level retail space. The new garage structure would replace an existing at-grade parking facility and surface parking lot of accessory spaces associated with the adjacent hotel.

The proposed actions are subject to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR).

## **II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Proposed Actions**

The applicant is seeking several actions in order to facilitate the proposed project. The following four actions are being sought in order to facilitate the proposed project:

1. A Special Permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-512 to permit a public parking garage with more than 150 spaces and to permit roof parking (“Garage Special Permit”);
2. A Special Permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-743(a)(2) to modify the requirements for height and setback (33-432), side (33-26) and rear yard (33-25) for buildings in a Large Scale General Development (LSGD);
3. A Special Permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-744(c) to permit the modification of sign regulations in an LSGD (“Use Special Permit”) related to surface area and height of signs set forth in ZR Section 32-644, Section 32-655, and Section 32-67;
4. Modification of the existing Restrictive Declaration (D-43) pursuant to paragraph 8 of the Declaration.

Collectively these discretionary actions are referred to as the “proposed actions.” It should be noted that the proposed special permit actions would require conditions to be recorded in a new Restrictive Declaration which would supersede and replace the formerly recorded Restrictive Declaration. The new Restrictive Declaration would incorporate appropriate conditions from the current Restrictive Declaration and impose new conditions relative to the special permits.

## **Description of the Project Site**

The project site is located at 102-05 Ditmars Boulevard in the East Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens, Community District 3. The project site is bounded by the Grand Central Parkway to the north and east, Ditmars Boulevard to the south, and 23rd Avenue to the west. The site encompasses Queens Block 1641, Lot 1, and has a frontage of approximately 952 feet on Ditmars Boulevard with a total lot area of 199,010 sf. The project site is predominantly zoned as a C4-2 commercial district; a small portion of the project site zoned as a R3X residential district. The lot contains an existing 10-story transient hotel with 410 total parking spaces on-site parking garage and a surface parking lot. C4-2 zoning districts are mapped in commercial areas that are located outside of the central business districts, and allow for larger, high-traffic generating uses; (e.g. department stores, theaters and other commercial and office uses). C2-4 districts allow a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.4 for commercial uses, a maximum FAR of 2.43 for residential uses, and a maximum FAR of 4.8 for community facility uses. R3X zoning districts are mapped in lower-density neighborhoods and allow for one- and two-family detached homes on lots that of at least 35 foot widths. This district allows a maximum FAR of 0.5 for residential uses which may be increased up to 20 percent for an attic allowance. One parking space is required per dwelling unit and the maximum building height is 30 feet.

The neighboring sites located along Ditmars Boulevard are comprised primarily of hotel and rental car businesses, which are complementary to LaGuardia Airport to the north. The area to the north of the project site is predominantly characterized by transportation infrastructure associated with the Grand Central Parkway and the 23rd Avenue Bridge (which is elevated over the Grand Central Parkway), as well as multiple hotel uses and LaGuardia Airport. The East Elmhurst neighborhood is characterized by predominantly low- to medium-density residential uses and a mixture of institutional, commercial, and transportation/utility uses along major traffic corridors, such as Northern Boulevard, Astoria Boulevard, and to a lesser extent, Ditmars Boulevard. Additionally, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation's Overlook Park is located in the northern portion of the East Elmhurst neighborhood, approximately ½ mile from the project site and south of the Grand Central Parkway.

