

STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

Willets Point Phase 2 Development
CEQR Number 07DME014Q
Made Pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act
and City Environmental Quality Review
New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development
August 8, 2024

INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Findings for property acquisition and associated Mayoral Approval Document (“MAD”) in support of the Willets Point Phase 2 Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the environmental review requirements of Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), as set forth in Section 617.11 of its implementing regulations, and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process as set forth in New York City Mayoral Executive Order 91 of 1977, as amended, and in the Rules of Procedure for the City Environmental Quality Review, found at Title 62, Chapter 5 of the Rules of City of New York. This Statement of Findings has been prepared to 1) certify that the procedural requirements of SEQRA and CEQR have been met; 2) consider the relevant environmental impacts, facts, and conclusions disclosed in the Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSSEIS) for the Willets Point Phase 2 Development Plan, which updated the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS, CEQR 07DME014Q) analysis and subsequent reviews; 3) weigh and balance the relevant environmental impacts of the proposed action with social, economic, and other considerations; and 4) set forth a rationale for the decision of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce (DMHEDW), and thereby adopted by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

Pursuant to CEQR and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process as set forth in New York City Mayoral Executive Order 91 of 1977, as amended, and in the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review, found at Title 62, Chapter 5 of the Rules of the City of New York, DMHEDW is the lead agency responsible for conducting the environmental review that determines whether the proposed action with respect to the Project would have significant impacts on public health and the environment. For the Willets Point Phase 2 Development Plan, a Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSSEIS) was certified as being complete, and a Notice of Completion was issued on February 23, 2024. After considering the FSSEIS, HPD has adopted this Statement of Findings.

DMHEDW has consulted with a number of City agencies in adopting these findings, including the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks), New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), New York City School Construction Authority (SCA), New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY), New York City Fire Department (FDNY), New York City

Police Department (NYPD), New York City Transit (NYCT), New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the New York City Law Department (Law). These agencies provided particular assistance to DMHEDW in the review of those matters within the agency's area of expertise.

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SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The Willets Point Phase 2 Development includes approximately 1.3 million gross square feet (gsf) of residential development (approximately 1,400 units); a 250-room, 215,000-gsf hotel; approximately 83,000 gsf of local retail use; a 500,000-gsf soccer-specific stadium for the New York City Football Group (NYCFC); and 500 accessory parking spaces. The proposed stadium would have a maximum capacity of approximately 25,000 seats, and approximately 2.77 acres of publicly accessible open space. The Phase 2 Development site, an approximately 17-acre site within the 61-acre Special Willets Point District (SWPD), is roughly bounded to the north by Northern Boulevard and the Whitestone Expressway, to the east by the Willets Point Blvd. and the Van Wyck Expressway, to the south by Roosevelt Avenue, and to the west by 126th Street/Seaver Way in the Willets Point neighborhood of Queens, Community District 7.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

At this time, HPD is considering a Proposed Action (the Acquisition) consistent with the Approved Plan. The phased development of the District analyzed in the FSEIS, the Proposed Action assumes the same gross floor area and mix of uses in the District as the Approved Plan with revisions described in the prior environmental review. The purpose of the Acquisition is to create an assemblage to realize the Phase 2 Development Plan studied in the FSSEIS.

HPD is seeking a discretionary MAD approval for the Acquisition and will proceed through a Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) Hearing and review, to acquire the parcels ("Site"), comprised of the below 3 lots in the Special Willets Point District and Willets Point Urban Renewal Area. The Proposed Action of the Acquisition is administrative in nature. The Acquisition is anticipated to be a transfer of the Site at a nominal fee. The Acquisition is anticipated to proceed through the MOCS Hearing and review in 2024 and once approved, the Site will undergo remediation (consistent with the Approved Plan and as analyzed in the FSSEIS) by a developer under a license from HPD and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) until such time that HPD is ready to close on a ground lease disposition.

