DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
CITY OF NEW YORK

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW DIVISION

Amanda M. Burden, FAICP, *Director*
Department of City Planning

November 9, 2012

POSITIVE DECLARATION

Project Identification
Halletts Point Rezoning
CEQR No. 09DCP084Q
ULURP Nos. 090484ZMQ, N090485ZRQ, 090486ZSQ, N090487ZAQ, N090488ZCQ, 130068MMQ, and other pending numbers
SEQRA Classification: Type I

Lead Agency
City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007
Contact: Robert Dobruskin
(212) 720-3423

Name, Description and Location of Proposal:

Halletts Point Rezoning

The applicant, Halletts A Development Company, LLC, in conjunction with New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) who would be a co-applicant for certain discretionary approvals affecting the existing NYCHA Astoria Houses campus, is requesting discretionary approvals (the "proposed actions") that will facilitate a mixed-use development on several parcels on Halletts Point along the East River in Astoria, Queens. The project site comprises all or portions of eight tax lots on the Halletts Point peninsula. In total, there would be development of eight buildings (Buildings 1 through 8). Building 1 (Block 915, Lot 6) would be located on the block bounded by 27th Avenue to the south, 1st Street to the west, 26th Avenue to the north, and 2nd Street to the east. Buildings 2 through 5 (Block 490, Lots 1 and 11 and Block 916, Lots 1 and 10), including the mapped streetbeds of 26th and 27th Avenues between 1st Street and the East River, would be bounded by Hallet's Cove Playground (Block 490, Lot 100) to the south, the East River to the west, Whitey Ford Field (Block 913, Lot 1) to the north, and 1st Street to the east. Buildings 6 through 8 would be located within the existing NYCHA Astoria Houses campus (Block 490, Lot 101) bounded by 27th Avenue, 1st Street, and 8th Street.

The application proposes the creation of a Large-Scale General Development (LSGD) Plan that would include Buildings 1 through 5 and the NYCHA Astoria Houses campus (including Buildings 6 through 8). The creation of the LSGD would be facilitated by the alienation of a 10-foot wide strip of parkland of Hallet's Cove Playground to create a single zoning lot containing

Buildings 2 through 5 and the Astoria Houses campus, including Buildings 6, 7, and 8. The use of an approximately 10-foot wide alienated portion of the Hallet's Cove Playground would require the jurisdictional transfer of parkland from NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to NYCHA.

The development of Buildings 6 through 8 would be facilitated by the disposition of NYCHA property which is subject to Section 18 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 and approval by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For Buildings 6 and 7, the NYCHA property would be disposed of to the applicant (i.e., Halletts A Development Company, LLC) for development. Building 8 would not be developed by the applicant; rather, it is expected that this application would facilitate a future disposition action by NYCHA with the development entity and building program subject to a future request for proposals (RFP) by NYCHA.

Implementation of the proposed project would require approval of discretionary actions by the CPC, including:

