

THE CITY OFNEW YORK OFFICE OF THE MAYOR NEW YORK, NY 10007

## **STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

# QUEENS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Date Issued:	February 19, 2025
CEQR No.:	23DME006Q
SEQRA Classification:	Type I
Lead Agency:	The New York City Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce 100 Gold Street, 2nd Floor New York, NY 10038
Location:	The project area is approximately 78 acres of largely asphalt surface parking areas located west of Seaver Way and adjacent to Citi Field stadium in Willets Point, Queens.

### **Final Environmental Impact Statement Filed:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This Statement of Findings for the Queens Future Development Project is issued pursuant to Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, (the State Environmental Quality Review Act or 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 Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Queens Future Development Project; 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).

Pursuant to CEQR, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce 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 Queens Future Development, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was certified as being complete, and a Notice of Completion was issued on February 7, 2025. After considering the FEIS, DMHEDW 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 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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## Location and Description of the Proposed Project

The Queens Future Development proposes to redevelop approximately 78 acres of largely asphalt surface parking areas located west of Seaver Way and adjacent to Citi Field with a major mixed-use development (the Queens Future Project, or the Proposed Project). The Proposed Project is anticipated to comprise up to approximately 3.7 million square feet (sf) of new construction, with destination entertainment that includes a music hall, hotel, a gaming facility, convention and meeting space, restaurant and retail space, and office and community facility space. The Proposed Project also includes public park space—at least 20 acres of the Development Site would be improved with landscaping and other amenities for public recreation-and other public realm improvements as well as structured parking facilities to accommodate up to 13,750 spaces. The existing parking area composing the majority of the Development site, is located within Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, which is mapped parkland. The property is owned by the City of New York (the City) and predominantly leased to Queens Ballpark Company, LLC. (Ballpark, LLC), pursuant to state law enacted in 1961 in connection with the construction of Shea Stadium. Shea Stadium was later demolished and replaced with Citi Field. The Development site is roughly bounded to the north by Northern Boulevard and the Whitestone Expressway, to the east by 126th Street/Seaver Way, to the south by Roosevelt Avenue, and to the west by Grand Central Parkway.

## BACKGROUND

The Project Area, which is primarily part of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, is located west of a tidal expanse along the Flushing River and south of Flushing Bay. Before the 1900s, the Development Site and the surrounding area were primarily undeveloped marshland with a rail line that transected the southern portion of the Development Site. For most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Project Area was an industrial dumping ground and landfill.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a period when the City was investing in major municipal parks projects, the landfill was targeted for development as a large recreation area (NYC DPR, 2001).<sup>1</sup> In addition, the area was planned as the venue of the 1939 World's Fair (NYC DPR, 2001). The Development Site served as a parking lot in 1938 for the World's Fair and has remained in continuous operation as surface parking ever since. The construction of the World's Fair also acted as a catalyst for the construction of other municipal projects in the surrounding area, such as the development of the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, the Whitestone Expressway, the Grand Central Parkway (GCP) and a new No. 7 Flushing line station at Willets Point Boulevard (NYC DPR, 2001).

From 1946 to 1951, the United Nations convened at the New York City Pavilion, now the Queens Museum, one of the few remaining structures from the 1939 World's Fair (NYC DPR, 2001). The 1964 World's Fair was also held on the fairgrounds park site. On June 3, 1967, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park was established, encompassing the fairgrounds, the Development Site and the current site of Citi Field. (NYC DPR, 2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC DPR), (2001). "Shea Stadium Redevelopment FEIS." (CEQR No: 02DPR001Q). Dated December 17, 2001. (p. S-2)

In 1961, the State enacted legislation (codified in Section 18-118 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York) that authorized the City to enter into agreements with private parties for the use of a stadium and parking lots on the Development Site and the current site of Citi Field. Shea Stadium opened on April 17, 1964, on the western portion of the Development Site, where the Citi Field parking lots are located today (NYC DPR, 2001). The stadium contained 56,000 seats for baseball and surrounding parking fields and was designed to be capable of converting from baseball to football use (NYC DPR, 2001).