Willets Point Acquisition Parcels, Queens (Site)

Block 1820, Lot 6 – 126-12/126-14 Northern Boulevard SR South, Queens, New York, 11368
Block 1820, Lot 34 – 126-17/136-19 34th Avenue, Queens, New York, 11368
Block 1820, Lot 108 – 126-16 Northern Boulevard SR South, Queens, New York, 11368

The Proposed Action is necessary to further the goals of the Approved Plan and is a precondition to further development onsite. The Proposed Action would not change the program and anticipated work studied in prior environmental review. As detailed in the FSSEIS, it is assumed that the remainder of the District would be built out consistent with existing zoning for the area and substantially as anticipated and analyzed in the environmental review.

BACKGROUND

On September 12, 2008, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development issued a Notice of Completion for the 2008 FGEIS (CEQR 07DME014Q). Zoning actions to facilitate the Willets Point Development Plan, with subsequent modifications, were approved by the New York City Planning Commission (CPC) and New York City Council on September 24, 2008 and November 13, 2008, respectively, and the project that was anticipated to be developed as a result of the actions is referred to herein as “the Approved Plan.” Under the Approved Plan, the approximately 61-acre Willets Point Development District (coterminous with the SWPD) was anticipated to be redeveloped with up to 8.94 million gsf of residential, retail, hotel, convention center, entertainment, commercial office, community facility, open space, and parking uses. The Approved Plan changed the underlying zoning of the District from an M3-1 district (and a small area zoned R3-2) to a C4-4 district and created an Urban Renewal Plan (URP) and a zoning Special District (i.e., the SWPD). The SWPD includes urban design regulations, addressing such elements as the location of uses, building heights and setbacks, street hierarchies, streetscape design, and other site planning and design provisions.

Subsequent to the approval of the Approved Plan in 2008, the City revised and reissued a Request for Qualifications and Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the redevelopment of this area. In 2012, QDG was selected as the City’s designated developer for an initial 20-acre City-owned portion of the SWPD (then termed “Phase 1”). Under that proposal, QDG proposed development of additional land beyond the boundaries of the SWPD in order to introduce a retail destination on portions of the main Citi Field stadium parking field (“Willets West”) and Citi Field parking fields south of Roosevelt Avenue. In 2013, a Supplemental EIS (2013 FSEIS) was prepared to assess the potential effects of the QDG program. In 2014, QDG received approval to modify the original Willets Point Development Plan to include the proposed “Willets West” development and the development of structured parking facilities on surface parking Lot D and South Lot along Roosevelt Avenue adjacent to Citi Field, as well as changes to the phasing of the project.

The 2013 FSEIS assumed the District would be developed in three phases. Phase 1A, anticipated to be completed by 2018, comprised the remediation and development of a small portion of the District along 126th Street with a hotel and retail space, with the remainder of the 23-acre City-owned portion of the District to be used as an interim surface parking/recreational area. Phase 1B—anticipated to be completed ten years after Phase 1A (by 2028)—comprised the development of the interim surface parking/recreational area created during Phase 1A with residential, retail, community facility, and public school uses, along with parking and more than

six acres of new public open space. In Phase 2, the remainder of the District was assumed to be built out substantially as described in the 2008 FGEIS, with a total of approximately 8.94 million gsf of development. As with Phase 1B, Phase 2 was anticipated to be completed incrementally over four years, with full buildout expected to be completed by 2032. The 2013 FSEIS anticipated that the Van Wyck Expressway ramps would come online before the later phases of development (Phase 1B and Phase 2/full buildout of the District). Subsequently, in 2017, the New York State Court of Appeals held that the Willets West portion of the Plan analyzed in the 2013 FSEIS required approval of the New York State Legislature; however, the analysis, methodology, and conclusions of the 2013 FSEIS were not an issue in that litigation. Since that legal challenge, neither the Willets West program that was invalidated by the New York State Court of Appeals, nor the overall 2013 plan moved forward.