- Zoning map changes to rezone: a) Block 490, Lots 1 and 11; Block 915, Lot 6; and, Block 916, Lots 1 and 10 from M1-1 to R7-3/C1-4; b) part of Block 490, Lot 101 from R6 to R6/C1-4; c) part of Block 490, Lot 100 (i.e., the alienation parcel of Hallet's Cove Playground) from N/A to R6; and, d) part of Block 913, Lot 1 (parcel bounded by edge of Whitey Ford Field, centerline of 2nd Street, East River, and 26th Avenue) from R6 to M1-1.
- Zoning text amendments to: a) make part of Queens Community District 1 eligible for the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) Program; b) exempt accessory parking located no more than 33 feet above the height of the base plane from the definition of floor area; c) make Block 490, Lots 1 and 11; Block 915, Lot 6; and, Block 916, Lots 1 and 10 an Inclusionary Housing designated area and add R7-3 base and maximum floor area ratios; d) require lot lines in approved LSGD to be treated as a street line for the purposes of applying minimum distance between legally required windows and walls or lot lines; and, e) permit a LSGD to be applied for and granted even though such LSGD does not meet the ownership requirements if a portion of the LSGD is owned by the State of New York or a defunct corporation.
- LSGD bulk modification to allow for the transfer of floor area and lot coverage.
- Waivers of height, setback, floor area coverage, rear yard, and minimum distance between buildings requirements of the waterfront zoning regulations.
- Various waterfront authorizations and certifications to: a) modify requirements for location, area and minimum dimensions of waterfront public access areas and visual corridors; b) modify requirements within a waterfront public access areas; c) for phased development of waterfront public access areas; and, d) for waterfront public access & visual corridors.
- Changes to the City Map to: a) delineate a 10-foot wide public access easement within the eliminated portion of a public park, between First Street and the U.S. pierhead and bulkhead line; b) eliminate, discontinue and close of 26th Avenue, 27th Avenue, and a 10-foot wide portion of a public park, between First Street and the U.S. pierhead and bulkhead line and accompanying disposition; c) eliminate, discontinue and close of two portions of Astoria Blvd., between First Street and Eighth Street and accompanying

disposition; d) delineate a 70-foot wide easement for street purposes within the two ends of Astoria Boulevard, between First Street and Eighth Street; e) delineate a public access easement within the closed portion of 26th Avenue and 27th Avenue, between First Street and the U.S. pierhead and bulkhead line; and f) establish an existing public park on the City Map as parkland on Block 913, Lot 1.

As noted above, NYCHA would be the co-applicant for certain discretionary approvals affecting the existing NYCHA Astoria Houses campus and those include the proposed rezoning of a portion of the Astoria Houses campus from R6 to R6/C1-4 and certain waterfront authorizations and certifications.

In addition to the proposed actions subject to CPC approval, the proposed project will require approval from other City, State, and Federal agencies, including: a) NYCHA board approval of the disposition of public housing property; b) approval by HUD under Section 18 of the U.S. Housing Act for disposition of NYCHA public housing property; c) NYS Office of General Services approval for disposition of a negative easement (i.e., lands underwater); d) permits and approvals by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) for in-water and tidal wetlands construction activities; e) State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit from NYSDEC; f) alienation of Parkland by the NYS Legislature; f) mayoral override of zoning resolution street tree planting requirements; g) HPD approval of an Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) pursuant to the Inclusionary Housing Program; and, potential financing from City and/or State agencies (HPD, NYC Housing Development Corporation, and/or NYS Homes and Community Renewal) for affordable housing construction.

The proposed actions would facilitate the development of a total of approximately 2.72 million gross square feet (gsf) on the project sites, consisting of a total of approximately 2.15 million gsf of residential space (2,573 housing units including 2,161 market-rate and 412 affordable housing units); approximately 69,000 gross square feet (gsf) of retail space (including an approximately 30,100 gsf retail space designed for supermarket use in Building 1); and approximately 1,439 garage parking spaces and 97 on-site surface parking spaces on the sites of Buildings 6, 7, and 8. The proposed project would also include approximately 96,000 sf (2.2 acres) of publicly accessible open space, including a waterfront esplanade along the East River and upland connections to 1st Street.

The proposed project would include improvements to stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure to support the new development. Other improvements would be made to the street network (reconnection of Astoria Boulevard, traffic directional changes, and pedestrian access) and transit services (an on-street bus layover facility) of the area.

According to the applicant, the proposed project is intended to transform a largely underused waterfront area into a new, enlivened mixed-use development. The proposed new housing would support the City's plans to provide additional capacity for residential development, especially affordable housing. The proposed neighborhood retail would provide amenities that are currently lacking in the area and which would serve the existing residential population in addition to the project-generated population. The proposed project would also establish a publicly accessible waterfront esplanade with upland connections and a connection to Hallet's Cove Playground south of the site and Whitey Ford Field north of the site. The opening of Astoria Boulevard between 1st and 8th Streets would improve circulation in the area and provide a better connection with the surrounding community. The proposed bus layover facility would facilitate the provision of better bus service to the area.

