Chapter 11: Public Health

A. INTRODUCTION

The 2012 *City Environmental Quality Review* (CEQR) *Technical Manual* defines as its goal with respect to public health "to determine whether adverse impacts on public health may occur as a result of a proposed project, and if so, to identify measures to mitigate such effects." According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, for most proposed projects, a public health analysis is not necessary where no significant unmitigated adverse impact is found in other CEQR analysis areas, such as air quality, water quality, hazardous materials, or noise. If an unmitigated significant adverse impact is identified in one of these analysis areas, the lead agency may determine that a public health assessment is warranted for that specific technical area.

As described in the relevant analyses of this SGEIS, the Proposed Project would result in unmitigated significant adverse noise impacts. Therefore, this chapter considers the potential for the Proposed Project to result in impacts to public health.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

As discussed in Chapter 2, "Analytical Framework," and Chapter 8, "Air Quality," the Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts in the areas of water quality, hazardous materials, or air quality.

As discussed in Chapter 10, "Noise," the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse noise impacts on open space locations immediately adjacent to Soissons Landing and at Pier 6 in Brooklyn during weekday time periods. There are no feasible mitigation measures for this impact, and it would therefore constitute an unmitigated significant noise impact. In addition, there could be significant adverse impacts at locations near the proposed school playgrounds; potential mitigation could include providing separation between the playground and existing open space areas via landscaping or positioning of the playground and/or school building. If these measures are determined to be infeasible, there would be an unmitigated significant noise impact resulting from the playground(s).

However, the CEQR noise thresholds are based on quality of life considerations and not on public health considerations. While the noise level increments at these locations would be considered significant according to CEQR criteria, absolute noise levels at these locations would be comparable to other open space areas in New York City. Noise levels of this magnitude frequently occur at parks or portions of parks that are adjacent to roadways, including Hudson River Park, Riverside Park, Bryant Park, Fort Greene Park, and other urban open space areas. In addition, park users would have the option of using a variety of other open spaces on Governors Island and Brooklyn Bridge Park, both of which are large publicly accessible parks that provide a range of passive and active spaces. While noise levels within the affected open spaces would exceed recommended CEQR thresholds, significant adverse noise impacts would not result in significant adverse public health impacts.

B. PUBLIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT—NOISE

As stated in Chapter 10, "Noise," according to the *CEQR Technical Manual* noise exposure guidelines, noise levels for outdoor areas requiring serenity and quiet should not exceed 55 dBA $L_{10(1)}$. The CEQR noise thresholds are based on quality of life considerations and not on public health considerations. In terms of public health, significance is not determined based upon the incremental change in noise level, but is based principally upon the magnitude of the noise level and duration of exposure.

The analysis presented in Chapter 10, "Noise," concludes that noise generated by ferries associated with the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts at open space locations immediately adjacent to Soissons Landing and at Pier 6 in Brooklyn during weekday time periods. While the noise level increments at these locations, ranging from 3.2 dBA to 4.8 dBA, would be considered significant according to CEQR criteria, absolute noise levels at these locations would be comparable to other open space areas in New York City. There would be no feasible or practicable measures to mitigate this impact.

The analysis also concludes, similarly to the conclusions of the *Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Phased Redevelopment of Governors Island* (2011 FGEIS), that if a school playground is located immediately adjacent to an existing open space area, noise level increases adjacent to the playground could range from 4.8 dBA to 18.4 dBA depending on the specific location of the playground. Consequently, a school playground could potentially result in a significant noise impact if it is located immediately adjacent to an existing open space area.

While the future noise levels with the Proposed Project would exceed the CEQR threshold for a significant impact, the resultant L_{10} noise levels ranging from 67.8 to 72.7 dBA are not uncommon for parks in New York City. Noise levels of this magnitude frequently occur at other parks, including Hudson River Park, Riverside Park, Bryant Park, Fort Greene Park, and other urban open space areas. In addition, park users would have the option of using a variety of other open spaces on Governors Island and Brooklyn Bridge Park, both of which are large publicly accessible parks that provide a range of passive and active spaces.

The CEQR guidelines are a worthwhile goal for outdoor areas requiring serenity and quiet. However, due to the level of activity present at most New York City open space areas and parks, a relatively low noise level is often not achieved. Overall, while noise levels within the affected open spaces would exceed recommended CEQR thresholds, significant adverse noise impacts to the proposed project's open space areas would not result in significant adverse public health impacts. ✷