In 2018, the City abandoned the 2013 plan and instead announced its intentions to focus on a first phase of development in Willets Point to deliver affordable housing, a new school, and necessary infrastructure and utilities within the southern portion of the SWPD. In 2021, a Technical Memorandum (TM005) was prepared to assess the potential effects of this smaller program on an approximately 8-acre southern portion of the SWPD. This program, then referred to as the “Phase 1 Development,” (different from the 2012/2013 Phase 1 plan) includes an all-affordable residential development, local retail, a public school, open space, and accessory parking. Following the TM005 approval and also in 2021, QDG secured for the Phase 1 Development CPC Chairperson certification per Zoning Regulation (ZR) Section 124-05 and Borough Board approval of the business terms of the proposed ground lease to QDG per New York City Charter section 384(b)4. QDG has been remediating the Phase 1 Site for over two years, and all remediation activities for this portion of the District were completed in spring 2023. Following remediation completion, QDG commenced construction of the Phase 1 Development in late 2023 and is expected to commence vertical construction and completion of the Phase 1 housing by 2026. The New York City School Construction Authority is expected to complete the new school on the Phase 1 Site by 2027.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The Approved Plan was designed to further a number of redevelopment goals for the Willets Point area. The Approved Plan evolved from the Downtown Flushing Development Framework, a land use and economic planning strategy developed between 2002 and 2004 by the Downtown Flushing Task Force. The Task Force outlined several redevelopment goals for the Willets Point District that were adopted for the Approved Plan. In addition, the Approved Plan aimed to achieve the following goals, which are consistent with the vision of the Downtown Flushing Development Framework:

- Provide a substantial number of new housing units to help meet the growing demand for housing in Queens and the City as a whole;
- Ensure that District housing would be affordable to a mix of incomes;
- Provide a world-class example of superior urban design, with a focus on green building and sustainable design practices; and,
- Strengthen the role of Flushing and Corona as commercial centers in northern Queens, while helping to meet the demand for office space in Queens and the City as a whole.

FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS RELIED UPON TO SUPPORT THE DECISION

The FSSEIS analyzed the Proposed Project in detail and concluded that the Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts in the following areas during operation of the project: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; shadows; archaeological resources; urban design and visual resources; natural resources; hazardous materials; water and sewer infrastructure; solid waste; energy; air quality; greenhouse gas emissions; noise; public health; or neighborhood character. An E-designation (E-758) for hazardous materials, air quality, and noise is being placed on Phase 2 Development sites as applicable, to avoid the potential for significant adverse hazardous material, air quality and noise impacts (see Zoning Resolution of the City of New York, Appendix C: City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), Table 1 for Environmental Requirements, E-758; for block and lot information¹). This new E-designation replaces the E-designation (E-214) that had been assigned to all lots within the Willets Point District which were privately owned at the time of the 2008 FGEIS (CEQR #07DME014Q). As discussed below, areas where potential significant impacts were identified include community facilities (publicly-funded early childhood programs), historic and cultural resources, and transportation (operational and construction period).

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A detailed analysis of community facilities was conducted based on the methodology set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual* and consistent with the Final Scope of Work. This analysis determined that the Proposed Project would result in a significant adverse impact on publicly funded early childhood programs but would not result in significant adverse impacts on public schools, libraries, health care facilities, or police and fire protection. The analysis of potential impacts to publicly financed early childhood programs concludes that with consideration of the current capacity and utilization of additional facilities in the study area with publicly financed slots, the Proposed Project would not have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on publicly funded early childhood programs in the 2027 analysis year. However, the Proposed Project would have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on publicly funded early childhood programs in the 2039 analysis year. The 2008 FGEIS, 2013 FSEIS, and subsequent technical memoranda identified the potential for significant adverse impacts on publicly funded early childhood programs.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

An assessment of historic and cultural resources, based on the methodology set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual* and consistent with the Final Scope of Work determined that—consistent with the findings of the 2008 FGEIS, 2013 FSEIS, and subsequent technical memoranda—the potential future Phase 3 Development portion of the Proposed Project would result in a significant adverse impact to architectural resources in the 2039 With Action condition. A developer for Phase 3 has not yet been selected. Before the Phase 3 Development commences, the selected developer would consult with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and LPC to evaluate any remaining potential

¹ Please note that the information provided in Zoning Resolution of the City of New York, Appendix C includes the final (E) designation information pursuant to potential City Council Modifications, which could differ from the original (E) designation information provided in the FSSEIS.

alternatives to demolition. If none are identified, measures to partially mitigate this adverse impact would be implemented.

