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Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Per the *2021 CEQR Technical Manual*, this chapter summarizes a proposed project's impacts on the loss of environmental resources, both in the immediate future and in the long-term. Resources include both man-made and natural resources. Examples of losses include removal of vegetation without replacement, use of fossil fuels and materials for construction, etc. The extent to which the Proposed Project forecloses future options or involves trade-offs between short-term environmental gains and long-term losses should also be addressed. In considering the trade-offs of the project, it is also possible to compare short-term losses with long-term benefits.

The Proposed Project constitutes a long-term commitment of land resources, thereby rendering land use for other purposes highly unlikely in the foreseeable future; however, the Development Site does not possess any natural resource of significant value, and the site has been previously developed. Furthermore, funds committed by the Applicants to the design, construction, and operation of Proposed Project under the Proposed Actions are not available for other projects.

These commitments of resources and materials are weighed against the benefits of the Proposed Project. As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description,** the Proposed Actions would facilitate the construction of approximately 2.19 million gross square feet (gsf) of academic, healthcare, Life Sciences, and retail space, and would also facilitate the development of new public realm improvements. The public realm improvements would take the form of a new publicly accessible open space, a replacement bridge over Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Drive at East 25th Street to make it ADA accessible, a tie-in to the ~~Kips Bay~~East Midtown Coastal Resiliency (~~KBCR~~EMCR) project's

planned flood protection to the northeast along FDR Drive and protection along East 25th Street,[1] ~~including a connection to the existing floodwall at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs New York Harbor Healthcare System's Manhattan campus (U.S. Corbin VA Facility),~~ and a widening of the demapped portion of the former East 26th Street ~~(former East 26th Street)~~ located between FDR Drive and First Avenue to accommodate two-way traffic flow. Through the development of this new mixed-use development, the Proposed Actions seek to provide needed services, business opportunities, and specialized health and Life Sciences training and education opportunities to the community.

LifeSci NYC, an over $1 billion investment in Life Sciences research and development and related innovation, was launched in 2016 by the City with the goal to establish New York City as a global leader in Life Sciences. LifeSci NYC is expected to create nearly 40,000 new jobs by 2026—many accessible to New Yorkers without advanced degrees. The LifeSci program is geared toward the following goals:

- Connecting existing researchers and institutions to the resources needed to advance programs to commercialization;
- Unlocking space for Life Sciences companies to grow within the city; and
- Building a pipeline for the talent and workforce needed to support these companies across the five boroughs.

Given the presence of Life Sciences, academic and medical institutions in the Kips Bay area, NYCEDC identified the CUNY Hunter College Brookdale Campus within the Kips Bay Science District and First Avenue Health and Sciences Corridor as an opportune location to advance many of the goals of the City's LifeSci NYC initiative.

The Proposed Project is based on the SPARC Kips Bay project, which was developed in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), NYC Health + Hospitals Corporation (H+H), NYC Public Schools (NYCPS), City University of New York (CUNY), and other relevant agencies and stakeholders, to envision a first-of-its-kind jobs and education hub in the heart of New York City with a mix of state-of-the-art academic, healthcare, and Life Science facilities on the site of the existing CUNY Hunter College's Brookdale Campus. Driven by a historic investment from the City and State totaling $1.6 billion, SPARC Kips Bay would create a pipeline from local public schools and City universities to careers in the Life Sciences and public health industries, which is expected to result in a $42 billion economic impact to the City over the next 30 years, creating approximately 13,000 temporary construction jobs, and approximately 3,100 permanent jobs.

The Proposed Actions would allow for the Applicants to achieve the following goals of the SPARC Kips Bay project:

- Create new career pathways and workforce development opportunities in Life Sciences, public health, and healthcare.
- Establish a unified plan for a cutting-edge campus that meets the needs of both campus institutions and the broader neighborhood.

[1] Absent the ~~KBCR~~EMCR project, the Proposed Project would incorporate standalone flood protections with independent utility into the design. For conservative analysis purposes, a hypothetical scenario in which there is no EMCR was referenced in the DEIS. However, that outcome is unlikely, and there are no plans to discontinue the EMCR project.

- Create a more connected, green, and resilient site through new open spaces, integration of a new accessible pedestrian bridge, and tie-in to ~~KBCR~~EMCR.
- Ensure a clear plan for implementation, considering cost efficiency, continuity of operations for the Hunter College Schools of Nursing and Health Professions, and entitlements pathways.

Leverage synergies between institutions to support a connected health, science, and education ecosystem.

Currently, the Development Site is zoned R8. In R8 zones, academic and health care uses are as-of-right while life sciences are not. The combination of rezoning the site to a C6-4 district and applying for a special permit would facilitate the development of the Life Sciences use, a key component of the proposed jobs and education hub. Furthermore, the disposition and acquisition actions would allow for the key partnerships envisioned with CUNY, H+H, and OCME as part of the Proposed Project. The City Map amendment would allow for a critical component of the public realm improvements—a replacement bridge to create a safe and universally accessible connection across FDR Drive. The project proposes further public realm improvements in the form of a new publicly accessible open space; a tie-in to the ~~KBCR~~EMCR project's planned flood protection to the northeast along FDR Drive and protection along East 25th Street; and widening and making bidirectional the former East 26th Street, a privately owned, demapped street, to improve vehicular circulation. Absent the approval of the Proposed Actions, these public realm improvements would not be realized.

In conclusion, the Proposed Actions would not result in an immediate or long-term loss of environmental resources, since the Development Site does not possess any natural resource of significant value, and the site has been previously developed. The long-term commitment of land resources needed for the Proposed Project would be balanced by the project's beneficial aspects including economic development, job creation, public realm improvements, and the growth of the Life Sciences industry in New York City in accordance with City policy goals.