22.0 Generic Analysis of Impacts from Salt Pile Relocation

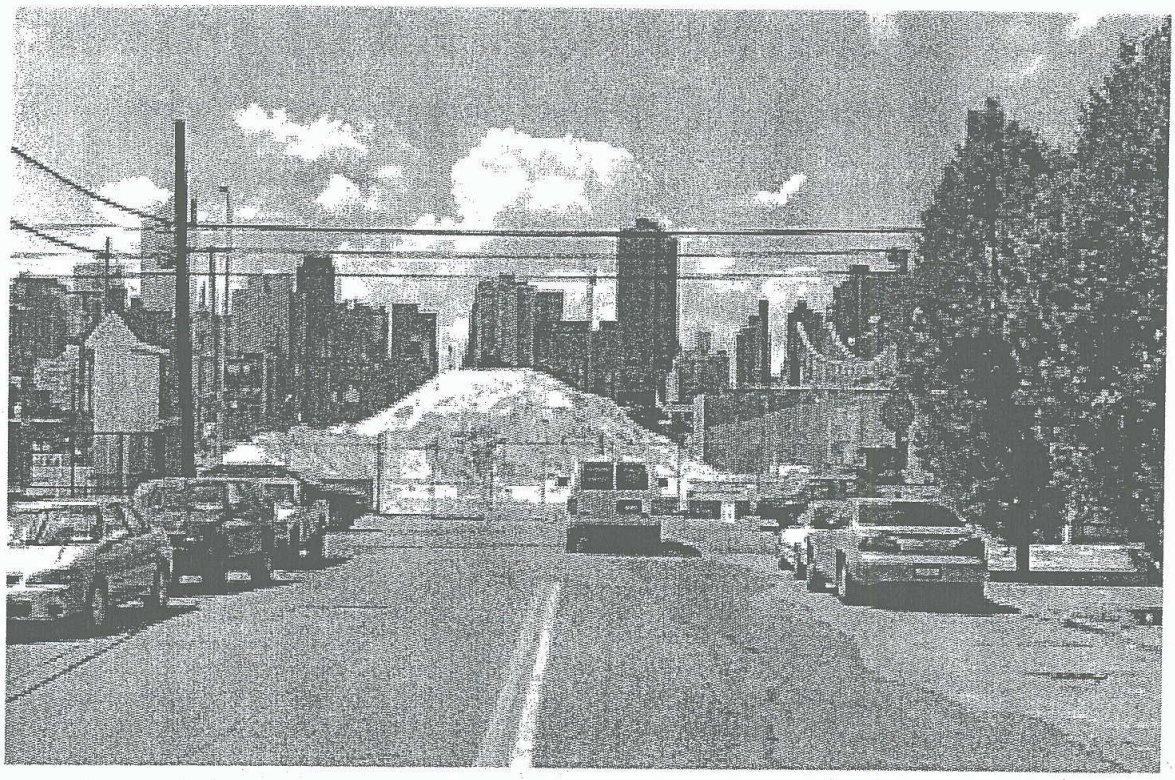
A. INTRODUCTION

The mapped but unopened segment of 43rd Avenue at the southern boundary of the Project Site is currently used by the DSNY for the open storage of rock salt, which is applied to roadways as deicing material during winter storm events in Queens Community Districts Numbers 1 and 2 (Figure 22-1). Rock salt, or NaCl, is readily available and inexpensive, and effectively depresses the freezing point of water to melt and/or avoid the development of ice on roadways. The maximum capacity of the storage pile is approximately 10,000 tons of rock salt and covers approximately 30,000 square feet of land. At peak usage during a major storm event, a maximum of 12 DSNY salt-spreading trucks use the facility. The salt pile is replenished each fall and, depending on the number and severity of winter storm events, is also replenished once or twice more during the winter season. Parking needed at a relocated site would be limited to a few spaces required for operating the facility.