In 2001, an FEIS was published by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC DPR) to allow for the construction of a new stadium for use by the New York Mets baseball team on a portion of the parking field adjacent to the existing Shea stadium (NYC DPR, 2001). The stadium was demolished in 2008, and the 42,000-seat baseball stadium that exists today was built on an adjacent portion of the site previously used for parking. The parking spaces were redistributed to the eastern and southern portions of the site.

In 2008, a Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) for the Willets Point Development Plan was issued, with the City's Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development (ODMED) as lead agency, in order to rezone, create an Urban Renewal Area, and redevelop the Willets Point Area east of Citi Field (ODMED, 2008).<sup>2</sup> The Willets Point Development Plan proposed a Willets Point Development District with residential, retail, hotel, a convention center, entertainment, commercial office, community facility, open space, and parking uses as well as a connection to the Van Wyck Expressway within the District. The plan was approved by the City Planning Commission on September 24, 2008, and the City Council on November 13, 2008.

A supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) was published in 2013 by ODMED to modify the previously approved Willets Point Development Plan and include a proposed Willets West development on a portion of the Development Site located on the surface parking lot west of the Citi Field baseball stadium (ODMED, 2013).<sup>3</sup> 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 State legislation authorizing parkland alienation. Following the Court of Appeals Decision, neither the Willets West program that was invalidated by the New York State Court of Appeals nor the overall 2013 plan moved forward. Most recently a Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSSEIS) for the Willets Point Development (Phase 2) was published in February 2024 (CEQR 23DME005Q).

In 2018, Flushing Meadows Corona Park was determined to be eligible on the State and/or National Register of Historic Places (S/NR) as the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Historic District by the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development (ODMED). 2008. "Willets Point Development Plan Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement" (CEQR No 07DME014Q). Dated September 2008.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development (ODMED). 2013. "Willets Point Development Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement" (CEQR No 07DME014Q). Dated September 2008.

## **DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS:**

To facilitate the Proposed Project, a number of approvals are required pursuant to the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), including discretionary actions that are subject to CEQR. The proposed actions consist of City approvals:

- 1. City map amendments, including:
  - Demapping of approximately 25 acres of parkland corresponding to Area of Development A, which would be leased to the Applicant, and a relocated ramp to the westbound Grand Central Parkway. The other areas in the Development Site currently mapped as parkland would remain as such.
  - Demapping of approximately 1.4 acres of streets corresponding to site access improvements (which would be leased to the Applicant) and park improvements within the existing boundary of the Grand Central Parkway.
  - Mapping of approximately 0.7 acres of streets corresponding to a relocated ramp to the westbound Grand Central Parkway.
  - Mapping of approximately 0.8 acres of parkland corresponding to park improvements within the existing boundary of Grand Central Parkway.
- 2. A zoning map amendment to map a C8-4 zoning district on the property bounded by the centerline of Northern Boulevard to the north, a line 970 feet parallel with and southwesterly of Seaver Way to the east, the centerline of Roosevelt Avenue to the south, and the centerline of the Grand Central Parkway to the west. This rezoning area encompasses the western portion of the Development Site.
- 3. City approval of amendments to the stadium lease, project agreements, and other project documents including approval of business terms related thereto, relating to the Citi Field parking areas and new agreements in connection with the Proposed Project;
- 4. Approvals by the NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT), NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) and NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) and other city agencies for public improvements, as applicable; and
- 5. Authorization of potential financing by the NYC Industrial Development Agency or other agency.

The Applicant is also seeking several approvals from the State:

- 1. Approval of State legislation authorizing the alienation of portions of parkland to allow for the Proposed Project. State legislation is not subject to SEQRA.
- 2. NYSDOT approval for highway access improvements along westbound Grand Central Parkway Exit 9E to and from Shea Road and to the Whitestone Expressway. Additional NYSDOT and NYCDOT approvals may also be required in connection with the roadway and other improvements.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The proposed highway ramp (reviewed by New York State Department of Transportation) is necessary to enhance the safety and overall capacity of the ramp system. The National Park Service has determined that the construction of the proposed highway ramp would result in a conversion under the requirements of the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program. To satisfy the requirements of a conversion, the Applicant proposes providing as replacement property an area that is currently mapped street (within the Grand Central Parkway) that would be mapped as parkland under the Proposed Project and improved as part of the Open Space 2 (OS-2) passive recreational area. The determination

- 3. Approval by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for improved connections to the Mets-Willets Point No. 7 Train NYCT Subway Station.
- 4. Approval by the Gaming Facility Location Board and a license from the New York State Gaming Commission.

