LR Item 3: Project Description

1. Introduction

The New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) is the Applicant for this application which, as described below, involves a City Map change. In a related application, NYCEDC, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), and New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), in affiliation with the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (H+H), New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), the School Construction Authority (SCA), and the City University of New York (CUNY), are seeking several discretionary actions to redevelop the southern approximately 4.75-acre portion of Manhattan Block 962, Lot 100 (the "Development Site") located at 425 East 25th Street in the Kips Bay area of Manhattan Community District 6 (CD 6) with the Science Park and Research Campus (SPARC) Kips Bay project. One component of the proposed project is the replacement of the existing pedestrian bridge that connects the existing CUNY Brookdale Campus over FDR Drive to Waterside Plaza. Public benefits of the bridge replacement include construction of an ADA-compliant crossing, compliance with City and State Departments of Transportation (DOT) clearances over FDR Drive, improved pedestrian flow through the area, and safe emergency egress over the floodwall proposed as part of the overall SPARC Kips Bay project during flood events. The existing pedestrian bridge is located over FDR Drive, which is a mapped roadbed, and it extends east from the north sidewalk of East 25th Street (the "Project Area").

This Application requests the following land use action which is subject to the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) (the "Proposed Action"):

Land Use Actions Subject to ULURP

City Map Change: A City Map change related to the East 25th Street replacement bridge, which includes a demapping action to remove the existing pedestrian bridge from the City Map.[1]

Completion of the Proposed Project is anticipated by 2031.

2. Background

The existing pedestrian bridge extends east across FDR Drive from the north sidewalk of East 25th Street. It is supported by three piers; the western pier of the bridge is located in the southeast corner of the CUNY Hunter College Brookdale Campus, the middle pier is located within the median of FDR Drive, and the eastern pier is located in the southwest corner of Block 991, Lot 60, which contains the Waterside Plaza Apartment Complex. Currently, the width of the pedestrian path on the bridge ranges from approximately 8 feet wide over FDR Drive to a width of 6 feet for the ramps on the east side of FDR Drive adjacent to Waterside Plaza. The mapped width of the bridge structure is approximately 18 feet on the west and approximately 21 feet on the east, and it occupies

[1] If the design of the new pedestrian bridge would require further change to the City Map, a separate mapping action would be requested in a future application.

an area of approximately 4,240 sf. As the underside vertical clearance of the bridge is approximately 13 feet to 16 feet in height, a portion of the bridge does not comply with current City and State DOT standards for underside bridge clearance heights.

Community Engagement

Since summer 2023, NYCEDC has been briefing local elected officials, community stakeholders, and workforce stakeholders on the SPARC Kips Bay project to share the project's goals and design considerations, while soliciting feedback on community priorities. In partnership with Council Member Keith Powers, NYCEDC launched the SPARC Community Task Force, a group of community stakeholders co-chaired by Council Member Powers and CB6 Chair Sandra McKee has met on a regular basis to share information about the project and process, and identify key community priorities for the project. The SPARC project team hosted an Open House in February 2024 to familiarize the greater Kips Bay community with the project.

The City Map amendment would allow for the public realm improvements, which includes the replacement pedestrian bridge to create a safe and universally accessible connection across FDR Drive. Absent the approval of the Proposed Action, this public realm improvement would not be realized.

3. Description of the Surrounding Area

The area within a 600-foot radius of the Project Area includes institutional, residential, commercial and recreational land uses. Institutional uses are the most prominent land use within the 600-foot radius and surround the Project Area on three sides.