TRANSPORTATION

A detailed transportation analysis was conducted based on the methodology set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual* and consistent with the Final Scope of Work. This analysis concludes that the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts to traffic, transit, and pedestrians, consistent with the findings of the 2008 FGEIS, 2013 FSEIS, and subsequent technical memoranda.

Traffic Intersections

Traffic conditions were evaluated at 40 intersections for the 2027 and 2039 With Action conditions. Under the 2027 With Action non-game day condition, significant adverse traffic impacts were identified at 8 intersections in the weekday AM peak hour, 7 intersections in the weekday midday peak hour, 9 intersections in the weekday PM peak hour, and 12 intersections in the weekend midday/afternoon peak hour. Under the 2027 With Action game-day condition, significant adverse impacts were identified at 10 intersections in the weekday pre-game peak hour, 10 intersections in the weekend pre-game peak hour, and 10 intersections in the weekend post-game peak hour. Under the 2039 With Action non-game day condition, significant adverse traffic impacts were identified at 20 intersections in the weekday AM peak hour, 21 intersections in the weekday midday peak hour, 23 intersections in the weekday PM peak hour, and 18 intersections in the weekend midday/afternoon peak hour. Under the 2039 With Action game-day condition, significant adverse impacts were identified at 25 intersections in the weekday pre-game peak hour, 19 intersections in the weekend pre-game peak hour, and 19 intersections in the weekend post-game peak hour.

Under the full buildout of the District (the 2039 With Action condition), the number of significantly impacted intersections would generally be lower as compared to the 2008 FGEIS and 2013 FSEIS. It should be acknowledged that the potential Queens Future project is expected to introduce several roadway improvements and add substantial traffic volumes onto the immediate and broader roadway networks. Overall, traffic conditions for the full buildout of the District would likely be more favorable than those concluded for the FSSEIS if the potential Queens Future project does not materialize.

Highway

The Van Wyck Expressway access ramps at the northeastern corner of the District are assumed to be in place by completion of the Phase 3 Development. It is projected that in each proposed buildout phase (both before and after the construction of the ramps) some sections of the highway network would incur level of service degradations and be significantly impacted. By the 2027 With Action condition, one highway mainline location (Van Wyck Expressway northbound between Roosevelt Avenue and Long Island Expressway) and one highway ramp location (Ramp from Whitestone Expressway northbound and Northern Boulevard westbound to Van Wyck Expressway southbound) would be significantly impacted during at least one of the seven peak analysis hours. The new access ramps to and from the Van Wyck Expressway at the northeastern corner of the District that are assumed to be in place by completion of the Phase 3 Development are expected to reduce the use of certain local streets by project-generated traffic to access the Project Site. As a result, the projected impact at the Ramp from Whitestone Expressway

northbound and Northern Boulevard westbound to Van Wyck Expressway southbound in the 2027 With Action condition would no longer materialize in the 2039 With Action condition. However, additional project-generated traffic would also cause significant traffic increases and level of service degradations elsewhere on the highway network. By the time the development associated with the 2039 With Action condition has fully materialized, two highway mainline locations (Van Wyck Expressway northbound between Roosevelt Avenue and Long Island Expressway, and Van Wyck Expressway southbound between Roosevelt Avenue and Long Island Expressway), and four ramp locations (Ramp from World's Fair Marina/Boat Basin Road to Grand Central Parkway westbound, Ramp from Van Wyck Expressway northbound to Northern Boulevard, Ramp from Astoria Boulevard eastbound/Grand Central Parkway eastbound to Whitestone Expressway northbound/Northern Boulevard eastbound, and Ramp from Whitestone Expressway southbound to Northern Boulevard westbound) would be significantly impacted during at least one peak hour.

