DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
CITY OF NEW YORK

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW DIVISION

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Department of City Planning

April 26, 2013

Robert R. Kulikowski, Ph.D., Director
New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination
100 Gold Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10038

NOTICE OF LEAD AGENCY DETERMINATION AND REVIEW

Re: Astoria Cove Development
CEQR No. 13DCP127Q
ULURP Nos. pending
Queens, Community District 1
Type I Action

Dear Dr. Kulikowski:

The above-referenced application involves discretionary actions subject to City Planning Commission (CPC) approval. These actions are subject to review under City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), Executive Order No. 91, and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), 6 NYCRR 617. Pursuant to Sections 5.03 and 5.05 of the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) as adopted June 26, 1991, the Department of City Planning, acting on behalf of the CPC, is assuming lead agency status for this application and is initiating the CEQR review.

The applicant, 2030 Astoria Developers, LLC, is requesting discretionary approvals from the City Planning Commission (CPC) that will facilitate a proposal by the applicant to redevelop an approximately 8.7-acre site in the Astoria neighborhood of Queens Community District 1. The project site consists of approximately 293,451 square feet (sf) along the waterfront (Block 907, Lots 1, 8, and Block 906, Lots 1, 5) and approximately 85,571 sf of upland area (Block 908, Lot 12 and Block 909, Lot 35) located along 26th Avenue between 4th Street and 9th Street. The project site is currently zoned light manufacturing (M1-1) north of 26th Avenue and medium-density residential (R6) on the two upland lots south of 26th Avenue.

The Proposed Action includes a zoning map amendment, City map amendments, several zoning text amendments, a large-scale general development special permit, waterfront special permits, authorization to modify waterfront public access area requirements, and Chairperson's

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waterfront certification (collectively, the "Proposed Action"). The Proposed Action would facilitate a proposal by the applicant to construct a mixed-use predominantly residential development (the "proposed development") comprised of approximately 1,701 dwelling units (approximately 1,701,126 gross sf of residential floor area), of which a minimum of 340 dwelling units (20 percent of residential floor area) would be affordable; approximately 117,000 gross sf of local retail space, including an approximately 25,000 gross sf supermarket; an elementary school with approximately 456-seats (K-5); approximately 940 accessory parking spaces; and approximately 142,000 sf of publicly accessible open space. If the School Construction Authority (SCA) does not commit to proceed with the development of a public school, the space would instead be occupied by residential units. The proposed development is expected to be completed by 2023.

The proposed development would require approval of discretionary actions by the CPC, including:

- Zoning Map Amendment to rezone the project site from M1-1 and R6 to R6B, R7-3 with a C2-4 commercial overlay, and R7A with a C2-4 commercial overlay.
- City Map amendments to:
    - establish 4th Street from 26th Avenue to the waterfront esplanade;
    - elimination, discontinuance and closing of a portion of 8th Street from 27th Avenue to the waterfront; and,
    - establish a public access easement within the waterfront public access area between 4th Street and 9th Street.
- Large-Scale General Development (LSGD) Special Permit:
    - special permit under the City's Zoning Resolution (ZR) §74-743 with bulk modifications to allow for the transfer of floor area, lot coverage, and dwelling units between waterfront zoning lots and non-waterfront zoning lots within the LSGD; and,
    - extension of the vesting term to 10 years for the LSGD Special Permits (ZR § 11-42(c)).
- Zoning Text Amendments:
    - make the Inclusionary Housing designated area applicable to the proposed R7-3 district (ZR §23-952 and Appendix F);
    - apply the Food Retail Expansion Program to Support Health (FRESH) program to the project site (ZR §63-02(a)(4) and 63-25(d));
    - exempt accessory parking located no more than 33 feet above the height of the base plane from the definition of the floor area (ZR §62-454); and,
    - add R7-3 base and maximum floor area ratios (ZR §23-952).
- Waterfront Special Permits:
    - special permit under ZR §62-836 with waivers for height and setback, floor area coverage, tower footprint size limitation, maximum width of walls facing shoreline, rear yard equivalent, and minimum distance between buildings on the same zoning lot.