Medical and Institutional Uses

The Bellevue Hospital Center is located immediately north of the Project Area, occupying a superblock bounded by the demapped East 30th Street, FDR Drive, former East 26th Street, and First Avenue. The entire campus includes seven buildings of various heights up to 18 stories and includes a fenced, landscaped garden at the corner of First Avenue and former East 26th Street and Sobriety Garden at the eastern end of former East 26th Street. Within that superblock, the OCME DNA Forensic Laboratory and the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Kips Bay Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Battalion 8 are located directly across former East 26th Street from the middle portion of the Project Area. These facilities occupy an 18-story, 265-foot-tall building. In addition to OCME's lab space, the building includes OCME's administrative unit and evidence facilities. Approximately 18 ambulances are assigned to EMS Battalion 8. The Battalion stores some ambulances along former East 26th Street when they are not on active assignment. Ambulances do not generally respond to emergencies from the station and are sent out to the field upon receipt of their daily assignment at the beginning of a shift and typically remain in the field for the entirety of their eight-hour shift, responding to calls from in-the-field locations. There is no parking at the EMS facility for personal vehicles.

The U.S. Corbin VA Facility located directly south of the Development Site, occupies a large portion of the superblock bounded by East 25th Street, the former Asser Levy Place, East 23rd Street, and First Avenue. The U.S. Corbin VA Facility's main building includes over one million square feet and rises to 18 stories. The U.S. Corbin VA Facility recently constructed a 14-foot-tall floodwall that extends around the site along the northern property line on East 25th Street, along the former Asser Levy Place on the site's eastern property line, and on the site's southern property line along East 23rd Street.

West of the Project Area, the NYU School of Dentistry occupies the block on the west side of First Avenue between East 23rd Street and East 26th Street (Manhattan Block 930, Lot 34). The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DOHMH) Public Health Laboratory Building is located on the northern side of East 26th Street at 455 and along the west side of First Avenue. The Public Health Laboratory will relocate to a new, purpose-built facility at a site adjacent to Harlem Hospital and the 455 First Avenue site is expected to be redeveloped to include approximately 443,680 zsf of new, modern commercial life sciences space including anchor space for NYC Grossman School of Medicine.

Institutional uses are also located further to the north with the remainder of the Bellevue Hospital Center, the Alexandria Center for Life Science, the NYU Langone Medical Center, and the NYU School of Medicine. Developed in 2010, the Alexandria Center currently includes two buildings of approximately 584,000 gsf predominantly dedicated to wet lab space, or specific scientific research and development facilities focused on biological innovations. Phase I of the project included the two existing towers and includes the option for a third building that could include up to approximately 330,000 gsf of additional life sciences space.

Residential Uses

A small number of multi-family residential elevator buildings and mixed commercial/residential buildings, which are 26-stories tall, are located to the west of First Avenue at the western boundary of the 600-foot radius. These buildings are also primarily within an R8 zoning district, with a C2-5 overlay on those lots fronting First Avenue. A small area within the 600-foot radius at the corner of East 23rd Street and First Avenue is zoned C1-9A.

Immediately east of the Project Area is FDR Drive and the associated service roads. East of FDR Drive, accessible by an automobile entrance at East 23rd Street and a pedestrian bridge at East 25th Street, is the Waterside Plaza mixed-use development. Built under the New York State Mitchell-Lama Housing Program in 1973, Waterside Plaza occupies all of Manhattan Block 991, Lots 60 and 61, and covers approximately 266,963 gsf in four high-rise apartment towers ranging in height from 31 to 37 stories with a total of 1,470 apartments. The complex, accessible by an automobile entrance at East 23rd Street and a pedestrian bridge at East 25th Street, also includes offices, commercial space, a multilevel parking structure and the British International School. Directly south of Waterside Plaza are the United Nations International School (UNIS) and the Skyport Marina which includes a parking garage, marina facilities and gas station. The properties

containing Waterside Plaza (i.e., Block 991, Lots 60 and 61) are zoned C2-7. The majority of the property containing UNIS (i.e., Block 991, Lot 59) is zoned R8, with a small portion along the northern and western edges of the property zoned C2-7. South of UNIS is the East 23rd Street Marina a.k.a. Skyport Marina (Block 991, Lot 50), a small portion of which falls within the 600-foot radius. The property containing the marina is mapped within an M1-1 district.

