Foreword[1]

This document is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Innovation QNS project. The Applicant (a joint venture between Kaufman Astoria Studios, BedRock Real Estate Partners, and Silverstein Properties[2]) is seeking a series of land use actions, including zoning map amendments, zoning text amendments, and special permits (the Proposed Actions), to facilitate the Applicant's intended development and programming. The area subject to the Proposed Actions is the five city blocks bounded by 35th Avenue to the north, 43rd Street/Northern Boulevard to the east, 36th Avenue to the south and 37th Street to the west, in the Astoria neighborhood of Queens in Community District 1. The Project Area (Blocks 641, 668, 669, 670, and 671) contains 43 lots, of which 21 are controlled by the Applicant while the remaining lots are controlled by others. With the Proposed Actions, the Applicant-controlled lots would be controlled by a Large Scale General Development (LSGD) Special Permit and would contain the Proposed Development (referred to as the "Development Site"). The 22 lots outside of the Development Site that are not controlled by the Applicant would be rezoned with approval of the Proposed Actions (referred to as the "Additional Affected Area").

The New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) issued a Notice of Completion for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on April 22, 2022. The public was provided an opportunity to provide oral and written comments on the DEIS, during the period leading up to and through the DEIS public hearing, which was held by the New York City Planning Commission (CPC) on August 10, 2022. In support of the City's efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, the public hearing was held remotely. A Public Notice for the Hearing on the DEIS was published in the *City Record* on July 27, 2022 and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation *Environmental News Bulletin* on July 27, 2022, and was also placed in a local newspaper, the *Daily News*, on July 26, 2022. The DEIS public comment period remained open until 5:00 PM on August 22, 2022.

This FEIS addresses all substantive comments made on the DEIS since its publication, during the public hearing, and through the subsequent comment period. Those comments are summarized and responded to in Chapter 25, "Response to Comments on the DEIS." Written comments on the FEIS are included as a new Appendix H. Changes to the text and graphics from the DEIS were made in this FEIS, as necessary, in response to these comments.

The analyses presented in the DEIS were generally conducted in accordance with the guidance outlined in the 2020 *New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*. In December 2021, a substantive update to the 2020 *CEQR Technical Manual* was released. By its terms, the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual* is to be used as guidance for "any environmental review commenced on or after the date" of its release. With respect to impact reviews commenced prior to such date that have not been brought to completion with the issuance of a Negative Declaration,

[1] This Foreword is new to the FEIS.

[2] The Applicant entities are Silverstein Astoria Member LLC and Kaufman BedRock Astoria I LLC.

Conditional Negative Declaration or a Final EIS, the lead agency is to consider whether it would be appropriate to supplement the impact analyses previously prepared to reflect the methodology set forth in the 2021 update based on whether the 2021 CEQR methodologies could result in potentially greater project-related impacts. In consultation with DCP as lead agency and other expert agencies, a preliminary assessment of the methodological changes was conducted in the DEIS, and it was determined that no new or substantially different impacts would occur (see **Appendix A**). This Final EIS (FEIS) has been updated to reflect the guidance of the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual,* where relevant.

In addition to this Foreword, Chapter 25, Appendix H (described above), the principal changes between the DEIS and FEIS include updated analyses in the following technical areas:

- **Community Facilities and Services**: The analysis of schools was updated to reflect the methodology updates in the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*, in particular the criteria for determining significant adverse impacts to elementary and intermediate schools.
- **Open Space**: This chapter was updated to reflect the methodology updates in the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*, including updated criteria for determining significant adverse impacts to open space and additional consideration of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) Walk to a Park initiative.
- **Shadows:** This chapter was updated to reflect the methodology updates in the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*, in particular the criteria for determining significant adverse impacts to vegetation.
- **Transportation:** This chapter was updated to reflect updated signal timing data from the Department of Transportation (DOT) and revisions consistent with the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*. The updates to reflect the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual* include revisions to the trip generation rates; temporal distributions; directional distributions; trip credit for linked, pass-by, and/or diverted trips; significant impact criteria for traffic and pedestrians; and shy distances for sidewalk analyses.
- **Air Quality:** This chapter was updated with refinements to the mobile source analysis, including refinements to reflect the updated traffic analysis discussed above. In addition, the updated chapter reflects additional analysis which determined that the impacts identified in the DEIS related to mobile source Annual $PM_{2.5}$ increments would be avoided, without the need for mitigation measures.
- **Noise:** This chapter was updated to reflect the methodology updates in the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*. In addition, the updated analysis includes additional noise measurements and traffic counts conducted at some study area locations, and refinements with the No Action condition and With Action condition noise level projections based on the updated traffic analysis discussed above. Finally, the chapter includes updated attenuation requirements based on the updated With Action noise levels.
- **Construction:**
  - The construction transportation analysis was updated to reflect updated signal timing data from DOT and revisions consistent with the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual* (see also "Transportation," above).
  - The construction noise analysis was updated to reflect the additional noise measurements noted above, including updates to the existing noise levels based on updated traffic counts conducted with those measurements. The analysis was also refined to include: refinements to projected noise emission levels from construction equipment; additional receptor

locations representing project-generated open space and projected development buildings completed and occupied during subsequent construction; additional receptor location facades of existing buildings surround the construction area; additional discussion of interior noise levels during construction for select receptors; and an additional analysis period.

- **Mitigation:** This chapter was updated to reflect the updated significant adverse impact findings resulting from the analysis updates described above, as well as the updated mitigation measures identified (e.g., updated transit, traffic, and pedestrian mitigation). Revisions in the area of transportation reflect further evaluation of potential mitigation measures conducted between the DEIS and FEIS in coordination with DCP and DOT. In addition, the chapter provides an update on mitigation for potential open space impacts that were developed in consultation with DCP and NYC Parks between the DEIS and FEIS, and refinements of the mitigation for potential libraries impacts that were developed in consultation with DCP and the Queens Public Library (QPL) between the DEIS and FEIS.
- **Alternatives:** This chapter includes a new alternative to the Proposed Actions (the Proposed Modified Application Alternative) that was developed in response to issues raised by during the public review process,[3] which includes modifications to the Proposed Development's massing configuration and distribution of floor area across the Proposed Development's blocks, as well as a reduction of parking in the Proposed Development.
- **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts:** This chapter provides an updated characterization of the avoidable or unavoidable nature of the Proposed Actions' impacts, based on the updated significant adverse impact findings and the updated mitigation measures discussed above.

All text changes since publication of the DEIS are marked in this FEIS by ~~strikethroughs~~ (for deleted text) and <u>double-underlining</u> (for added text). No double-underlining is used for this Foreword, Chapter 25, "Responses to Comments on the DEIS," or Appendix H, which are entirely new to the FEIS.

[3] Since the publication of the DEIS, the Applicant has submitted a modified application with proposed changes to the project. This modified version of the project is described and considered in this FEIS as the Proposed Modified Application Alternative, as outlined in Chapter 21, "Alternatives."