In addition, a State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit from NYSDEC will be required for stormwater discharges during the construction period. The Proposed Project would also include various ministerial actions, including design approval by the Public Design Commission, and additional approvals as may be necessary. The Development Site is located within the Notice Criteria area for LaGuardia International Airport; all proposed buildings fall within the jurisdiction of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and require approval of building heights.

### **PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce (DMHEDW) issued its Notice of Intent to serve as lead agency on March 24, 2023 to the Department of City Planning (DCP) and the New York City Public Design Commission (PDC). DMHEDW assumed lead agency status and issued an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) on November 8, 2023. Based on information contained in the EAS, DMHEDW determined that the proposed project could have the potential to result in significant adverse environmental impacts and issued a Positive Declaration and Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on November 8, 2023, along with a draft Scope of Work for the DEIS. The EAS, Positive Declaration, and Draft Scope of Work (DSOW) for an DEIS were posted on the website of the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination via CEQR Access. A Public Scoping Meeting to hear testimony on the DSOW was held December 21, 2023. In support of the City's efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19, the public scoping meeting was held remotely. Comments received during the public scoping meeting and written comments received up through January 12, 2024 comment period deadline, were considered and incorporated as appropriate, into the Final Scope of Work (FSOW).

DMHEDW issued a Notice of Completion for the Draft EIS on September 20, 2024. A public hearing on the Draft EIS was held by the New York City Planning Commission (CPC) in conjunction with the public hearing on the associated Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) on January 8, 2025. The public was provided an opportunity to provide oral and written comments on the Draft EIS during the period leading up to and through the Draft EIS public hearing, which was held at the New York City Planning Commission Hearing Room at 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271, with an option for the public to attend and comment remotely. A public notice for the hearing on the Draft EIS was published in the *City Record* and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation *Environmental News Bulletin* on December 18, 2024, and was also placed in the following local newspapers on December 18, 2024—the *New York Daily News, El Diario NY* (in Spanish), *Korea Daily New York* (in Korean),

whether the new parkland comprising part of the OS-2 would satisfy requirements for replacement property will be subject to review by the National Park Service, with the involvement of the New York State Office of Parks and Recreation.

Sing Tao and Chinese World Journal (in Mandarin). The Draft EIS public comment period remained open until January 31, 2025.

### FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS RELIED UPON TO SUPPORT THE DECISION:

The FEIS 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; community facilities; open space; shadows; historic and cultural 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-834) for hazardous materials is being placed on projected development site as applicable, to avoid the potential for significant adverse impacts from hazardous material, by ensuring that supplemental testing for and remediation of hazardous materials, if necessary, are completed prior to future development. See Zoning Resolution of the City of New York, Appendix C: City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), Table 1 for Environmental Requirements, E-834; for block and lot information<sup>5</sup>. As discussed below, areas where potential significant impacts were identified include, transportation and construction.

## POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS

### 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, highway, transit, and pedestrians.

## TRAFFIC

#### INTERSECTIONS

Traffic conditions were evaluated at 50 intersections for the 2030 With Action conditions. The Proposed Project would result in significant adverse traffic impacts at 11 intersections during the non-gameday weekday AM peak hour; 12 intersections during the non-gameday weekday midday peak hour; 19 intersections during the non-gameday weekday PM peak hour; 10 intersections during the non-gameday Saturday PM peak hour; 17 intersections during the gameday weekday PM peak hour; 17 intersections during the gameday Saturday PM Peak hour; 12 intersections during the gameday Saturday PM Post Game peak hour; 13 intersections during the gameday Sunday midday peak hour; and 14 intersections during the gameday Sunday PM peak hour. The identification and evaluation of traffic capacity improvements needed to mitigate potential significant adverse traffic impacts created by the Proposed Projected are presented in FEIS Mitigation chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 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 FEIS.