To the southwest of the Development Site is the East Midtown Plaza mixed-use development. Built in 1970 – also under the New York State Mitchell-Lama Housing program – East Midtown Plaza occupies Block 929, Lot 1 and Block 930, Lot 12, and is comprised of six buildings, including three high-rise apartment towers ranging in height from 21 to 28 stories, and three low-rise apartment buildings ranging between 6 and 11 stories in height. Combined, the six buildings contain approximately 758 apartment units and approximately 40,000 gsf of ground floor retail uses.

To the northwest of the Project Area within the 600-foot radius is a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) development at 344 East 28th Street (Block 933, Lot 25) that was constructed in 1970, rises 26 stories in height, and contains approximately 225 publicly subsidized residential units. Directly adjacent to the NYCHA building is a 9-story residential building at 335 East 27th Street (Block 933, Lot 7501), which was built in 2014 and contains approximately 55 micro-residential units that were developed on a city-owned site pursuant to a Request for Proposal (RFP) from the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). Both residential developments are located within the R8 district.

Additionally, the Peter Cooper Village-Stuyvesant Town residential complex is located south of East 23rd Street, beyond the U.S. Corbin VA Facility, and outside of the 600-foot radius. Peter Cooper Village-Stuyvesant Town is a large, post-World War II private residential development that consists of 62 red brick apartment buildings ranging between 13- and 15-stories in height on an approximately 80-acre campus bounded by East 23rd Street to the north, East 14th Street to the south, Avenue C to the east, and First Avenue to the west, occupying all of Blocks 972 and 978. Combined, the development includes approximately 12 million gsf of floor area, including up to approximately 11,705 apartment units, 20,000 gsf of commercial office space, and 94,000 gsf of commercial retail space. A majority of the properties containing the Peter Cooper Village-Stuyvesant Town residential complex (i.e., Blocks 972 and 978) are zoned R7-2, with small portions of the properties along First Avenue zoned C1-7; additionally, some portions of the R7-2 district along north side of East 14th Street and the south side of East 20th Street are zoned with a C1-5 commercial overlay. The area beyond the 600-foot radius to the west includes high-density residential and mixed-use commercial/residential buildings along Second Avenue, with a mixture of C1-8, C1-8A, C1-9, and C1-9A zoning districts from East 23rd Street to East 30th Street.

Public Open Spaces

East of the former Asser Levy Place (a street that has been demapped and incorporated into the adjacent park), the 2.44-acre Asser Levy Park and Recreation Center occupies the remaining

portion of the superblock south of the Project Area. This facility is run by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks). The playground was expanded in 2015 and includes outdoor fitness equipment, playground equipment, handball courts, basketball courts, and seating. The Recreation Center, which fronts on East 23rd Street, includes a gym with fitness equipment, classroom space, basketball courts, an outdoor pool, and an indoor pool. The Recreation Center is a designated New York City Landmark.

Northwest of the Project Area along Mount Carmel Place is Bellevue South Park—a 1.59-acre public open space owned and managed by NYC Parks. The park, which is bounded by Mount Carmel Place to the east, the Kips Bay residential development to the west, the pedestrianized East 28th Street to the north and East 26th Street to the south, was mapped in 1966 as a new green space for an increasingly residential neighborhood. The park was initially owned and maintained by local community organizations before NYC Parks assumed jurisdiction in 1986. The park was recently renovated and contains amenities like playgrounds, a basketball court, a spray shower area, and a dog run. The park edge is lined with trees and planter beds planted with shrubs and groundcovers. In 2001, Antoni Milkowski's abstract sculpture entitled Skaggerak was relocated from Madison Square Park to Bellevue South Park's northern landscape. The park's mature tree canopy covers seating space, creating a serene environment shaded by foliage of well-established trees.