## **Description of the Proposed Project**

The proposed actions would facilitate the construction of an approximately 547,687 gross square foot (gsf), 128-foot-tall (including bulkheads) parking garage structure (the "proposed project") that would consist of 2,195 parking spaces and an approximately 600 sf ground-level retail space. Due to variations in grade at the project site, the garage structure would rise eight stories from the Ditmars Boulevard frontage and ten stories from the Grand Central Parkway frontage. The proposed project would include three facilities, the first containing approximately 420 spaces accessory to the hotel, the second 1,775 parking spaces available to the public, intended for air travelers from LaGuardia in need of long-term parking, and the third containing the approximately 600 sf ground-level retail space along Ditmars Boulevard. The new garage structure would replace an existing at-grade parking facility and surface parking lot of accessory spaces associated with the adjacent hotel. Three curb cuts would be provided on site: one for the hotel and its accessory parking, and two for the long-term public parking facility. Access to the hotel would be provided by a 41-foot-wide curb cut, which would replace an existing 60-foot-wide curb cut at the hotel entrance. The second 41-foot curb cut would provide access and egress to the public garage and would be located 86 feet east of the hotel

entrance. Additional access would be provided via a 29-foot-wide curb cut, approximately 275 feet east of the other public garage curb cut.

### **III. BUILD YEAR**

The analysis year for the proposed actions is 2018. This assumes the receipt of approvals and commencement of construction in 2016, and a construction timeframe of approximately 20 months. It is anticipated that the proposed project would be built and operational by 2018.

### **IV. PURPOSE AND NEED**

The Parking Spot, an affiliate of the applicant, solely constructs and operates long-term parking garages to serve airports, and is the largest airport parking company in the industry. The company has a national footprint of 32 facilities, with approximately 57,400 parking stalls at 20 different airports. In the New York Metro Area, The Parking Spot currently operates three facilities at Newark, and one each at JFK and LaGuardia Airport. The Parking Spot facility that serves LaGuardia passengers is located on two adjoining lots at the intersection of 23rd and 90th Street, approximately 12 blocks to the west of the project site. This existing facility has approximately 600 spaces and a very high occupancy rate. The applicant plans to continue to operate this facility, which is not directly associated or connected with the proposed project.

The applicant intends for the proposed parking facility to serve air passengers and existing hotel parking demand; the applicant believes a parking facility of this capacity could not be filled by the demand for typical, non-airport related, short-term public parking.

The applicant sees a growing need for long-term parking to serve travelers using LaGuardia Airport, which is not well served by transit options. Travelers take private buses, black cars, taxis, or are dropped off by family or friends. The existing supply of near-airport parking is nearly 100 percent occupied most days of the week. In addition, by 2018 approximately 1,100 on-airport parking spaces will be permanently removed as a result of the terminal redevelopment project, including all 921 existing long-term parking spaces. The Port Authority has a substantial passenger growth goal of approximately 30 percent of its passengers (from 24 million to 36 million, annually). Thus, planned and expected growth in passenger traffic will increase the impact of constrained supply.

The Final LaGuardia Airport Environmental Assessment (November 2014), conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), on behalf of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for the US Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration, provides extensive information on the anticipated change in airport customer patterns. Based on the assessment, there is an anticipated increase in airplane passengers of up to 44 percent over a 20-year period, which ends in 2030. This passenger growth results in a projection of at least 20,000 new passengers traveling to LaGuardia Airport daily. According to the Port Authority's Environmental Assessment, the current LaGuardia Airport parking facilities capture only about 4.6 percent of the total passengers arriving at the airport, which, based on the passenger growth projections, would still result in a daily parking demand growth of up to 920 spaces. Taking into account travelers staying more than one day, this new demand more than doubles. The projection also indicates that new taxi and black cars arriving at the airport would constitute an additional 4,400 trips each day.

As LaGuardia Airport plans to expand within the boundaries of its constrained perimeter, the expansion of the central terminal and parking reconstruction will reduce the number of available parking spaces at the terminals. Currently, LaGuardia Airport offers about 6,300 spaces. At the completion of the parking construction phases, expected in 2018, LaGuardia Airport would offer about 5,200 spaces at the terminals.

On a national basis, the use statistics are very different for how passengers travel to airports when compared to the statistics for LaGuardia Airport. The national statistics indicate that 19 percent of the passengers arrive and park at airport facilities. LaGuardia Airport has quite different travel patterns with only 4.6 percent of the passengers parking at on-airport facilities, which is likely due to the limited and costly supply of terminal parking options (The Parking Spot's existing facility experiences very high occupancy rates) in addition to the passenger's demand. A goal for the proposed project includes accommodating travelers currently using taxis and black cars.

