Chapter 27: Cumulative Effects

A. INTRODUCTION

The federal Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), set forth at 40 CFR Part 1500-1508, require federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of their actions, including not only direct and indirect effects, but also cumulative effects. In accordance with the guidelines in the 2012 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* and pursuant to NEPA, this chapter summarizes the proposed project's cumulative effects when considered with other planned developments in the area (those presented in the "Future Without the Proposed Project" sections of the previous chapters.

Cumulative impacts result from the incremental consequences of an action (the proposed project) when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (40 CFR 1508.7). The cumulative effects of an action may be undetectable when viewed in the individual context of direct and even indirect impacts, but nevertheless can eventually lead to a measurable environmental change. Cumulative impacts are the net result of both the proposed project and other projects planned near and around the project site. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, cumulative impacts are two or more individual effects on the environment that, when taken together, are significant or that compound or increase other environmental effects.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, "Analytical Framework," the various Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) chapters address cumulative impacts by comprehensively defining the environmental setting expected in the No Build condition, including a discussion of development projects expected to be completed independent of the proposed project (No Build projects), and the baseline growth in the No Build condition.

To this end, this EIS considers as the future baseline condition the combination of existing conditions together with known development plans, recent approved land use actions, public policies, projected population and employment growth, and other general background growth. The potential impacts of the proposed project, presented in the previous chapters of this Draft EIS (DEIS), were assessed in comparison to the future baseline (No Build) condition.

This chapter relies on the technical analyses of the DEIS for a description of the No Build condition, and summarizes the proposed project's potential effects in combination with anticipated conditions in the future without the proposed project.

B. SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

As described in more detail in Chapter 2, "Analytical Framework," a number of No Build projects are anticipated in the various technical study areas by the 2022 Build year. Many of these projects will introduce residential and retail uses, most notably, the proposed Astoria Cove project, which is assumed to be partially complete by 2022. This is a preliminary development proposal that will require discretionary land use approvals; however, because it is located in

close proximity to the project site, the portion that is assumed to be completed by the 2022 Build year has been incorporated into the future without the proposed project for conservative impact analysis. Astoria Cove, if approved, will transform five lots (totaling approximately 8.4 acres) on the northeastern portion of the Halletts Point peninsula, on either side of 26th Avenue, into a mixed-use, predominantly residential waterfront development. At partial build-out in 2022, Astoria Cove is expected to add more than 1,000 residential units (including both market-rate and affordable units), local retail (including a supermarket), parking, and publicly accessible open space to the study area.

In addition, future development pursuant to the 2010 Astoria Rezoning is expected to introduce new residential/retail uses on two sites located on 31st Drive and 31st Avenue between Vernon Boulevard and 12th Street in the southern portion of the study area. Approximately 189 new housing units and 16,000 square feet of retail will be created on these two sites combined.

Several smaller residential projects are also anticipated in the study areas in the future without the proposed project, including 28 units on 2nd Street between 26th and 27th Avenues, 8 units on 12th Street between 26th and 27th Avenues, 5 units at the northwest corner of Astoria Boulevard and Blackwell Lane, and another 4 units on 12th Street between Welling Court and 30th Road.

Although funded and planned separately, the construction and operation of these various projects would have a cumulative effect on the character of the Halletts Point peninsula and the surrounding region, as a whole, both during and after construction. The project's cumulative operational effects are addressed in the technical chapters of this EIS (generally Chapters 3 through 19). Additionally, the project's cumulative construction impacts are addressed in Chapter 20; and the project's cumulative environmental justice effects are addressed in Chapter 28. The project's incremental development, in combination with the No Build projects, would be consistent with the trend throughout Astoria and other parts of the city toward reinvestment in appropriately located underutilized waterfront areas through development of mixed-use, higher density projects.

Temporary cumulative effects could occur if the any of the No Build projects have construction timetables overlapping with the proposed project combined with a physical proximity to the project site. The reasonable worst-case schedule conservatively accounts for overlapping construction activities and simultaneously operating construction equipment, thus capturing the cumulative nature of construction impacts that would result in the greatest impacts at nearby receptors, and assumes overlapping activities at Buildings 5 and 8, which would have the potential for the greatest impacts on adjacent New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) properties and the Hallet's Cove Playground. Additionally, the reasonable worst-case conceptual construction schedule conservatively identifies the first quarter of 2021 as the period of peak construction activity as well as the peak for cumulative effects, because the reasonable worst-case conceptual construction schedule accounts for the cumulative effects of overlapping operational and construction activities for the proposed project as well as nearby No Build projects, most notably the proposed Astoria Cove project. For impact analysis purposes, 2021 conditions with background growth and the construction of the No Build projects except the proposed project are compared against the same condition but including the proposed project. The increment between these two conditions represents the cumulative construction effects of the proposed project when added to background growth and construction activity of the other development projects in the local area.

In summary, the proposed project in combination with the other future development projects evaluated in this chapter and throughout this DEIS would result in changes in the future conditions of the project study areas, and would result in certain cumulative significant adverse impacts. As presented in the various chapters, the proposed project is expected to result in significant adverse impacts in the following areas: community facilities, open space, transportation, and construction. Measures have been examined to minimize or eliminate the anticipated impacts and are presented in Chapter 22. The proposed project would also have beneficial cumulative effects by transforming underutilized industrial parcels on the waterfront to higher-density mixed use development, along with providing affordable housing, local retail amenities, transportation and infrastructure improvements, and new publicly accessible open space and a waterfront esplanade for the area's existing and future population. ✷