Under the 2039 With Action condition, the number of significantly impacted highway sections and ramps, and the magnitude of delays, would generally be lower as compared to the 2008 FGEIS and 2013 FSEIS, except at Van Wyck Expressway southbound between Roosevelt Avenue and Long Island Expressway, where the previous analyses did not identify the significant adverse impact that had been identified with the current Proposed Project. It is worth noting, however, that this outcome is in part attributed to the substantial travel demand added in the 2039 No Action condition by the adjacent potential Queens Future project. Absent those additional vehicle trips, the magnitudes of the identified impacts would be lower and some may not materialize at all.

Transit

Detailed analysis was conducted for the Mets-Willets Point subway station, subway line-haul analysis for the No. 7 and N/W subway lines, and bus line-haul analysis for the Q19, Q48, and Q66 bus routes. Under the 2027 With Action condition, the Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse transit impacts (i.e., subway station, subway line-haul, or bus line-haul). Under the 2039 With Action condition, significant adverse subway station impacts were identified for the street-level stairs, mezzanine stairs, and fare control areas at the Mets-Willets Point station. A significant adverse subway line-haul impact was also identified for the No. 7 subway line and significant adverse bus line-haul impacts were identified for the Q19, Q48, and Q66 bus routes. Potential improvement measures that may be implemented to mitigate these impacts are identified in the FSSEIS.

For transit, significant adverse impacts were identified in the 2008 FGEIS for the Mets-Willets Point subway station and area bus routes adjacent to the District. The 2013 FSEIS identified a significant adverse subway line-haul impact and additional station impacts associated with potential station reconfiguration by New York City Transit (NYCT) that were not previously identified in the 2008 FGEIS. Although the incremental subway and bus trips currently anticipated for the full buildout of the District would be substantially lower than identified in the previous environmental review, similar or greater impacts have been identified for the full buildout of the District in the 2039 With Action condition due to elevated baseline conditions in the 2039 No Action condition. Specifically, the previous analyses did not identify the significant adverse subway impact at the R532 fare control area that had been identified with the current Proposed Project. This outcome is in part attributed to the substantial amount of transit ridership

that would be added in the 2039 No Action condition by the adjacent potential Queens Future project. Absent those additional trips, the magnitudes of the identified impacts would be lower and some, including the one identified for the R532 control area, may not materialize at all.

Pedestrians

Pedestrian conditions were evaluated at 23 sidewalks, 4 corners, and 12 crosswalks for the 2027 With Action condition. For the 2039 With Action condition, a total of 41 sidewalks, 8 corners, and 16 crosswalks were analyzed. Under the 2027 With Action non-game day condition, significant adverse impacts were identified at 0 sidewalks, 0 corners, and 1 crosswalk in the weekday AM, PM, and weekend midday/afternoon peak hours, and no significant adverse impacts were identified in the weekday midday peak hour. Under the 2027 With Action game-day condition, significant adverse impacts were identified at 0 sidewalks, 0 corners, and 1 crosswalk in the weekday pre-game and weekend pre-game peak hours; and 1 sidewalk, 0 corners, and 1 crosswalk in the weekend post-game peak hour. Under the 2039 With Action non-game day condition, significant adverse impacts were identified at 5 sidewalks, 0 corners, and 4 crosswalks in the weekday AM peak hour; 5 sidewalks, 0 corners, and 5 crosswalks in the weekday midday peak hour; 2 sidewalks, 0 corners, and 5 crosswalks in the weekday PM peak hour; and 2 sidewalks, 0 corners, and 4 crosswalks in the weekend midday/afternoon peak hour. Under the 2039 With Action gameday condition, significant adverse impacts were identified at 3 sidewalks, 0 corners, and 4 crosswalks in the weekday pre-game peak hour; 2 sidewalk, 0 corners, and 7 crosswalks in the weekend pre-game peak hour; and 5 sidewalks, 0 corners, and 7 crosswalks in the weekend post-game peak hour. Potential improvement measures that may be implemented to mitigate these impacts are identified in the FSSEIS.