Development of Silvercup West would require the relocation of the storage pile to an alternative site, the location of which is currently unknown. In conformance with the City ULURP, relocating the storage pile would require the completion of a site selection study to identify the alternative site, environmental review in accordance with CEQR, and public review. DSNY indicates that to continue to serve Queens Community Districts Numbers 1 and 2, a new site would need to be approximately ½ acre in size and be located north of the Long Island Expressway (LIE) and west of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE). In accordance with DSNY requirements, the relocated facility would likely include a waterproof enclosure (e.g., shed) to cover the salt pile and truck loading operations, an impervious pad or surface on which the salt pile would be located, and curbing to prevent runoff from the site to infiltrate into ground- and surface-waters. Likely criteria that would be applied in identifying and evaluating alternative sites for the relocation of the salt storage facility would include adequate site size, convenient access to the regional roadway network, ground conditions and topography, avoidance of nearby sensitive land uses, avoidance of the 100-year flood plain, nearby water bodies or other ecologically sensitive areas, site ownership, a preference for vacant land, appropriate zoning designation, and cost.

Provided in this chapter is an assessment of the potential impacts of relocating the salt pile. Since the precise site of the relocated facility is currently unknown, a generic qualitative assessment will be provided based on the likely criteria for siting, designing and operating a storage facility for deicing materials. In completing the analysis it is assumed that the facility would be approximately the same size, serve the same area (i.e., Queens Community Districts Numbers 1 and 2), and result in approximately the same number of truck operations as the existing facility. Included are assessments of the potential impact of the relocated facility on each of the impact categories for which assessments of the Proposed Action are provided in this EIS.

Based on this generic analysis, no significant adverse impacts would result from the relocation of the salt storage facility. In particular, its relocation to an industrial zone and its limited scale of operations would virtually ensure that no sensitive uses would be proximate or affected. Therefore, the relocation of the proposed salt storage facility would result in no significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, or public policy; socioeconomic conditions; community facilities, open space,



Manhattan skyline viewed from 43rd Avenue east of Vernon Boulevard, partly obscured by the DSNY salt and sand pile.

Figure 22-1:
View of Salt Storage Facility

historic resources, urban design or neighborhood character. There would be no significant adverse impacts to traffic and parking, transit and pedestrians, air quality, or noise. The salt storage facility would be a use consistent with an industrial zone, and its likely enclosure at the new site would serve to improve the effect salt storage has on natural resources in this DSNY service area and be consistent with waterfront revitalization policy.

B. ASSESSMENT

Provided below is a generic analysis of the impacts resulting from relocating the DSNY deicing salt storage pile currently located in the mapped but unopened segment of 43rd Avenue at the southern boundary of the Project Site. To the extent possible given the unknown location to which the facility would be located, assessments are included of potential construction- and operational-related impacts on land use, zoning and public policy, socioeconomic conditions, neighborhood character, community facilities and services, open space, historic resources, traffic and parking, transit and pedestrians, air quality, noise, infrastructure and energy, natural resources, hazardous materials, urban design and visual quality, waterfront revitalization, and public health. As detailed below, relocating the salt storage facility would not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts, but, conversely, would improve environmental conditions within the designated coastal zone along the East River.

1. Land Use, Zoning & Public Policy

The facility would be classified as part of Use Group 17 ("Yards, for sales, storage, or handling, open or enclosed, unlimited as to lot area..."). In accordance with the New York City Zoning Resolution, uses included in Use Group 17 cannot be sited within residential or commercial districts, but are permitted, as-of-right, in any manufacturing district, provided they meet performance standards established for the district in which they would be located. It is, therefore, assumed that the salt storage facility would be relocated to a manufacturing zone. It is unlikely that siting the facility in a manufacturing zone would significantly affect surrounding land use patterns, since manufacturing zoning districts have defined environmental performance standards and are mapped with the intent to provide for compatible land use. Therefore, the relocation of the salt storage facility would result in no significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, or public policy.

2. Socioeconomic Conditions

Since a basic siting criterion would be land use and ownership with a preference given to vacant land, it is assumed that no business or residence would be displaced by the siting of the new salt storage facility, and therefore no direct impacts would result to the housing stock or businesses. Since this municipal facility is neither a residential nor commercial use, it would not introduce resident or worker population or compete with existing businesses. Further, it is unlikely that residences would be located near the site, due to zoning restrictions on residential land use. Therefore, a socioeconomic analysis is not warranted, and the relocation of the salt storage facility would result in no significant adverse impacts to socioeconomic conditions.