There are more than 19,000 'true originating' daily passengers from LaGuardia Airport and 50 percent live outside of Manhattan. A true originating passenger is someone whose travel originates at the airport, and is not there on a layover. Thus, a true originating passenger is one who would be dropped at the airport or would drive to the airport and seek long-term parking and is a potential user of the parking facilities. Half of those (25 percent of the total) live outside of New York City limits. Given driving preferences and car ownership rates of these residents and the severe limitation of transit access to the airport, it is estimated that 46 percent of true originating passengers would prefer to drive if parking spaces were reliably available at a cost effective rate. This 46 percent rate is much lower than the calculated 61 percent of true originating passengers who drive to other City area airports, reflecting the fact that approximately half of originating passengers are from Manhattan. With 60 to 65 percent of airport users now leisure travelers, the demand for parking spaces has increased, as leisure travelers are more likely to use their personal vehicles.

## V. FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The *2014 CEQR Technical Manual* serves as the general guide on methodologies and impact criteria for evaluating the proposed project's potential effects on the various environmental areas of analysis. As noted above, the proposed project is expected to be complete and fully operational by 2018, thus its environmental setting is not the current environment, but the future environment. Therefore, the technical analysis and consideration of alternatives assess current conditions and forecast these conditions to 2018 for the purposes of determining potential impacts. Specifically, the EIS provides a description of "Existing Conditions" and forecasts these conditions to the future 2018 without and with the proposed project ("No-Action" and "With-Action" conditions, respectively).

To forecast the No-Action condition, information on known proposed land-uses are incorporated. The differences between the No-Action and With-Action conditions are assessed to determine whether such differences are adverse and/or significant; and any significant adverse impacts are disclosed. The EIS also identifies and analyzes appropriate mitigation for any identified significant adverse environmental impacts.

An Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) was issued on May 14, 2015, which concluded that there would be no potential for significant adverse impacts in the following analysis areas and conditions:

- Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy
- Socioeconomic Conditions
- Community Facilities and Services
- Open Space
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Water and Sewer Infrastructure
- Solid Waste and Sanitation Services
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Construction Impacts

The RWCDs for the purpose of analyzing the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project is described below, including the No-Action and With-Actions scenarios.

#### **No-Action Condition**

Absent the proposed action, no new development is anticipated at the project site. The site would continue to operate with the existing hotel use with the area to be developed with the proposed parking facility remaining as the existing patron parking facility for hotel guests.

#### **With-Action Condition**

The With-Action condition established in the DEIS for analysis purposes has a slightly greater number of parking spaces (2,200 total) than the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) application (2,195 total, comprised of 1,775 public spaces and 420 accessory spaces). The With-Action condition consists of a 128 foot (with bulkheads) garage structure containing a total of 2,200 parking spaces in two separate facilities: one with 400 parking spaces accessory to the hotel (replacing the existing 410 spaces), and one with 1,800 parking spaces available to the public for air travelers from LaGuardia Airport in need of long-term parking. In addition, the new garage structure would contain an approximately 600 sf ground-level retail space along Ditmars Boulevard.

The proposed actions would not result in any new modifications to the existing 10-story, 258,504 gsf hotel. As part of the proposed LSGD special permit, maintenance of the existing signage on the hotel building would be allowed and signage would be placed on the north and the south facades of the proposed garage structure.

The proposed actions limit the type of use, size and design of the development to that which is illustrated on the site plan for the LSGD plan.

## **VI. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS**

The May 14, 2015 EAS concluded that the following impact categories would not result in a significant adverse impact and no further analysis would be required: Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy, Socioeconomic Conditions, Community Facilities and Services, Open Space, Historic and Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, Water and Sewer Infrastructure, Solid Waste and Sanitation

Services, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Construction Impacts. This EIS analyzes Shadows, Urban Design, Hazardous Materials, Transportation, Air Quality, Noise, Public Health, Neighborhood Character, Mitigation, Alternatives, Growth-Inducing Aspects of the Proposed Action, and Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitments of Resources.