Compared to the 2008 FGEIS and 2013 FSEIS, greater pedestrian impacts have been identified for the full Phase 3 buildout of the District (the 2039 With Action condition). Although the projected impacts would similarly be limited to locations on the 126th Street/Seaver Way corridor, there would be more sidewalk locations where significant adverse pedestrian impacts would result, whereas previous environmental reviews only concluded potential impacts at crosswalks. While the nearby potential Queens Future project would generate a significant amount of pedestrian trips, most are not expected to traverse the 126th Street/Seaver Way corridor. The relatively more unfavorable impact findings are mainly attributed to the evolution of prevalent analysis methodologies and procedures, pursuant to the latest *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines.

Alternative Transportation Scenario

Under the Alternative Transportation Scenario, parking resources in the vicinity of Citi Field (including those along the marina) are assumed to be unavailable for New York City Football Club “NYCFC” stadium events. Attendees who choose to drive to stadium events would, therefore, have to rely on the parking resources in adjacent neighborhoods—Corona and Flushing. With limited available on-street parking in both neighborhoods and public parking facilities only available in Flushing, most, if not all, of these auto trips would be made to the area in Flushing surrounding these public parking resources. Conservative analyses for this scenario, prepared to assess the potential transportation-related effects of a highly attended event at the NYCFC stadium, concluded the potential for significant adverse traffic and pedestrian impacts at locations in Flushing and adjacent College Point, where event activities would be concentrated.

These activities would, however, take place over short durations on event days and only on 40 to 50 occasions a year. Given the anticipated parking constraints and aggressive auto-trip reduction campaign that NYCFC would be expected to undertake, event attendees would learn and be expected to alter their mode of travel, such that the actual traffic demand under the Alternative Transportation Scenario would be substantially lower than what was assumed for analysis. Accordingly, the identified impacts would likely be at lower magnitudes or occur at a smaller number of locations. Considering also the short-duration and infrequent nature of these effects, implementing typical traffic improvement measures, such as adjusting signal timing or changing curbside regulation, is likely impracticable. Therefore, should Citi Field parking resources not be available in the future for NYCFC events, NYCFC would, in collaboration with NYPD and FDNY, extend game-day traffic management strategies that currently take place surrounding Citi Field and would occur in the future surrounding the new soccer stadium to Flushing and College Point, to address the above periodic short-term effects on traffic conditions. NYCFC would additionally commit to undertaking a transportation monitoring effort after travel patterns have stabilized to reevaluate the actual effects experienced at that future point in time. A work plan would be drafted for review and approval by DOT for implementation. The findings from this study and those presented in the FSSEIS would be compared to identify specific needs for inclusion in the game-day traffic management strategies.

CONSTRUCTION

A construction analysis conducted based on the methodology set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual* and consistent with the Final Scope of Work, determined that—consistent with the 2008 FGEIS, 2013 FSEIS, and subsequent technical memoranda—the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts related to historic and cultural resources and transportation. For all other technical areas, construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts.

Historic and Cultural Resources

The potential future Phase 3 Development portion of the Proposed Project would result in a significant adverse impact to architectural resources in the 2039 With Action condition. A developer for Phase 3 has not yet been selected. Before the Phase 3 Development commences, the selected developer would consult with OPRHP and LPC to evaluate any remaining potential alternatives to demolition. If none are identified, measures to partially mitigate this adverse impact would be implemented, as identified in the FSSEIS.

Transportation

Significant adverse construction traffic impacts were identified for Phase 2 and Phase 3 construction during one or more study peak periods at four and seven study area intersections, respectively. Significant adverse construction pedestrian impacts were identified for Phase 3 construction at one study area sidewalk during both peak periods. Potential measures that may be implemented to mitigate these impacts are identified in the FSSEIS. No significant adverse impacts were identified for transit and parking during the construction of the Proposed Project.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN THE FSSEIS

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative is the Future without the Proposed Actions (the No Action scenario), described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” of the FSSEIS and analyzed in Chapters 2 through 20 of the FSSEIS. Absent the Proposed Project (in both the 2027 and 2039 analysis years), the Phase 1 Development would be completed on the Phase 1 Site, and the Phase 2 Site and Phase 3 Site would remain in their existing condition. The Phase 1 Development comprises approximately 892,635 gsf of residential use (1,100 units), 23,756 gsf of retail, 3,159 gsf of community facility use, a 650-seat public school (anticipated to be PS, IS, or PS/IS), and approximately 0.87 acres of publicly accessible open space. All of the proposed residential units will be affordable; a portion of the units (approximately 220) will be for senior use.