#### HIGHWAY

77 highway segments (including, basic, merging, diverging, and weaving segments) were analyzed in the With-Action condition along the Grand Central Parkway west of the site, the Van Wyck and Whitestone Expressways north and east of the site. The Proposed Project would result in significant adverse traffic impacts to 13 highway segments during the weekday AM peak hour; 18 highway segments during the non-gameday weekday midday peak hour; 21 highway segments during the non-gameday weekday PM peak hour; 16 highway segments during the non-gameday Saturday PM peak hour; 17 highway segment during the gameday weekday PM peak hour; 11 highway segments during the gameday Saturday PM Pre Game peak hour; 19 highway segments during the gameday Saturday PM Post Game peak hour; 10 highway segments during the gameday Sunday midday peak hour, and 21 highway segments during the gameday Sunday PM peak hour.

#### TRANSIT

#### Subway

The Mets-Willets Point subway station was analyzed during the weekday AM and PM peak commuter peak periods, as well as weekday game ingress, Saturday game ingress, and Saturday game egress conditions to address worst-case conditions that occur on gamedays. A Baseline Scenario without modifications to the station, as well as a With Improvements Scenario with proposed station enhancements were considered for the With-Action condition. The analysis determined that under the Baseline Scenario without modifications, all subway station elements would operate at acceptable levels of service during the non-gameday weekday AM, gameday weekday PM, Saturday PM Pre Game, and Saturday PM Post Game peak hours. One element, the Mezzanine Outside Fare Zone Passageway, would be significantly impacted during the non-gameday weekday PM peak hour. Under the With Improvements Scenario, all station elements would operate at acceptable levels of service during the analysis peak hours. Additionally, the With Improvements Scenario would add ADA accessibility to the station, including access to all platforms.

A subway line-haul analysis was conducted for the No. 7 subway line and determined that the subway line would operate at over-capacity conditions during the Saturday PM peak hour. However, the project would result in an increase of 4.60 passengers per car in the Flushing-bound direction during this peak hour, which is below the five subway passengers per car threshold that is considered a significant impact per the *CEQR Technical Manual* criteria. Therefore, significant subway line-haul impacts are not expected as a result of the project.

#### Buses

Bus line-haul analyses were conducted for three bus routes in the vicinity of the Development Site (Q19, Q48, and Q66) based on the *CEQR Technical Manual's* screening assessment. The With-Action condition analysis determined that there would be adequate supply for the Proposed Project's projected demand for the Q19 and Q66 bus routes in both the eastbound and westbound directions, as well as the Q48 bus route in both the eastbound and westbound directions during the weekday AM peak hour. However, the Proposed Project would result in a capacity shortfall for the Q48 bus route in the eastbound and westbound directions during the weekday PM and Saturday PM peak hours; this bus route would be significantly impacted. The identification and evaluation of bus service improvements needed to mitigate potential significant adverse bus impacts created by the Proposed Projected are presented in FEIS Mitigation chapter.

### PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrian analysis was performed at 16 sidewalks elements, 9 corners, and 16 crosswalk elements at key intersections for the non-gameday weekday AM, midday, PM, Saturday PM, and gameday weekday PM, Saturday PM Pre Game, Saturday PM Post Game, Sunday midday, and Sunday PM peak hours. Of the 41 pedestrian elements analyzed, the Proposed Project would result in significant impacts at:

- Two pedestrian elements (two crosswalks) during the non-gameday weekday midday, PM and Saturday PM peak hours
- Three pedestrian elements (one sidewalk, two crosswalks) during the gameday weekday PM hour
- Five pedestrian elements (two sidewalks, two crosswalks, and one corner) during the gameday Saturday PM Pre Game peak hour
- Six pedestrian elements (two sidewalks, two crosswalks, and two corners) during the gameday Saturday PM Post Game peak hour
- Three pedestrian elements (one sidewalk, one crosswalk, one corner) during the gameday Sunday midday peak hour
- Nine pedestrian elements (three sidewalks, three crosswalks, and two corners) during the gameday Sunday PM peak hour

Mitigation measures that could be implemented to mitigate these significant adverse pedestrian impacts are discussed in FEIS Mitigation chapter.

## VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Eleven of the 50 traffic analysis locations have been identified as high-crash locations according to New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) criteria. These intersections are considered Vision Zero priority intersections or have had at least five pedestrian/bicyclist injury crashes within a consecutive 12-month period. In addition, five traffic analysis locations are located along Vision Zero priority corridors and have had at least three pedestrian/bicyclist injury crashes within a consecutive 12-month period. Therefore, a total of 16 intersections are identified for a street user safety assessment. This assessment evaluates the number of crashes, prevailing contributing factors of the crashes, existing safety conditions and potential measures to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety at these intersections.