### **Shadows**

The proposed actions would not have a significant adverse shadows impact. The proposed actions would allow for the development of a parking garage structure with a maximum level height of approximately 128 feet (including bulkheads). The analysis identified two open space resources within the maximum potential shadow radius of the proposed project. These resources included open space associated with the Grand Central Parkway and “Greenstreets” along and at the intersection of Ditmars Boulevard and 23rd Avenue. The Greenstreets program converts paved, vacant traffic islands and medians into green spaces filled with trees, shrubs and groundcover in an effort to capture stormwater. The program is part of the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan. The approximately 4.23 acres of open area associated with the Grand Central Parkway, owned and maintained by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), does not meet the CEQR definition of a sunlight-sensitive resources nor is it publicly-accessible.

Shadows from the proposed project would fall on the Greenstreets resource within the maximum shadow radius during the morning hours of the March 21 and May 6 analysis periods but not during the December 21 and June 21 analysis periods. Observations of this resource indicated that the Greenstreets in the vicinity of these anticipated shadows is primarily comprised of pavement, with no vegetative features. Incremental shadows cast by the proposed project during these analysis periods would not adversely affect this resource of concern. Thus, the proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse shadows impact.

### **Urban Design**

The proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse impact related to urban design. The proposed project would rise eight-stories along the Ditmars Boulevard frontage with two cellar levels (10 stories along Grand Central Parkway and an overall maximum roof height of approximately 128-feet).

The proposed project would consist of a rectangular structure situated in the eastern and central portions of the project site, fronting along Ditmars Boulevard, and setback approximately 77 feet from the existing residential uses adjacent to the project site to the east. The maximum proposed building height of the proposed parking structure would be approximately 106 feet (without bulkheads) measured from the Grand Central Parkway grade and approximately 84 feet (without bulkheads) measured from the Ditmars Boulevard grade, both of which would be lower than the hotel’s maximum height of 111-feet-4-inches (excluding parapets and bulkhead). The highest elevation of the proposed project would be located at its western end, closest to the existing hotel, and would step down towards the lower-rise residential neighborhoods to the south and east.

The proposed development would be constructed on an existing block and would not alter street orientation or street pattern in the study area. The exterior treatment of the proposed parking structure would complement the façade of the existing Marriott hotel building, which would also generally reflect other commercial hotel development within the study area. The proposed parking



garage structure would include signage along its Ditmars Boulevard and Grand Central Parkway frontages.

Design and landscaping elements of the LSGD plan would integrate the existing hotel building and proposed project with an entry court. The proposed landscape design would provide a coordinated treatment that would integrate the existing hotel and proposed parking structure within the overall LSGD plan and help minimize views of the proposed parking garage structure from pedestrians and automobiles along Ditmars Boulevard.

The proposed project was found to be consistent with nearby commercial buildings and has been designed to be set back from adjacent residential uses in the surrounding area and screened with landscaping. The proposed project would be compatible with the overall urban design of the area, which is characterized by a mix of commercial buildings and residential uses. Overall, the proposed actions would not have a significant adverse impact on urban design.