Unlike the Proposed Project, under the No Action Alternative, the significant adverse impacts related to community facilities and services (publicly funded early childhood programs), historic and cultural resources, and transportation (operational and construction period) would not occur. However, because the No Action Alternative would not allow for the proposed Phase 2 Development or the potential future Phase 3 Development, it would not facilitate the full build-out of the District with the new uses to complement the Phase 1 Development, and large portions of the District would remain vacant sites and predominantly low-density auto-related and industrial uses. In particular, the proposed stadium and hotel uses would not be provided under the No Action Alternative. Similarly, the substantial amount of additional housing (including affordable housing) expected under the Proposed Project would not be provided. Therefore, unlike the Proposed Actions, the No Action Alternative would not create a dynamic, sustainable community with regional attractions and residential, retail, and other uses within a network of pedestrian-scaled streetscapes.

NO UNMITIGATED SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS ALTERNATIVE

The No Unmitigated Significant Adverse Impacts Alternative examines a scenario in which the density and other components of the Proposed Project are modified to avoid the unmitigated significant adverse impacts associated with the Proposed Project. There is the potential for the Proposed Project to result in unmitigated significant adverse impacts to related to community facilities and services (publicly funded early childhood programs), historic and cultural resources, and transportation (operational and construction period). While this alternative considers development that would not result in any unmitigated significant adverse impacts, to eliminate all unmitigated significant adverse impacts, the Proposed Project would have to be modified to such a degree that the principal goals and objectives of the Proposed Project would not be fully realized.

The Proposed Project would result in a significant adverse impact to publicly funded early childhood programs in the 2039 analysis year. In 2039, the Proposed Project would introduce approximately 382 children under the age of five who would be eligible for publicly funded early childhood programs. With the addition of these children, early childhood programs within the study area would operate at 108.29 percent utilization, an increase in the utilization rate of approximately 25.33 points over the 2039 No Action condition. To mitigate the potential impact on child care facilities that could occur by 2039, the New York Economic Development Corporation (EDC) would require, as part of the developer’s agreement, that the designated developer(s) of Phase 3 consult with the New York City Administration for Child Services (ACS) to determine the appropriate way to meet demand for child care services generated by development in the District by 2039; the designated developer(s) would, as directed by ACS,

potentially implement mitigation measures, such as adding capacity to existing facilities or providing a new child care facility within or near the area surrounding the Project Site. Should practical and feasible mitigation measures not be found, the significant adverse impact to early childhood programs would remain unmitigated. To avoid the identified significant adverse impact to early childhood programs, the number of affordable DUs that could be introduced by the Proposed Project would have to be reduced from 2,725 DUs to 1,830 DUs, a reduction of 895 affordable units. A substantial reduction in the number of affordable housing units developed in the District would be less supportive of the goals and objectives of the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project would result in a significant adverse impact to historic and cultural resources in the 2039 With Action condition, relating to one architectural resource within the Phase 3 Site—the former Empire Millwork Corporation Building, which has been determined eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR) by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The Phase 3 Development would include demolition of all buildings within the Phase 3 Site and raising the Phase 3 Site above the 100-year floodplain level. To avoid the identified significant adverse impact to historic and cultural resources, the potential future Phase 3 Development would have to be modified to avoid the demolition of the former Empire Millwork Corporation Building. This would require a modification of the Phase 3 Development site plan such that there is no new construction on the Empire Millwork Corporation Building's parcel within the Phase 3 Site. This reduction in new development would be less supportive of the goals and objectives of the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts to traffic (local intersections and highway network) under both the 2027 With Action condition and the 2039 With Action condition, transit (subway station, subway line-haul, and bus line-haul) under the 2039 With Action condition, and pedestrians (sidewalks and crosswalks) under both the 2027 With Action condition and the 2039 With Action condition. Because of the anticipated congestion at these transportation elements, even small increases in incremental trips in the District would result in significant adverse impacts that could not be fully mitigated during one or more analysis peak hours, and almost any new development in the District could result in unmitigated transportation impacts. The unmitigated traffic and pedestrian impacts that may occur if the Alternative Transportation Scenario were to materialize are related to NYCFC event attendee parking being accommodated in Flushing instead of within Citi Field parking lots. An alternative that would avoid these impacts would require NYCFC event attendee parking being accommodated within Citi Field parking lots, which is infeasible under the Alternative Transportation Scenario, or the elimination of the proposed stadium as part of the Proposed Project, which does not meet the goals and objectives of the Proposed Project. Therefore, no reasonable alternative could be developed to completely avoid such impacts without substantially compromising the Proposed Project's stated goals. Therefore, no reasonable alternative could be developed to completely avoid such impacts without substantially compromising the Proposed Project's stated goals.