## **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 the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts related to traffic and pedestrian. For all other technical areas, construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Significant adverse construction traffic impacts were identified for the peak quarter of construction activities would occur during the first quarter of 2029. Based on shift schedules and construction worker and truck arrival/departure patterns, the 6 AM - 7 AM hour was identified for the AM construction peak hour and the 3 PM – 4 PM hour was identified for the PM construction peak hour. The projected construction activities would result in less traffic volumes than traffic projected for the operation of the Proposed Project. However, significant traffic impacts could still occur at some of the study area locations during construction, similar to impacts identified in FEIS Transportation chapter. In addition, construction worker trip patterns on gamedays when a Mets game is scheduled at the Development Site would vary from patterns typical of the operational period. The construction analysis considers two scenarios for construction worker trips: a non-gameday scenario where construction worker parking would be accommodated on-site, and a gameday scenario in which construction workers are directed to nearby parking facilities in downtown Flushing.

Forty-five intersections were identified for analysis during the AM and PM construction peak hours for the With-Action with Construction condition. On non-gamedays, construction activities for the Proposed Project would generate 810 construction worker auto trips and 48 construction truck trips during the AM construction peak hour, and 920 construction worker auto trips and 26 construction truck trips during the PM construction peak hour. On gamedays, construction activities would generate the same number of worker auto trips as during the non-gameday AM and PM construction peak hours. In order to avoid overlap with gameday ingress and egress traffic, most truck deliveries would largely occur in the morning hours; 64 truck trips would occur during the AM construction trucks would be required to use NYCDOT-designated truck routes to get to the project area and would then use local streets to access the construction site

On non-gamedays, construction traffic impacts were identified at two intersections during the AM construction peak hour, and six intersections during the PM construction peak hour. On gamedays, construction traffic impacts were identified at six intersections during the AM construction peak hour, and 11 intersections during the PM construction peak hour. Where impacts during construction may occur, measures similar to the ones recommended in FEIS Mitigation chapter, could be implemented prior to the commencement of the operation of the Project in order to alleviate congested traffic conditions. On non-gamedays, with these measures in place, all intersections would be mitigated during the AM construction peak hour, and four intersections would remain unmitigated (or partially unmitigated) during the PM construction peak hour, and eight intersections would remain unmitigated (or partially unmitigated) during the AM construction peak hour, and eight intersections would remain unmitigated (or partially unmitigated) during the AM construction peak hour, and eight intersections would remain unmitigated (or partially unmitigated) during the AM construction peak hour, and eight intersections would remain unmitigated (or partially unmitigated) during the AM and PM construction peak hours are discussed in the FEIS Mitigation chapter.

#### TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIAN

Based on U.S. Census data for the construction industry, it is anticipated that approximately 45 percent of construction workers would commute to the Development Site by public transportation or walking. During the first quarter of 2029 when construction worker volumes

would be highest, construction would be expected to generate 2,407 daily construction workers with 1,083 workers expected to use public transportation. Similar to the traffic analysis, the 6 AM - 7 AM hour was identified for the AM construction peak hour and the 3 PM - 4 PM hour was identified for the PM construction peak hour. It is expected that the majority of construction workers (80 percent) would arrive during the AM construction peak hour and depart during the PM construction peak hour, and that they would generate approximately 866 construction worker trips by public transportation during the AM and PM construction peak hours.

On non-gamedays, construction workers would be able to park on-site, and workers traveling by public transportation or walk would enter the site along Roosevelt Avenue. As assessment of the level of service along key walking paths during construction was conducted. This analysis was conducted during the AM and PM construction peak hours for the crosswalks and north and south sidewalks at the intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and 126th Street/Seaver Way. No significant pedestrian impacts would result from construction activities in the non-gameday scenario.