Transportation

The primary north-south thoroughfares through the immediate neighborhood surrounding the Project Area are FDR Drive (two-way, north- and southbound), First Avenue (one-way northbound) and Second Avenue (one-way southbound). First Avenue and Second Avenue are local truck routes, as are East 23rd Street and East 34th Street. Traffic exiting FDR Drive can travel crosstown via East 23rd Street, East 25th Street and East 34th Street. All three are two-way, east-westbound streets (East 25th Street is two-way only between FDR Drive and First Avenue). Entrances to the Queens Midtown Tunnel are situated at East 34th Street between First and Second Avenues and at East 36th Street near Second Avenue. The Queens Midtown Tunnel offers access to the major metropolitan airports located in Queens County.

The closest MTA subway line to the Project Area is the No. 6 local (a.k.a. the Lexington Avenue Local line) which stops at East 23rd and East 28th Streets at Park Avenue, with each station at a distance of approximately 0.5 miles west of the Project Area. The closest express subway stops are at the East 14th Street (approximately 0.7 miles to the southwest) and East 42nd Street Stations (approximately 0.9 miles to the north), which are served by the MTA No. 4/5 (a.k.a. the Lexington Avenue Express) line. Phase 3 of the Second Avenue subway project will include a T line station at East 23rd Street.[2]

[2] It should be noted that there are currently no funding commitments for Phase 3 of the Second Avenue subway project.

The closest MTA bus lines providing service to or near the Project Area are the north-south M9 (providing connections between Battery Park City and Kips Bay/Bellevue Hospital Center), M15 and the M15 Select Bus Service (SBS) (both providing connections between East Harlem and South Ferry), and the east-west M23 SBS (providing connections between Chelsea Piers and Peter Cooper Village), M34 SBS and M34A SBS (both providing connections between Ferry Terminal/Waterside Plaza and Jacob Javits Center/Port Authority Bus Terminal). The M15 stops on the block directly south of the Project Area, along First Avenue at East 23rd Street. The M15 SBS stops directly west of the Project Area along First Avenue at East 25th Street. The M23 SBS and M34 SBS run along East 23rd Street and both stop on the block directly south of the Project Area, along First Avenue at East 23rd Street, while the M9 loops through the neighborhood using East 23rd and East 29th Streets and First and Second Avenues.

The East River Bikeway/Greenway can be accessed via the East 25th Street pedestrian bridge just east of the Project Area; this bridge has stairs and therefore is not ADA accessible. Protected bicycle lanes are located along First Avenue (northbound), Second Avenue (southbound), and East 26th Street (eastbound), with a small section of both conventional and shared bicycle lanes placed along East 26th Street between First and Second Avenue. In addition, there are several Citi Bike docking stations within the 600-foot radius, including those at the southeast corner of East 23rd Street and First Avenue, the northeast corner of East 25th Street and First Avenue, and the demapped portion of East 27th Street between First and Second Avenues.

NYC Ferry service is available at Stuyvesant Cove, which is a stop along the Soundview Ferry Service route with additional stops at East 34th Street (which provides connections to the Astoria and East River NYC Ferry routes), East 90th Street (which provides connections to the Astoria NYC Ferry route), Soundview-Clason Point, and Throgs Neck-Ferry Point Park to the north, and Wall Street-Pier 11 to the south, where connections can be made to all other NYC ferry routes (with the exception of the St. George NYC Ferry route).

4. Description of Project Area

The existing pedestrian bridge is located over FDR Drive, which is a mapped roadbed. It extends east from the north sidewalk of East 25th Street. It features three piers; the western pier of the bridge is located in the southeast corner of the CUNY Hunter College Brookdale Campus, the middle pier is located on FDR Drive, and the eastern pier is located in the southwest corner of Block 991, Lot 60, which contains the Waterside Plaza Apartment Complex. Access to the bridge from the west is provided by a series of stairs, while access from Waterside Plaza to the east is provided by a series of ramps. Although there are ramps on the Waterside Plaza side of the existing pedestrian bridge, the existing access to the pedestrian bridge does not meet current ADA accessibility requirements on either side of FDR Drive. Currently, the pedestrian bridge ranges in width from approximately 18 feet on the western side to approximately 21 feet on the eastern side, and it occupies an area of approximately 4,240 sf. The underside clearance height of the bridge is

approximately 13 feet to 16 feet in elevation, which is noncompliant according to current DOT standards for underside bridge clearance heights.

