

A. INTRODUCTION

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) plans to revitalize existing and create new public open spaces throughout Lower Manhattan. The goal is to enhance public open space and recreational amenities in an area where public open space is lacking.

Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) intends to provide U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development United States Department of Housing and Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 for many of these proposed projects. These projects will provide public facilities that add to the quality of life for all communities in lower Manhattan and draw residents and visitors to the area, contributing toward the restoration, stabilization and enhancement of the Lower Manhattan communities that were severely impacted by the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC).

The projects include neighborhood parks and plazas, East River waterfront spaces, gateway parks, and roadway and streetscape improvements. Each of the park projects has independent utility—i.e., each would proceed in the absence of the others. None of the projects is related in a way that would foreclose options or require LMDC to commit funding for the others. However, while they are separate projects, LMDC considered the cumulative impacts of these projects to determine whether they might collectively result in any significant adverse impacts.

B. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS

The Proposed Action would be implemented concurrently with the East River Esplanade and Piers project, the open space improvements at Peck Slip, and street reconstruction projects. The park and open space improvements are be funded in full or in part by LMDC. The street reconstruction projects are being funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

No significant adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts are expected to result from the construction of the open space and infrastructure projects, considered individually or cumulatively. Construction activities will take place primarily over a period of 18 month period, and activities will be coordinated through the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center.

The distribution of the projects over a wide geographic area is expected to minimize the possibility of additive or cumulative construction impacts, such as effects on historic resources, economic conditions, access and circulation, air quality, and noise. During the construction period, plans for maintenance and protection of local traffic will be instituted where necessary. Other area-wide impacts during the construction period, such as noise and air quality are unlikely because the projects are separated by significant distances and their peak construction activities are unlikely to occur simultaneously. The intensity of construction activity for all projects is expected to be low, with the majority and longest duration of work involving installation of park furniture, plantings and other landscaping activities. At some locations,

East River Waterfront Access: Catherine, Rutgers, and Montgomery Slips

pavement and sidewalk repair, drainage improvements and installation of water features will be undertaken, resulting in slightly higher but still moderate construction intensity.

No significant adverse environmental impacts are expected to result from the operation of the proposed open space and infrastructure projects, considered individually or cumulatively. The potential for individual project impacts has been addressed in the environmental documentation for each project. Furthermore, the planned roadway improvements would not adversely impact access and circulation. The distribution of the projects over a wide geographic area is expected to result in minimal additive or cumulative impacts following completion of the projects.

Upon completion, the park and waterfront access projects are expected to improve the quality of life for Lower Manhattan's growing residential population and to provide new destinations for visitors to New York City by capitalizing on Lower Manhattan's waterfront setting and its significant architectural and historic resources. The roadway projects will replace deteriorated pavement and streetscape elements with new infrastructure, which would improve access and circulation in Lower Manhattan. The cumulative effect of the proposed parks and infrastructure projects on Lower Manhattan's urban fabric is expected to be beneficial.

Overall, these projects would not result in any significant adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts, during their respective construction or operational phases. *