On gamedays, construction workers would be accommodated offsite at parking facilities in downtown Flushing. Construction workers parking at these facilities would continue via transit or walking to access the site. An assessment of the level of service along key walking paths to and from these facilities during construction was performed. This analysis was conducted during the AM and PM construction peak hours for the crosswalks and north and south sidewalks at the intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and 126th Street/Seaver Way, similar to the non-gameday scenario. Significant pedestrian impacts would be expected at the east crosswalk during both the AM and PM construction peak hours, and the west crosswalk during the PM construction peak hour.

## ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN THE FEIS

## NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No-Action Alternative is the future without the Proposed Actions (the No-Action condition). Absent the Proposed Project, it is assumed that the Development Site would continue operating under existing conditions; it would remain as a paved parking area for Citi Field under the current lease agreement with the City, which runs through 2105. The surface parking lots within the Development Site currently contain 7,423 parking spaces.

Unlike the Proposed Project, under the No-Action Alternative, the significant adverse impacts related to transportation (operational and construction period) would not occur. However, the No-Action Alternative would not result in the development of destination entertainment facilities, restaurants and retail, community facility space, or 20-acres of public park space and other public realm improvements in areas currently occupied by surface parking. Therefore, the economic, infrastructure, and public realm benefits expected from the Proposed Actions, which include the public park space, an ADA-accessible renovated subway station, bike and pedestrian infrastructure and streetscape improvements, and highway improvements, would not be realized under the No-Action Alternative.

#### PHOENIX MEADOWS ALTERNATIVE

The Phoenix Meadows Alternative was created by Flushing for Equitable Development and Urban Planning (FED UP) Coalition in response to the Proposed Project and consists of a publicly released vision plan with limited design and technical detail. The Phoenix Meadows Alternative examines future conditions where a parkland restoration project would be undertaken to redevelop the mapped unimproved parkland on the Development Site, currently used as surface parking for Citi Field under a 1961 lease agreement with the City, into approximately 50 acres of new open space, while retaining the existing number of parking spaces.

The Phoenix Meadows Alternative would not include a substantial commercial component and therefore, would fail to realize the tourism and economic development goals of the Proposed Project. The Phoenix Meadows Alternative does not identify any mechanism to achieve either the development (three parking decks and two pedestrian bridges) associated with this Alternative or the many infrastructure improvements associated with the Proposed Project, which include at least 20 acres of public park space, an ADA-accessible renovated subway station, replacement of all the existing number of parking spaces, a Taste of Queens food hall and community space, bike and pedestrian infrastructure and streetscape improvements, and highway improvements that are made possible with the creation of the regional mixed-use recreational and entertainment hub that would be realized under the Proposed Actions. For these reasons, the Phoenix Meadows Alternative would not meet the Purpose and Need of the Proposed Project and is not considered a reasonable alternative

### PROPOSED PROJECT WITH PASSERELLE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Project with Passerelle Bridge Replacement Alternative would involve the replacement of the Passerelle Bridge at the same time as the Proposed Project. This alternative would include all the components of the Proposed Project, as well as the replacement of the Passerelle Bridge. As a design for the replacement bridge has not yet been developed, for analysis purposes, the bridge replacement would include the following components: replacement of the bridge structure substantially in the same location and with the same dimensions as the existing Passerelle Bridge; upgrades to achieve ADA compliance; and exterior improvements to the Passerelle Building, to provide weather-tight structures and extend the useful life of the building as the main gateway to Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

Since the only difference between the Proposed Project and the Passerelle Bridge Replacement Alternative would be the replacement of the Passerelle Bridge, the only impacts of this Alternative that would differ from those of the Proposed Project would be those associated with construction and operation of the reconstructed Passerelle Bridge. These include long-term (operation-related) impacts to historic and cultural resources and short-term (constructionrelated) impacts. Since this alternative entails demolishing and replacing the Passerelle Bridge, a S/NR-eligible contributing resource to the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Historic District, altering the bridge's current condition would result in a significant adverse impact to historic and cultural resources. The bridge replacement would require review by Parks, New York State Historic Preservation Office, and the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Additionally, the potential for design changes and mitigation measures would need to be explored to the extent necessary. Since a construction staging plan is not yet available, it is conservatively assumed at this time that there would be significant adverse impacts during the construction period. Once a detailed construction staging plan is developed, potential mitigation measures will be explored with the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

### NO UNMITIGATED SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS ALTERNATIVE

The No Unmitigated Significant Adverse Impacts Alternative identifies those modifications to the Proposed Actions that would be required to eliminate all of the Proposed Actions' unmitigated significant adverse impacts. The Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts to traffic and pedestrian elements<sup>6</sup> that could not be fully mitigated.