### **Hazardous Materials**

The proposed actions would not have a significant adverse impact related to Hazardous Materials. The potential for hazardous materials was evaluated based on an April 22, 2014 Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) prepared by CBRE, Inc. (CBRE); a July 2014 limited Subsurface Report Phase II Environmental prepared by GZA GeoEnvironmental; and a Phase II ESA prepared by VHB dated August 5, 2015. These documents have been reviewed and approved by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Based upon the subsurface investigations identified and summarized in Chapter 4, "Hazardous Materials," there were no impacts to groundwater identified on the site. It was also determined that no off-site spills or other adjacent uses were affecting groundwater quality at the site. As groundwater will likely be encountered as part of construction, standard dewatering procedures and permitting will be implemented by the applicant for non-impacted groundwater. Additionally, the Phase II testing showed no potential for contaminated soils or other regulated hazardous materials. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reviewed and approved these findings on September 6, 2015 and required only the preparation of a Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP), which will be submitted for DEP approval prior to the start of construction. The CHASP will outline procedures for the handling and removal of calcium-impacted soils in order to minimize any potential exposure to contractors and construction workers. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the disturbance of hazardous materials nor would it increase pathways for human or environmental exposure to hazardous materials.

### **Transportation**

The proposed actions would result in significant adverse traffic impacts at two intersections during the AM peak hour. The impacted traffic movements are the Westbound left turn movement at Ditmars Boulevard and 94th Street and the Northbound approach at Ditmars Boulevard/111th Street and Astoria Boulevard. Standard traffic improvement measures were identified to fully mitigate the two potential significant adverse traffic impacts resulting from the proposed project and are presented in Chapter 10 of the DEIS, "Mitigation."

It is expected that the public parking component of the proposed project would generate 122 total



vehicle trips (107 “ins” and 15 “outs”) during the weekday AM peak hour, 101 total vehicle trips (27 “ins” and 74 “outs”) during the weekday midday peak hour, and 119 total vehicle trips (33 “ins” and 86 “outs”) during the weekday PM peak hour. These project generated trips were added to peak hour volumes on the street network to ensure a conservative traffic analysis.

Based on the analysis results, the majority of traffic movements would continue to operate at acceptable levels of service; three intersections would have at least one movement operating at unacceptable levels of service during at least one peak hour. Traffic movements that operate at unacceptable levels of service under the No-Action conditions would continue to do so under the With-Action conditions; no additional movements would be expected to operate at unacceptable levels of service as a result of the proposed project.

Seven intersections were analyzed and it was found that two intersections would have significant adverse impacts during the weekday AM peak hour (7:30 – 8:30). The impacted traffic movements are identified below.

Ditmars Boulevard and 94th Street

- Westbound left turn movement (weekday AM peak hour).

Ditmars Boulevard/111th Street and Astoria Boulevard

- Northbound approach (weekday AM peak hour).

Standard traffic improvement measures were identified to fully mitigate the two potential significant adverse traffic impacts resulting from the proposed project and are presented in Chapter 10, “Mitigation.” The screening thresholds would not be exceeded for transit or pedestrians; thus, additional analyses were not required for these technical areas.

## Air Quality

The proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse impact related to air quality. The results of the transportation analysis indicate that the number of incremental trips generated by the parking garage would be lower than the 2014 CEQR Technical Manual carbon monoxide (CO)-based screening threshold of 160 vehicles per hour at an intersection, as well as the minimum screening threshold of 12 Heavy Duty Diesel Vehicles for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). The maximum vehicle increment due to the project at an intersection is 111 vehicles during the evening peak period at the intersection of the proposed project’s primary access point (the new curb cut closest to the hotel) and Ditmars Boulevard. No heavy vehicle trips are expected to be generated by the proposed project. Therefore, traffic from the proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse effect on air quality, and a quantified assessment of on-street mobile source emissions is not warranted.

The proposed actions would include a naturally ventilated parking facility located on the project site. An analysis of the emissions from the facility and their potential impacts on the environment was performed, calculating pollutant levels in the surrounding area using the methodology set forth in the 2014 CEQR Technical Manual. The emissions of the project are subject to the regulatory concentration levels of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and the CEQR De Minimis criteria for general conformity. The results of the modeling indicate that the highest one-hour CO concentration that would occur around the project site is 3.57 parts per million (ppm).