Finally, the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse construction traffic impacts. Since several of the construction traffic analysis locations would already be operating at congested levels in both the No Action conditions, even small traffic increments would yield unmitigated impacts at one or more of the analyzed locations during either or both the construction AM and PM analysis peak hours. Therefore, almost any new development within

the District would result in unmitigated traffic impacts during construction. In order to completely avoid significant adverse construction traffic impacts, the scale of each development would likely have to be reduced by two-thirds, or the pace of construction would have to be drastically slowed. These conditions would severely limit achievable development density and progress and the Proposed Project's goals and objectives.

Overall, given the above-described limitations, in order to fully avoid all identified significant adverse impacts, the Proposed Project would have to be modified to a point where its principal goals and objectives would not be realized.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of the Willets Point Phase 2 Development Plan outweigh the adverse environmental impacts, many of which can be mitigated by the measures identified in the FSSEIS. The balance of benefits and impacts, combined with the need for job creation and the far-reaching, City-wide economic development benefits of transforming a largely underutilized site with substandard conditions and substantial environmental degradation into a lively, mixed-use, sustainable community and regional destination sports stadium, in addition to infrastructure improvements and new open space, provides a full and compelling rationale to proceed with the Project notwithstanding its environmental impacts.

The Proposed Action represents a critical step in achieving the redevelopment goals for the Willets Point District through facilitating the development of affordable housing, and represents further implementation of the original goals as outlined in the 2008 FGEIS (CEQR 07DME014Q). Neither the No Action Alternative nor the No Unmitigated Significant Impacts Alternative would accomplish the project's goals and objectives.

On balance, after considering the benefits and impacts of the project disclosed in the FSSEIS, DMHEDW concludes that the social, economic, and environmental benefits provide a rationale to proceed with the Willets Point Phase 2 Development project notwithstanding its environmental impacts.


CERTIFICATION OF FINDINGS TO APPROVE/FUND/UNDERTAKE

Having considered the relevant environmental impacts, facts, and conclusions disclosed in the FSSEIS and weighed and balanced relevant environmental impacts with social, economic, and other essential considerations as required in 6 NYCRR 617.11, HPD as the agency pursuing the discretionary action of the Acquisition and associated MAD approval certifies that:

- the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 have been met and that, consistent with social, economic, and other essential considerations from among the reasonable alternatives available;
- The action is one which avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and

- Adverse environmental impacts will be avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable by incorporating as conditions to the decision those mitigation measures that were identified as practicable.

For these reasons, HPD has determined to undertake activities related to the Proposed Project, including the Acquisition and associated MAD approval. The FSSEIS and these Findings constitute HPD's written statement of facts and the environmental, social, economic and other facts and standards that form the basis of this decision, pursuant to Section 617.11 (d) of the SEQRA regulations.



August 8, 2024

Anthony Howard

Date

Director of Environmental Planning

City of New York – Department of Housing Preservation & Development