For the environmental review, the reasonable worst case development scenario for the proposed actions would be the applicants' proposed project as described above. Absent the proposed action, the project site would remain as it is under existing conditions of light manufactory uses and the present NYCHA Astoria House campus.

The analysis year for the proposed actions is 2022.

Statement of Significant Effect:

On behalf of the CPC, the Environmental Assessment and Review Division has determined, pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.7, that the proposed action may have a significant effect on the quality of the environment as detailed in the following environmental impacts, and that an environmental impact statement will be required:

1. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts related to land use, zoning, and public policy in the vicinity of the affected area.
2. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts related to socioeconomic conditions in the vicinity of the affected area.
3. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts related to community facilities and services in the vicinity of the affected area.
4. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts on publicly accessible open space in the vicinity of the affected area.
5. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse shadow impacts in the vicinity of the affected area.
6. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts on historic and cultural resources in the affected area.
7. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources in the vicinity of the affected area.
8. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts on natural resources in the vicinity of the affected area.
9. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts related to hazardous materials in the vicinity of the affected area.
10. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts on water and sewer infrastructure in the vicinity of the affected area.
11. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts on solid waste and sanitation services.
12. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts on energy.
13. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts to transportation in the vicinity of the affected area.
14. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts to air quality in the vicinity of the affected area.
15. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts to greenhouse gases in the vicinity of the affected area.
16. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse noise impacts in the vicinity of the affected area.
17. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood

character in the vicinity of the affected area.

18. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse construction-related impacts.
19. The actions, as proposed, may result in significant adverse impacts related public health.
20. The actions, as proposed, may result in a disproportionately high and adverse environmental or human health effects on low-income or minority populations.

Supporting Statement:

The above determination is based on an Environmental Assessment Statement prepared for the action which finds that:

1. Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy - The proposed actions would alter existing land uses and zoning by allowing different uses than the current zoning permits. In addition, the effects of the proposed actions may not be compatible with one or more of the public policies that are applicable to portions of the affected area.
2. Socioeconomic Conditions – No direct residential displacement would occur under the proposed actions as the project site does not contain any residences. In addition, the businesses located on the project site do not contain more than 100 employees; therefore, an assessment of direct business displacement is not warranted. The proposed actions could result in indirect displacement of residents and/or businesses as it would introduce a new residential population and new retail uses to the area.
3. Community Facilities – The proposed actions would not result in the direct displacement of any existing health care, fire department, or police department facilities nor would it create a sizeable new neighborhood where none existed before; therefore, assessment of health care facilities or fire and police protection services is not warranted. However, analyses would be warranted for public schools, libraries, and child care facilities as the proposed actions would introduce a new residential population to the area.
4. Open Space – The proposed actions would not directly affect existing open space resources as the proposed parkland alienation would only result in a transfer of jurisdiction to permit a zoning lot merger and would not affect the use of the land as a publicly accessible open space. However, the proposed actions may have an indirect effect due to increased demand for use of publicly accessible spaces by the sizable new residential population that would be introduced to the area by the proposed actions.
5. Shadows – The proposed actions would allow greater building heights in the affected area. Shadows cast by the proposed buildings could affect publicly accessible open spaces and sunlight-sensitive architectural and/or natural resources in the area.
6. Historic and Cultural Resources – According to the NYC Landmark Preservation Commission, there are no known architectural resources existing within the proposed actions' directly affected area; however an assessment of architectural resources will be conducted to verify that there are no resources that could meet the eligibility criteria that could be affected by the proposed project. The proposed actions would result in additional in-ground disturbance on the project site, and therefore has the potential to affect archaeological resources that may be present in the project area.
7. Urban Design and Visual Resources – The proposed actions would result in new buildings on the project site that would be beyond the bulk and form currently permitted as-of-right; therefore, these changes could affect a pedestrian's experience of public space and may alter the urban design character and visual resources of the surrounding

area. In addition, the proposed actions would result in the construction of large buildings along the waterfront where high wind conditions exist; therefore, the proposed project may result in an exacerbation of wind conditions that may affect pedestrian safety.

