

**A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter relies on the analysis from the Fresh Kills Park Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) and summarizes the conclusions drawn from that analysis. No additional analysis was warranted for this SEIS as it pertains to Chapter 9, “Neighborhood Character.”

Neighborhood character is an amalgam of the many factors that combine to give an area its distinctive personality. These components include land use, scale, and type of development; historic features; patterns and volumes of traffic; noise levels; and other physical or social characteristics that help define a community. Not all of these elements affect neighborhood character in all cases; a neighborhood usually draws its distinctive character from a few determining elements.

**B. METHODOLOGY**

According to the 2001 *New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, an assessment of neighborhood character is generally needed when a proposed project or action would exceed thresholds in any one of the following areas of technical analysis: land use, urban design, visual resources, historic resources, socioeconomic conditions, traffic, or noise. An assessment is also appropriate when the proposal would have moderate effects on several of the aforementioned areas. Potential effects on neighborhood character may include:

- *Land Use:* When a proposed project would introduce a large new or potentially incompatible land use; or conflict with land use policy or other public plans for the area; or result in significant land use impacts. The proposed project would create new parkland and would not have a negative impact on land use, zoning, or public policy.
- *Urban Design and Visual Resources:* Urban design changes have the potential to impact neighborhood character by introducing substantially different buildings in form, size, scale, or arrangement. Urban design changes may also alter block forms, street patterns, or street hierarchies as well as streetscape elements such as streetwalls, landscaping, curb cuts, and loading docks. Visual resource changes have the potential to affect neighborhood character by directly changing visual features, such as unique and important public view corridors and vistas, or public visual access to such features. The proposed project would have a positive urban design impact in that it would substantially re-landscape Fresh Kills Landfill. It would also introduce new roadways.
- *Historic Resources:* When an action would result in substantial direct changes to a historic resource or substantial changes to public views of a resource, or when a historic resources analysis identifies a significant impact in this category, there is a potential for neighborhood character impacts. The proposed project would not adversely impact any historic architectural resources.

- *Socioeconomic Conditions*: Changes in socioeconomic conditions have the potential to affect neighborhood character when they result in substantial direct or indirect displacement or addition of population, employment, or businesses; or substantial differences in population or employment density. There is no direct or indirect displacement of residences or businesses with the proposed project, nor is there any impact on socioeconomic resources.
- *Traffic and Pedestrians*: Changes in traffic and pedestrian conditions can affect neighborhood character in a number of ways. For traffic to have an effect on neighborhood character, it must be a contributing element in the character of the neighborhood, and it must change substantially as a result of the proposed project. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, substantial traffic changes can include: changes in level of service (LOS) to C or below; change in traffic patterns; change in roadway classifications; change in vehicle mixes; substantial increases in traffic volumes on residential streets; or significant traffic impacts, as identified in that technical analysis. Regarding pedestrians, when a proposed action would result in substantially different pedestrian activity and circulation, it has the potential to affect neighborhood character. The proposed project would create new roads through the project site and would generate traffic that would use local neighborhood roads. Thus, a focus of the neighborhood character assessment will be traffic.
- *Noise*: According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, for a proposed project to affect neighborhood character with respect to noise, it would need to result in a significant adverse noise impact and a change in acceptability category. This neighborhood character assessment would then consider potential changes local neighborhood noise levels that may occur as a result of changes in traffic conditions.

This chapter's impact analysis focused primarily on potential changes to neighborhood character in the technical areas cited above. The study area surrounding the project site, which is ½ mile from the project site perimeter, includes the Staten Island neighborhoods of Travis, Chelsea, Heartland Village, New Springville, Rossville, Arden Heights, and Greenridge.

### C. CONCLUSIONS

The FGEIS concluded that the proposed project would have beneficial impacts with respect to neighborhood character. It would create a large park that would provide recreational opportunities and public access to the waterfront on the site of what is now Fresh Kills Landfill. The new park would significantly alter the project site's land use and urban design characteristics and result in both reduction and increases in traffic along street corridors in the area and would increase pedestrian activity. However, these changes overall would not be significantly adverse with respect to neighborhood character; to the contrary, the proposed project is expected to have a positive effect on neighborhood character. The project site, which is currently in the process of landfill construction closure and precludes public access to both the site and the waterfront, would be enlivened with recreational amenities that would draw visitors to the area as well as the enhancement of natural habitat and the protection of resources. In sum, it is expected that the overall local neighborhood character would significantly benefit from the proposed project by the creation of a substantial new park with waterfront access and new park road connections to a regional highway.

These conclusions also apply to the SEIS.

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