Chapter 21: Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," based on projections issued by the national Centers for Disease Control, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) expects that new cancer cases in New York City will increase from the current rate of 40,000 annually to 60,000 annually by 2050. While this increase is a projection among all age groups, this rise is being driven by two populations: older patients, whose cases are more acute and require more complex treatment, and younger patients who are being diagnosed with prostate, colon, and breast cancer at alarming rates. To meet this increase in patient volume and the new interventions that are needed to treat the growing number of acute cases, MSKCC will need to supplement its existing capacity with a purpose-built structure with 28 operating rooms (with four dedicated to interventional radiology procedures)and up to 206 single bedded patient rooms including intensive care unit (ICU) and single rooms for immunocompromised patients, as well as medical support areas.

To fulfill this need, MSKCC is requesting a series of zoning actions to establish a building envelope to facilitate the development of a new 31-story (up to 598.3 feet including mechanical bulkhead), approximately 903,065 gross square foot (gsf) inpatient hospital building (the Proposed Project), also referred to as the "MSK Pavilion." It would be located on York Avenue between East 66th and East 67th Streets and would consist of 28 operating rooms, including recovery and intensive care facilities, up to 206 single-bedded patient rooms, clinical support, a two-floor lobby, and 5 mechanical floors to house intensive technologies and air exchange systems. A two-story patient bridge across East 67th Street (Patient Bridge) connecting floors 5 and 6 of the Proposed Project with floors 8 and 9 of the Memorial Hospital building would serve as the primary connector for patients in either building to access medical services in the other building.

This chapter summarizes the potential impacts of the Proposed Project on the loss of environmental resources, both in the immediate future and in the long term and identifies whether the Proposed Project forecloses future options or involve trade-offs between short- or long-term environmental gains and losses. According to the 2021 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, environmental resources include human-made and natural resources.

B. ASSESSMENT

Resources, both natural and built, would be expended in the construction and operation of the Proposed Project building on the Development Site. These resources include the materials used in construction; energy in the form of fuel and electricity consumed during construction and operation of the projects; and the human effort (i.e., time and labor) required to develop, construct, and operate various components of the projects.

The resources are considered irretrievably committed because their reuse for some purpose other than the construction of the Proposed Project would be highly unlikely. The Proposed Project

constitutes an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of the Development Site as a land resource, thereby rendering the land's use for other purposes infeasible, at least in the near term.

These commitments of land resources and materials are weighed against the benefits of the Proposed Project. As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Actions would facilitate the replacement of two non-clinical and non-research buildings with the construction a new, 31-story state-of-the-art facility entirely devoted to in-patient care for acutely ill cancer patients, providing 28 new state-of-the-art operating rooms and up to 206 new highly specialized single-bedded patient rooms and support spaces required to support them. The Proposed Project would replace the two existing MSKCC buildings on the Development Site, Scholars and Sloan, which contain contract housing for MSKCC professional staff and students as well as administrative offices and below-grade parking, which connects with the existing Rockefeller Research Laboratories (RRL) building adjacent to the west. Existing research functions and staff would remain in RRL. However, some conference room space (approximately 2,080 gsf) would be removed to provide a new two-way parking garage ramp on East 67th Street to serve the existing 263 spaces in the garage, which would remain. The garage would continue to have an entrance on East 66th Street and would be available exclusively to MSKCC staff, patients, and visitors with valet service.

A two-story Patient Bridge over East 67th Street would provide a medically necessary connection for staff and patients between the Proposed Project and MSKCC's Memorial Hospital on the block immediately to the north. Because the Proposed Project would not be designed to function as a free-standing hospital, with a program limited to the 28 operating rooms and the up to 206 beds, technology and support spaces necessary to support them, the proposed two-story Patient Bridge will provide an essential link to existing medical services, such as its Urgent Care Service, and its therapeutic and diagnostic facilities housed elsewhere on the MSKCC Campus.

The Proposed Project has been designed to allow MSKCC to augment its current surgical capacity to provide the highest level of care for rising acuity, to enhance its diagnostic abilities and reduce recovery times, to provide patients with a seamless experience through digital communications and wireless connectivity, and to drive additional advancements in cancer research and patient outcomes.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," benefits of the Proposed Project include:

- The Proposed Project would allow MSKCC to house the technology and inventions it needs to meet the complexity of care necessary for the patients of the future, including cutting-edge robotics, improved digital infrastructure, and enhanced operating rooms.
- With its 28 state-of-the-art operating rooms and up to 206 single-bedded rooms for acutely ill patients, the Proposed Project will be designed to provide the capacity required for the influx and acuity of future cancer patients, and the families who care about them. The design of vertical floor-to-floor heights to accommodate room clearances as well as interstitial levels between ceiling and bottom-of-slab for necessary high-performance air-changing equipment, technology-driven conduits, and other advanced technologies for both the operating rooms and the inpatient rooms are as critical to the overall design as the horizontal dimensions of each floorplan.
- The Patient Bridge to Memorial Hospital would provide critical access to facilitate the sharing of functions, facilities, and equipment for the benefit of patients. The Patient Bridge would also streamline MSKCC's clinical and translational research capabilities and allow ease of access in triaging patients from different facilities including operating rooms and ICUs.

- Long-term, the construction of the Proposed Project would permit the staged modernization of the patient rooms in Memorial Hospital, which is now 50 years old, so that it too will be able to provide greater access to MSKCC's state-of-the-art inpatient care. MSKCC would remain operational throughout construction of the Proposed Project.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the Proposed Project would also be consistent with, and supportive of, the public policies applicable to the Project Site and the study area. ✷