5. Description of the Proposed Project

The Proposed Project would deliver on a long-standing request from the community to improve the existing pedestrian bridge that crosses FDR Drive at East 25th street, creating an ADA-accessible pedestrian pathway that connects to the waterfront and the communities at Waterside Towers and the UN International School. The Applicant proposes to demolish and replace the existing pedestrian bridge. The replacement bridge would also increase the underside clearance height to approximately 15.5 feet to comply with State and City DOT standards, and it would be coordinated with the future flood protection alignment. While the design and precise location of the new pedestrian bridge has not yet been finalized, the design intent will be to create a ADA-compliant bridge that will improve access, user experience and ensure maximum connectivity from East 25th Street to Waterside Plaza. NYCEDC will work closely with City DOT, the Department of City Planning (DCP), and other interested parties on the bridge design and if the design of the new pedestrian bridge would require further change to the City Map, a separate mapping action would be requested in a future application. As described, the Proposed Project is one component of the overall SPARC Kips Bay project to redevelop the existing Hunter College's antiquated Brookdale Campus into approximately 1,781,000 zoning square feet (zsf) (approximately 2.19 million gross square feet (gsf)) of state-of-the-art academic, healthcare, and life sciences space. The Proposed Action is one component of the overall SPARC Kips Bay project, in which several other discretionary actions are being sought in tandem to this application, including:

1. **Zoning Map Change:** A zoning map amendment to rezone an area to the street centerlines of East 25th Street to the south, First Avenue to the west, and FDR Drive to the east, and to the northern edge of former East 26th Street to the north from an R8 district to a C6-4 district.
2. **Zoning Text Amendment:** A zoning text amendment to Appendix F of the New York City Zoning Resolution (ZR) to establish a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area coterminous with the proposed C6-4 district that would be mapped on the Development Site.
3. **Special Permit:** A special permit pursuant to ZR Section 74-171, Laboratories and ZR 74-901, Bulk Modifications for Laboratories, to modify certain bulk regulations and allow Use Group (UG) VII in a commercial district.
4. **Disposition of City-owned property:** Disposition of City-owned property for the Western Parcel, disposition for the open space premises, and disposition of a portion of the Eastern Parcel to CUNY.
5. **Site Selection and Acquisition of real property interest:** Site Selection and Acquisition of real property interest for OCME facility;
6. **Acquisition of real property interest:** Acquisition of real property interest for H+H facility.

Additional Discretionary Approvals Not Subject to ULURP

7. **State Financing:** In addition to City capital funding, the Applicants are seeking to use New York State financing for the development of the Proposed Development.
8. **City Funding:** Construction of the new CUNY building would rely on City Capital funding.

6. Actions Necessary to Facilitate Proposal

The following action is requested as described in detail below:

Land Use Actions Subject to ULURP

City Map Change: A City Map change related to the East 25th Street replacement bridge, which includes a demapping action to remove the existing pedestrian bridge from the City Map. The proposed City Map change is intended to accommodate the new ADA-compliant pedestrian bridge which would improve access across FDR Drive. The new pedestrian bridge would also increase the underside clearance of the pedestrian bridge for vehicles on FDR Drive.

7. Conclusion

The proposed land use action would facilitate the development of a replacement bridge over FDR Drive. The replacement bridge would provide a safe, accessible, public crossing and would serve as an important east-west connection for residents of the Waterside Plaza Apartment Complex, students, staff, and visitors of the UN International School, and those accessing the waterfront and Manhattan Waterfront Greenway. The proposed bridge replacement would be designed to be ADA-accessible on the eastern and western sides whereas the existing bridge is not ADA-accessible. Additionally, the proposed bridge replacement would meet underside clearance heights required by the City and State DOTs. Furthermore, the proposed bridge replacement is expected to provide a safe pathway for emergency egress over the floodwall proposed as part of the overall SPARC Kips Bay project during flood events.