

Relationship between Local Short-Term Uses of the Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

Chapter 28:

A. INTRODUCTION

Short-term effects on the environment result from construction impacts. Long-term effects relate to the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity—in particular, the consistency of the proposed development program with long-term regional and local planning objectives. The short- and long-term effects of the proposed development program are summarized below.

B. SHORT-TERM USES

Construction activities—including construction schedules, phasing plans, and staging plans—were described and assessed in Chapter 20, “Construction Impacts.” As detailed in that analysis, construction would at times be disruptive to the surrounding area and, in particular, to nearby residential buildings and open spaces. Although construction would occur over several years, the disruptions would be temporary and would not occur for the entire construction period. Construction activities would be similar to construction activities at other large development sites in the city and the hours of the construction would be regulated by the New York City Department of Buildings (NYCDOB) and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP).

It is anticipated that most of the construction activity could be accommodated on-site. However, during parts of the construction process, some on-street lane closures would be needed. On-street construction staging would attempt to utilize only curbside lanes whenever possible on First Avenue and crosstown streets. Available capacity on First Avenue would permit lane closures adjacent to the construction sites, as would lane closures on crosstown streets that are less trafficked and are not used for direct vehicular access to the Queens-Midtown Tunnel.

For construction at 616 and 685 First Avenue, lane closures may occur as a result of lanes being used as staging areas. At 685 First Avenue, on-street construction staging would occur on East 40th Street; at 616 First Avenue, construction staging would occur on site or on East 36th Street. At 708 First Avenue and Waterside, it is expected that some of the storage and delivery drop-off would be internalized on site. For 708 First Avenue/Waterside, construction staging would occur on site or on East 41st Street. Traffic requirements along the FDR Drive service road make it inadvisable to close traffic along that corridor.

The proposed development program is not expected to result in an increase of potential pathways by introducing new activities and/or processes using hazardous materials. Dust control and traffic maintenance measures would be required to avoid any impacts on local air quality during construction of the proposed development program from fugitive dust (particulate) emissions and mobile source emissions, including hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxide, and carbon

monoxide emissions. No significant adverse air quality impacts from anticipated construction activities have been identified.

Construction noise generated by the proposed development program is expected to be similar to the noise generated by other large construction projects in the city. Increased noise levels resulting from construction activities can be expected to be most noticeable during the early phases of construction, particularly from rock drilling, and/or blasting. It is anticipated that noise and vibration levels during construction may be perceptible from nearby sensitive areas.

At the same time, construction would create direct benefits resulting from expenditures on labor, materials, and services, as well as indirect benefits created by expenditures by material suppliers, construction workers, and other employees involved in the direct activity. Construction also would contribute to increased tax revenues for the city and state, including those from personal income taxes.

C. LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Occupied by vacant land, the four parcels on First Avenue currently offer no benefits to the surrounding community. They detract from the surrounding street life and hinder access to the East River waterfront. Located close to the Midtown Central Business District and the United Nations, and surrounded by low- to high-density residential developments that include Tudor City, the parcels offer an opportunity to accommodate the needs of the area and of the city for economic growth, housing, and open space. The city has historically supported policies and public-private initiatives, such as rezoning, to foster economic growth and encourage commercial and residential development.

The rezoning and other land use approvals proposed by ERRC would facilitate the development of the underutilized First Avenue parcels, accommodate long-term economic growth, and contribute to the vitality of the area and of the city as a whole. This would be accomplished through the construction of substantial new residential, commercial, community facility, and retail facilities, and the provision of publicly accessible open space and views of the East River. The commercial component of the development program would provide jobs and accommodate growth in office-based economic sectors, the substantial residential component would accommodate a portion of the city's current and future housing needs, and the retail, community facility, and open space components would provide community benefits to the area's residents and workers.

ERRC's development program would offer open space and public amenities in a site plan designed to integrate the development into the neighborhood and open access through the 700 and 708 First Avenue parcels. Open spaces and ground-level retail uses would improve the streetscape and pedestrian experience adjacent to the development parcels and would create neighborhood amenities. The open space envisioned under the proposed development program would provide new waterfront views, thereby helping the city realize its long-standing objective of increasing public views of the waterfront.

D. CONCLUSION

Disruptions caused by construction of the proposed development program on any one of the development parcels would be temporary. The long-term social, economic, and community benefits that would result from such construction would, on the other hand, be substantial. Accordingly, the local short-term impacts in use of resources resulting from construction of the

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proposed development program are consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity for the local area, state, and region. *