- Waterfront Authorizations and Certifications
  - Authorization under ZR §62-822
    - to modify requirements for location, area and minimum dimensions of waterfront public access areas and visual corridors;
    - to modify requirements within a waterfront public access area; and,
    - for phased development of waterfront public access areas.
  - Certification under ZR § 62-811 for waterfront public access and visual corridors (a ministerial action).

In addition, the proposed development would require approvals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for two proposed new stormwater outfalls to be located at the end of 4th and 9th Streets. NYSDEC approval will also be required as part of the proposed waterfront esplanade falls within NYSDEC-regulated adjacent area. Additionally, a State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit from the NYSDEC will also be required for stormwater discharges during the construction period because construction on the project site involves more than one acre.

The applicant may also seek New York City Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) approval of an Affordable Housing Plan pursuant to the Inclusionary Housing Program and potential financing from City and/or State agencies including HPD, the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC), and/or NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) for affordable housing construction.

The Proposed Action, as noted above, includes an amendment of the City's zoning map to rezone the project site from the existing M1-1 and R6 to R6B, R7-3 with a C2-4 commercial overlay, and R7A, with a C2-4 commercial overlay. A portion of the R6 district would remain. The proposed zoning districts would allow residential uses in the entire rezoning area, which are prohibited under the existing M1-1 zoning on the northern portion of the project site. It would also allow a wider range of commercial uses through the mapping of a commercial overlay.

The Proposed Action, according to the applicant, is intended to provide opportunities for new residential and commercial development, as well as enhancement and upgrade of the waterfront area to provide waterfront access. The applicant believes that the Proposed Action would create opportunities for new housing development, including affordable housing, on underutilized and vacant land formerly used for manufacturing, where there is no longer a concentration of industrial activity and where strong demand for housing exists. In addition, the applicant believes that the Proposed Action would significantly advance the City's Comprehensive Waterfront Plan by facilitating the redevelopment of the area's inaccessible waterfront, and completing the street grid in this area of Astoria.

The project site is currently zoned M1-1 north of 26th Avenue, and R6 on the two upland lots south of 26th Avenue. The lots comprising the northern portion of the project site along the waterfront contain a total of seven warehousing and industrial buildings (with a combined total floor area of approximately 194,700 sf) as well as bus/vehicle storage, and an estimated 100 accessory parking spaces. The project site currently encompasses two mapped but unbuilt segments of 8th Street (to the north and south of 26th Avenue), as well as an unimproved portion

of 26th Avenue west of 9th Street.

For environmental review purposes, the reasonable worst case development scenario for the Proposed Actions would be the applicants' proposed development project as described above. The applicant anticipates that construction of the proposed development would take ten (10) years; therefore, the analysis year for the Proposed Action is 2023.

In the future without the Proposed Action, it is expected that the applicant would redevelop the existing R6 zoned upland portion of the project site on an as-of-right basis, constructing a building with approximately 166 dwelling units and 83 accessory parking spaces. The existing light industrial and warehouse buildings on the other portions of the project site would remain and be fully occupied. In conjunction with the as-of-right residential development, the portions of the unbuilt segment of 8th Street to the south of 26th Avenue and/or portions the unimproved segment of 26th Avenue, would be built-out in order to satisfy NYC Department of Buildings requirements regarding street frontage.

An Environmental Assessment Statement is attached. If you have any questions regarding this application, please contact the project manager, Diane McCarthy, at (212) 720-3417.

Sincerely,

Robert Dobruskin

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Environmental Assessment and Review Division
New York City Department of City Planning

cc: The Hon. Helen M. Marshall, Queens Borough President
Vinicio Donato, Chair, Community Board 1, Queens
Lucille T. Hartman, District Manager, Community Board 1, Queens
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