However, the NAAQS for one-hour CO is 35 ppm. In addition, an eight-hour CO calculation was conducted, and the maximum eight-hour CO concentration was 1.82 ppm, which is below the 9 ppm standard set by the NAAQS. The results of the modeling indicate that the highest 24-hour concentration of PM<sub>10</sub> that would occur around the project is 50.65 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The analysis indicates that the highest annual concentration of PM<sub>2.5</sub> that would occur around the project is 9.13 micrograms per meter cubed (µg/m<sup>3</sup>), which includes a combined project contribution and local roadway contribution of 0.03 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The De Minimis criteria for the increase in annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> is 0.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. In addition, a 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> calculation was conducted, and the maximum 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration was 24.13 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, which includes a combined project contribution and local roadway contribution of 0.13 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. This is below the De Minimis criteria of 5.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

Because garage emissions from the proposed project would fall below NAAQS and the De Minimis criteria for the pollutants of concern, the parking garage would not result in a significant adverse impact on the ambient air quality of the surrounding neighborhood.

## Noise

The proposed actions would not have a significant adverse impact related to noise. A noise evaluation was conducted to assess the potential for noise impact associated with the proposed actions. The existing noise conditions includes noise contributions from Ditmars Boulevard, Grand Central Parkway, vehicles on other local roads, and air traffic at LaGuardia Airport. To characterize the existing environment, ambient sound measurements (which include all sources of sound) were recorded along with simultaneous spot traffic counts on Ditmars Boulevard. Because the proposed actions would only increase traffic volumes on Ditmars Boulevard, ambient sound levels at nearby receptors would only be affected by increases in sound generated from Ditmars Boulevard. It was found that the contribution from all other sources would not be affected by the proposed actions. Because the proposed actions would not introduce any new sensitive receptors, the impact has been assessed according to the increase between the No-Action to With-Action conditions. A 3 dBA increase in sound level is generally considered to be just noticeable to a listener and the threshold for a significant adverse noise impact.

A traffic analysis was conducted for the proposed actions to quantify the number of new vehicle trips that would be generated by the project. The analysis indicates the proposed actions would result in an approximately 17 percent increase in PCEs on Ditmars Boulevard for the morning peak hour and approximately 11 percent increase during the evening peak hour. The proposed project would not double the PCEs, which indicates that the increase in vehicular traffic would result in less than a 3 dBA increase in sound levels at the neighborhood around the project site. Therefore, no discernible difference in sound levels would be recognized by the public and noise impact would not be expected.

An analysis of the contribution of sound from Ditmars Boulevard and from other sources such as the Grand Central Parkway and air traffic at LaGuardia Airport found that sound from other sources contributed significantly to the overall environment. Traffic noise predictions using Traffic Noise Modeling (TNM) show that sound levels from Ditmars Boulevard would increase from 0.4 to 0.7 dBA due to the proposed project and that overall sound levels would increase from 0.1 to 0.2 dBA. Therefore, the proposed actions would increase sound levels less than 3 dBA which would result in an unperceivable change in sound level and there would be no significant adverse noise impact on the neighborhood. Additionally, No-Action and With-Action L10 sound levels would not affect

whether the closest existing residential receptors would be in an ambient sound environment that is marginally acceptable or marginally unacceptable. This further demonstrates that the proposed actions would have minimal effect on existing receptors.

### **Public Health**

As described in Chapter 4.0, “Hazardous Materials,” Chapter 6.0, “Air Quality,” and Chapter 7.0, “Noise, (and the May 14, 2015 EAS which screened out Water and Sewer Infrastructure analyses), the proposed project would not result in unmitigated significant adverse impacts in any of the technical areas related to public health (hazardous materials, water quality, air quality, or noise). As detailed in Chapter 4.0, “Hazardous Materials,” the proposed project would not result in the disturbance of hazardous materials nor would it increase pathways for human or environmental exposure to hazardous materials. Furthermore, as described in Chapter 6, “Air Quality” and Chapter 7, “Noise,” there were no potential for significant adverse impacts related to Air or Noise and no additional measures were identified to avoid impacts. Therefore, the proposed project would not have the potential for significant adverse impacts related to public health and no further analysis is warranted.

### **Neighborhood Character**

The proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse impact related to Neighborhood Character. As noted above, there would be no significant adverse impacts to any of the individual technical areas that contribute to neighborhood character as a result of the proposed project, except for traffic. These impacts do not affect the overall character of the neighborhood and could be fully mitigated with standard traffic engineering improvements. Overall, the project’s moderate effects on urban design, shadows, and traffic do not have the potential to combine and cumulatively change the neighborhood’s defining features. The use and design of the proposed project, as an airport-supportive business, would reinforce the existing defining features of the area, and would not create an adverse impact on neighborhood character.

The proposed project would not result in a significant impacts on the neighborhood-defining characteristics of the project site and the surrounding area, except for traffic, which could be fully mitigated with standard traffic engineering improvements. Overall, the proposed project would not adversely affect the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Mitigation**

As discussed in Chapter 5, “Transportation,” of the DEIS, the proposed project would result in significant traffic impacts at two intersections: the intersection of Ditmars Boulevard and 94th Street and the intersection of Ditmars Boulevard/111th Street and Astoria Boulevard. These impacts would occur during the weekday AM peak hours (impacts are not expected during the weekday midday and PM peak hours). Measures have been examined to fully mitigate these impacts as described further below.

Ditmars Boulevard and 94th Street: Impacts to the westbound Ditmars Boulevard left turn movement could be mitigated by shifting two seconds of green time from the southbound 94th Street lead phase to the eastbound-westbound Ditmars Boulevard phase.

Ditmars Boulevard/111th Street and Astoria Boulevard: The northbound 111th Street approach could be fully mitigated by installing a “No Standing 7 AM to 10 AM Monday through Friday” parking regulation along the east curb extending 100 feet from the stop bar (a loss of four parking spaces) to provide an additional travel lane during the AM peak period.

It was found that these traffic mitigation measures fall within the jurisdiction of NYCDOT for implementation. Approximately four parking spaces would be lost along 111th Street between Astoria Boulevard and Northern Boulevard during the AM peak period. Designated truck loading zones and bus overlay areas would not be affected by the proposed parking regulations.

## **Alternatives**

Three alternatives to the proposed actions were considered in the DEIS: A No-Action Alternative, a Reduced Impact Alternative, and a No Impact Alternative. The No-Action Alternative is intended to provide an assessment of the environmental impacts should the lead agency choose not to approve the proposed actions. This analysis is formulated to provide an understanding of the consequences of not approving the proposed project and a baseline for the evaluation of potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project.

Both a Reduced Impact Alternative and a No Impact Alternative were also considered, which would reduce the size of development on the project site such that there would be lesser impacts or no potential for significant adverse impacts.

### *No-Action Alternative*

The No-Action Alternative would avoid the proposed project’s significant adverse traffic impacts. However, in this alternative, there would be no additional parking capacity added on the site. Instead, the site would continue to operate with its current uses as a hotel and a 410-space accessory parking structure (parking deck and surface parking). Therefore, the No Action Alternative would not meet the applicant’s proposed goals and objectives of the proposed project, which is to provide increased parking capacity in close proximity to LaGuardia Airport to serve the needs of current and future air passengers.

### *Reduced Impact Alternative*

The Reduced Impact Alternative considers a parking garage consisting of approximately 525 public parking spaces at the project site. Under this alternative, the total number of public parking spaces would equal 525. With this reduced number of parking spaces, the proposed project would result in one fewer significant adverse impacts. The Reduced Impact Alternative represents a garage that provides a limited number of parking spaces, and according to the Applicant, compromises the overall objective of the proposed project which is to provide sufficient long-term parking capacity in close proximity to LaGuardia Airport to serve the needs of current and future air passengers, and replace parking that will be eliminated from the airport in the future