While this alternative considers development that would not result in any unmitigated significant adverse impacts, to eliminate all unmitigated significant adverse impacts, the Proposed Actions would need to be so substantially modified that the project goals and objectives would not be realized.

Flows from the Proposed Project, which would contribute to an exceedance of the capacity of the 24-inch sanitary main and the 37th Avenue Pump Station, could result in a potential significant impact to sewer infrastructure. Additional analysis will be undertaken between the DEIS and FEIS of the hydraulic capacity of the 24-inch sewer and of the capacity of the 37th Avenue pump station. If it is confirmed that the flow levels in the With-Action condition would exceed available capacity to an extent considered significant consistent with *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance (taking into account capacity limitations resulting from developments under the No-Action condition), a significant adverse impact would occur, In that event, potential mitigations could include a replacement of the 24-inch sanitary main and/or infrastructure upgrades to increase the capacity of the 37th Avenue Pump Station. Should these measures be unable to fully address the capacity shortfall, the impact would be unmitigated.

The Proposed Project would result in significant adverse traffic impacts that could not be fully mitigated with standard traffic capacity improvement measures during non-gameday and gameday peak periods. These impacts would result from a minimal increase in vehicle trips because of prevailing background traffic conditions. Even a minimal increase in traffic and pedestrians above No-Action condition levels would be expected to result in traffic impacts that could not be mitigated. Based on a sensitivity analysis conducted at the intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and 114th Street, the addition of just two incremental vehicles at critical movements during the non-gameday weekday PM peak hour would create a significant adverse impact that could not be fully mitigated. Therefore, any development increment larger than the No-Action development would be expected to result in unmitigated significant adverse traffic impacts.

The Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts at pedestrian elements during the non-gameday and gameday peak periods. Based on a sensitivity analysis performed at the east and west crosswalks at the intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and 126th Street/Seaver Way, it was determined that the Proposed Actions would require a 35 percent reduction in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> As discussed in **Water and Sewer Infrastructure**, since the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection has coordinated with the Applicant regarding the sanitary sewer infrastructure, and it has been determined that the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact to sewer infrastructure.

development increment during the non-gameday Saturday PM peak hour to avoid unmitigated pedestrian impacts. Given the above, there is no Unmitigated Significant Adverse Impact Alternative to the Proposed Actions any larger than the No-Action Alternative.

## UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, unavoidable significant adverse impacts are those that would occur if a proposed project or action is implemented regardless of the mitigation employed, or if mitigation is impossible. As described in Mitigation, the Proposed Project has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on water and sewer infrastructure as well as traffic, transit, and pedestrian impacts<sup>7</sup> at certain locations. To the extent practicable, mitigation has been proposed for these identified significant adverse impacts. However, in some instances no practicable mitigation has been identified to fully mitigate the significant adverse impacts, and there are no reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Actions that would meet the purpose and need, eliminate potential impacts, and not cause other or similar significant adverse impacts.

## CONCLUSION

The benefits of the Queens Future Development Project outweigh the adverse environmental impacts, many of which can be mitigated by the measures identified in the FEIS. The balance of benefits and impacts, combined with the need for job creation and the far-reaching, Citywide economic development benefits of transforming a largely underutilized site 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.

Neither the of the three proposed Alternatives 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 FEIS, DMHEDW concludes that the social, economic, and environmental benefits provide a rationale to proceed with the Queens Future Development project notwithstanding its environmental impacts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> As described in **Water and Sewer Infrastructure**, since the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection has coordinated with the Applicant regarding the sanitary sewer infrastructure, and it has been determined that the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact to sewer infrastructure.

#### **CERTIFICATION OF FINDINGS TO APPROVE/FUND/UNDERTAKE**

Having considered the relevant environmental impacts, facts, and conclusions disclosed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and weighed and balanced relevant environmental impacts with social, economic, and other essential considerations as required in 6 NYCRR 617.11, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce 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.

Hilary Senf

February 19, 2025 Date

Hilary Semel Assistant to the Mayor On Behalf of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce.