A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes and responds to all substantive comments on the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) for the Phased Redevelopment of Governors Island Project made during the public review period. The Notice of Completion for the DGEIS was issued by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development on October 21, 2011, which marked the beginning of the public comment period for the DGEIS. Public comments on the DGEIS also were solicited at the public hearing on the DGEIS held at 5:00 PM on November 21, 2011, and during the public comment period, which closed on December 2, 2011. There were no speakers present at the public hearing on November 21, 2011. Two comment letters on the DGEIS were received and are included in Appendix D.

Section B of this chapter lists the organizations that commented on the DGEIS. Section C summarizes and responds to the substance of these comments. These summaries convey the substance of the comments but do not necessarily quote the comments verbatim. Comments are organized by subject matter and generally follow the chapter structure of the DGEIS. The organization that commented is identified after each comment. When more than one commenter expressed a similar view, those comments have been grouped and addressed together.

B. LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT COMMENTED ON THE DGEIS

ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERESTED PUBLIC

1. Governors Island Alliance, written comments dated December 2, 2011 (Alliance)
2. Urban Assembly New York Harbor School, written comments dated December 2, 2011 (Assembly)

C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

Comment 1: The DGEIS describes elements of the later phase of the Park and Open Space Plan. We would suggest that this include discussion of the maritime uses on the Island, in particular around the protected northern end of the Island. (Alliance)

Response 1: The DGEIS analyzes the program contained in the Park and Public Space Master Plan, which was developed with extensive community input. Other possible park and open space uses that are not proposed at this time are not described or analyzed in the DGEIS. However, to the extent required under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and City Environmental Quality review (CEQR), any future

modifications to the Proposed Project may include further environmental review.

Comment 2: The Proposed Project will create two ballfields for use by "Little League, adult softball, and soccer." Currently, and under the No Action Alternative, the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School and other public high school and other users in the area are able to use the seven ballfields currently on the Great Lawn. As a result, the Proposed Project under its present design will limit the use by schools and users seeking regulation-sized ballfields for high school baseball. We are hopeful that, with minor reconfigurations to the Proposed Project, one of the two proposed fields on the Play Lawn could be sized to accommodate high school baseball, if only during specific times when the other field is not in use. (Alliance)

As a result of the Proposed Project under its present design, the New York Harbor School will be forced to leave Governors Island to use regulation-sized ballfields for high school baseball or any Public School Athletic League (PSAL)-sanctioned field sport where striping of field lines is required. Under the No Action Alternative, however, the Harbor School would be allowed to continue using the already available Great Lawn, which can accommodate up to seven ballfields suitable to high school students for practice, competition, and scrimmage in a variety of sports. The Proposed Project puts an undue burden on the Harbor School that would require its students and coaches to travel off of Governors Island to use regulation-sized ballfields for high school students. The travel that will be imposed on the Harbor School as a result of the proposed project is, in our view, an unnecessary direct institutional displacement, which can be easily rectified with minor reconfigurations to the Proposed Project. At the Harbor School, we would be pleased to see the reconfiguration of at least one of the two proposed fields on the Play Lawn to be sized to accommodate high school baseball. (Assembly)

Response 2: The program for the Proposed Project was the result of an extensive public input process. The proposed ballfields are intended to serve a wide range of users from all over the City and are not exclusively designed to serve the Harbor School. It should be noted that the ballfields referenced by the commenter are not currently publicly accessible, nor would they be made publicly accessible in the future without the project. The two existing fields which have been used by special permit do not have fixed bases or infields and are sized to accommodate little league games and not high school games. Unlike the future without the project, the project would create new regulation-size

ballfields for little league baseball, adult/high-school softball, and adult/high-school soccer.

As the Harbor School would remain on the Island in the future with the project, it would not constitute direct institutional displacement as defined under CEQR.

Comment 3: We believe the analyses of Later Phases-Island Redevelopment of the Proposed Actions are too vague in the DGEIS and should require additional environmental impact statements for any projects to come in the development zones or the historic district. (Assembly)

Response 3: As described in Chapter 2 of the DGEIS, "Analytical Framework," the DGEIS, where appropriate, discusses possible conditions under which further environmental review would be required. Existing deed restrictions and zoning provide specific limitations on potential new land uses on the Island. It is therefore anticipated that the future development proposed for the Later Phases-Island Redevelopment would require rezoning and/or other land use changes that would be subject to additional environmental review pursuant to CEQR. The level of environmental review required would be determined at the time such actions are sought.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Comment 4: While the Fire Department does provide service to the Island, the lack of an on-Island fire company means that response times to a fire on the Island are, at best, three times and more likely six times the four-minute standard travel time recommended by the National Fire Protective Association for first responders (and roughly the current City average). The DGEIS should address steps to ensure fire safety during construction. (Alliance)

Response 4: The New York City Fire Department (FDNY) provides fire protection services to the Island and will continue to do so during construction. As noted in Chapter 5, "Community Facilities and Services," on non-public access days (i.e., "construction days"), the FDNY has access to the Island via the Coursen ferry and FDNY boats, and has pre-positioned fire equipment on the South Island in the event of an emergency. During construction, the Proposed Project will comply with all City requirements, including permitting through the City's Buildings Enforcement Safety Team (BEST) that involves the FDNY, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Department of Buildings (DOB) as part of the demolition permitting process.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Comment 5: Removing and replacing the sea wall outside of the historic district with a rip-rap revetment is an excellent choice. As The Trust moves forward with design and permit approvals, we suggest that they and the relevant state and federal agencies consider how to expand this thinking by incorporating the creation of oyster and shellfish habitat into the revetment design, and to consider how the creative placement of rip-rap could positively impact fishing and public appreciation of the shoreline. (Alliance, Assembly)

Response 5: Comment noted. The Trust is considering the inclusion of other sustainability features, such as those mentioned, as part of the design of the riprap revetment.

TRANSPORTATION

Comment 6: As discussed in Chapter 15, "Transportation," Peter Minuit Plaza and the intersection of State Street and Whitehall Street will experience challenges in accommodating pedestrian movements under the proposed action (as it does now). Our understanding is that construction of the widened sidewalk for mitigation will have to wait until the Battery Maritime Building (BMB) construction plans proceed. In the interim, we believe that The Trust should work with the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) on additional and perhaps temporary measures, including distinct paving or markings to differentiate the eastern travel lane in front of the BMB. Such markings would increase safety for pedestrians during peak hours while ensuring that vehicles could use the space as needed at other times. (Alliance)

Response 6: The DGEIS does describe existing practices, interim measures for pedestrian control and safety, and anticipated coordination with the BMB design. Currently, during peak visitation, The Trust regulates visitor queuing and circulation in front of the BMB by closing part of the adjacent roadway to vehicular traffic and deploying security personnel to direct traffic. As part of the proposed redevelopment of the BMB, there will be a design effort to look at the reconfiguration and construction of the sidewalk in front of the BMB. Any proposed design would take into consideration Governors Island visitors, operations in NYCDOT's Slip 5, and the planned hotel, restaurant, and catering facility. It would be reviewed and approved by NYCDOT, which controls the right-of-way in front of the BMB. In the meantime, because the design for a potential sidewalk reconstruction is not yet proposed or finalized, The Trust will continue to consult with NYCDOT on the best way to support the safe and efficient use of the right-of-way in front of the BMB by using appropriate interim measures, whether those include

placing cones and barriers to create temporary space for pedestrian queuing, deploying security personnel to direct traffic or laying down the markings or pavement treatments suggested in the comment. ✷