### *No Impact Alternative*

The No Impact Alternative considers a parking garage consisting of approximately 125 public parking spaces at the project site. This alternative would reduce the size of the proposed public parking garage on the project site so that significant adverse impacts would be eliminated such that

mitigation measures would not be necessary. A reduction of approximately 1,675 public parking spaces (for a total of 125 public parking spaces, which is only 7 percent the size of the proposed project), would be needed to eliminate significant traffic impacts at both impacted intersections. The sensitivity analysis concluded that any additional public parking spaces on the proposed site in excess of approximately 125 spaces could result in significant adverse traffic impacts. The No Impact Alternative represents a garage that provides a limited number of parking spaces, and according to the Applicant, compromises the overall objective of the proposed project, which is to provide sufficient long-term parking capacity in close proximity to LaGuardia Airport to serve the needs of current and future air passengers, and replace parking that will be eliminated from the airport in the future.

### **Growth-Inducing Aspects of the Proposed Action**

The term “growth-inducing aspects” generally refers to the potential for a proposed project to trigger additional development in areas outside the project site (i.e., directly affected areas) that would otherwise not experience such development. The 2014 *CEQR Technical Manual* indicates that an analysis of the growth-inducing aspects of a proposed project is appropriate when the action:

Adds substantial new land use, new residents, or new employment that could induce additional development of a similar kind or of support uses, such as retail establishments to serve new residential uses; and/or introduces or greatly expands infrastructure capacity (e.g., sewers, central water supply).

The proposed actions would expand upon existing parking use to provide a new 547,687 gross square foot public parking garage with 1,775 spaces available for long-term parking, and 420 spaces accessory to the existing Marriott hotel on the project site. The proposed actions would not provide a substantial amount of new employment because the garage would rely upon parking ticket pay machines and a limited number of attendants and maintenance personnel. The surrounding study area is generally fully developed and existing zoning controls the level of development. Additionally, the proposed project does not require any major new infrastructure and would have no effect on existing infrastructure.

The proposed actions would not provide a substantial amount of new employment because the garage would rely upon parking ticket pay machines and a limited number of attendants and maintenance personnel. The surrounding study area is generally fully developed and existing zoning controls the level of development. Additionally, the proposed project does not require any major new infrastructure and would have no effect on existing infrastructure. The site is accessible to major roadways, including the Grand Central Parkway. Therefore, the proposed project is not expected to induce significant additional growth beyond that identified and analyzed in the DEIS.

### **Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitments of Resources**

Resources, both natural and built, would be expended in the construction and operation of the development facilitated by the proposed actions. These resources include the building materials used for construction; energy in the form of gas and electricity consumed during construction and operation of structures by various mechanical and processing systems; and the human effort (i.e. time and labor) required to develop, construct, and operate various elements of the proposed project.

These resources are considered irretrievably committed, because their reuse for purposes other than the proposed project would be highly unlikely. The proposed project constitutes an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of the project site as a land resource, thereby rendering land use for other purposes infeasible, at least in the near term. The site is currently used as a parking facility and the proposed actions would expand upon that existing use by increasing parking capacity at the site.



---

Olga Abinader, Deputy Director  
Environmental Assessment and Review Division  
New York City Department of City Planning

cc:

Carl Weisbrod, Chairman  
City Planning Commissioners  
The Hon. Melinda Katz  
Stephan A. Kulhanek, Chair, Community Board 3, Queens  
Giovanna A. Reid, District Manager, Community Board 3, Queens  
Raju Mann, City Council  
Nilda Mesa, OEC  
Terrell Estes, DEP  
Naim Rasheed, DOT  
Joon Park, DOT  
Purnima Kapur  
Jacquelyn Harris  
Robert Dobruskin  
John Young  
Frederick Lee  
James Miraglia  
Kevin Olinger  
Rachel Rendeiro  
Yasmine Robinson  
Mehdi Amjadi  
Mauricio Garcia  
Ronald Ying  
Jeff Shumaker  
Sagi Golan  
Pat Bussey  
Susan Wong