8. Natural Resources – The project site is located on the East River waterfront and the proposed actions may potentially impact natural resources due to construction activities and/or changes in the discharge of stormwater runoff.
9. Hazardous Materials – The proposed actions would result in additional in-ground disturbance which, given the historical on-and off-site uses and conditions, has the potential to result in hazardous materials impacts.
10. Water and Sewer Infrastructure – The proposed actions would result a sizable net increase of building space within the affected area which could place additional demands on infrastructure, including water supply and storm water management.
11. Solid Waste and Sanitation – Due to the increase in density within the affected area, the proposed actions would increase the demands on solid waste and sanitation transport and disposal services.
12. Energy – Although significant adverse energy impacts are not anticipated for the proposed actions as it would not affect the transmission or generation of energy, the projected amount of energy consumption during long-term operation resulting from the proposed actions should be assessed.
13. Transportation – The proposed actions would generate additional vehicular travel and increase demand for parking, as well as pedestrian traffic and subway and bus riders. These new trips have the potential to affect the area's transportation systems.
14. Air Quality – Increased demand for heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and additional vehicular traffic introduced by the proposed actions may affect air quality. In addition, the proposed project will construct new residential buildings in an area currently zoned for industrial/manufacturing uses.
15. Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Although the proposed project is not a city capital project, power plant, or would fundamentally change the City's solid waste management system, CEQR recommends a greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis for projects resulting in the development of 350,000 square feet or more, which the proposed project would exceed, and, as the result, to determine if the proposed project would be consistent with the City's GHG reduction goal.
16. Noise – The proposed actions would increase the volume of traffic in the area, which could result in additional traffic noise that may have the potential to result in noise impacts to nearby sensitive receptors. In addition, existing noise levels at the project site may affect proposed uses.
17. Neighborhood Character – The proposed actions has the potential to alter certain constituent elements of the affected area's neighborhood character, including land use patterns, socioeconomic conditions, open space, shadows, traffic, and noise levels.
18. Construction – The proposed actions would result in the construction of a number of new buildings over an extended period that can have a disruptive and noticeable effect on the adjacent community, as well as people passing through the area
19. Public Health – A public health assessment may be warranted at the discretion of the lead agency if an unmitigated significant adverse impact is identified in CEQR analysis areas, such as air quality, water quality, hazardous materials, or noise.

20. Environmental Justice – As the proposed actions includes disposition of NYCHA property, which would require federal approval, an assessment of the proposed project's potential for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations is warranted.
21. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to be prepared for the proposed actions will identify and describe any other potential effects on the environment.

Public Scoping:

The CEQR lead agency hereby requests that the applicant prepare or have prepared, at their option, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in accordance with 6 NYCRR 617.9(b) and Sections 6-08 and 6-12 of Executive Order No. 91 of 1977 as amended (City Environmental Quality Review) and pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 24 CFR Part 58 and 40 CFR Part 150.

A public scoping meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, December 13, 2012 and will be held in the cafeteria of the Goodwill Astoria Headquarters located at 4-21 27th Avenue, Astoria, New York, 11102; access through the main lobby on 4th Street. The public meeting will be held in two sessions with the first session starting at 3:00 pm and the second starting at 6:30 pm. Written comments will be accepted by the lead agency until the close of business on Wednesday, December 26, 2012.

This determination has been prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

Should you have any questions pertaining to this Positive Declaration, you may contact the Project Manager, Diane McCarthy, at (212) 720-3417.

Robert Dobruskin

Robert Dobruskin, AICP, Director
Environmental Assessment & Review Division
New York City Department of City Planning

11/9/12

Date