3. Neighborhood Character

The relocation of the salt pile to a manufacturing zone amid industrial uses would not affect neighborhood character to a significant degree. The salt pile is an industrial use which would be consistent with the industrial area in which it would be located. The limited scale of operations associated with the relocated salt storage facility would preclude significant adverse impacts on

sensitive uses (e.g., residences, public open spaces, and historic resources) in surrounding areas, since a maximum of 12 trucks would access the salt pile when responding to winter storm events. It is also unlikely that sensitive resources would exist in an industrial zone near the site of the relocated salt storage facility. Moreover, the introduction of the facility would not be expected to affect a visual resource in a significant way. Therefore, the relocation of the salt storage facility would result in no significant adverse effects to neighborhood character.

4. Community Facilities and Services

The relocation of the salt pile would not increase demand on community facilities and services. Siting criteria applied during the relocation process would prevent direct displacement of community facilities. It is also unlikely the site would be adjacent to such facilities in a manufacturing zone. Moreover, the operations would not result in conditions that could affect community facilities as sensitive receptors, due to the relatively few trucks and limited activity (a maximum of 12 trucks accessing the salt pile during a winter storm event). Therefore, the relocation of the salt storage facility would not result in significant adverse impacts to community facilities and services.

5. Open Space

The use of public open space for the relocation of the salt pile is not likely to occur, based on siting criteria for the salt pile relocation. Furthermore, it is unlikely that designated parkland or other public open space would be present near the prospective site, if the site were to be located within a manufacturing zone. In addition, the scale and operations of the facility (particularly since it would be actively used only during winter storm events), make it unlikely that it would interfere with any public parklands or open space that may be in the vicinity of the site. Therefore, the relocation of the salt storage facility would not result in significant impacts to open space resources.

6. Historic Resources

During the course of CEQR environmental review, the proposed site for the relocation of the facility would be reviewed by the NYCLPC and/or NYSHPO. The location of the facility and its operations would be assessed to determine whether the new facility could potentially affect any listed or eligible New York City landmark, or State- or National Register-listed or eligible resource; likewise, the review would determine whether the site may be sensitive for archaeological resources. If such resources are identified, appropriate mitigation would be required and implemented to avoid significant adverse impacts to historic architectural or archaeological resources.

7. Traffic & Parking

Consistent with current operations, a maximum of 12 DSNY salt-spreading trucks would use the facility during a winter storm event. Replenishment of the salt pile by trucks would occur each fall and, depending on the number and severity of winter storm events, the salt pile also could be replenished once or twice more during the winter season. Parking at the facility would be limited to a few spaces required for operating the facility. As a consequence, the relocated facility would not have a significant adverse impact on traffic operations. Conversely, the facility would serve to provide safe roadway conditions during winter storm events, thereby maintaining reliable year-round roadway operations in Queens Community Districts Numbers 1 and 2 at a level consistent with Future Conditions without the Proposed Action.

8. Transit & Pedestrians

Relocating the salt pile would not displace or have any effect on transit facilities or operations, or pedestrian flows except to improve roadway conditions during winter storms for the safe passage of buses along the roadway network in Queens Community Districts Numbers 1 and 2. Therefore, the relocation of the salt storage facility would not result in significant adverse impacts on transit and pedestrians.

9. Air Quality

The limited number of DSNY salt-spreading trucks that would infrequently use the relocated facility would not result in a significant adverse impact on air quality.

10. Noise

Replenishment of the relocated facility with salt and loading salt onto DSNY salt-spreading trucks would result in infrequent localized short-term increases in noise levels in the vicinity of the facility. These very infrequent operations would not result in a significant adverse noise impact in the community.

11. Infrastructure & Energy

The relocated facility would require an insignificant amount of electricity for its operation and would not result in the generation of any significant quantity of solid waste. If the facility were to remain uncovered, runoff from the facility would be directed to the municipal waste water system resulting in conditions similar to the Future without the Proposed Action. Covering of the salt pile, placing the salt pile on an impermeable base or ground, and providing curbing around the facility would safeguard against chlorides or other contaminants entering into the East River or other receiving water bodies. Therefore, the relocation of the salt storage facility would result in no significant adverse impacts related to water supply, sanitary sewers, or stormwater.

12. Natural Resources

It is assumed that the site selection process would result in the identification of a site without significant natural features. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the relocated salt pile would be stored within a waterproof enclosure, placed on an impervious pad or surface, and provided with appropriate curbing to prevent salt pile erosion, runoff, and infiltration into ground- and surface waters. Relocation of the salt pile from its current location would also eliminate the potential for drainage of chloride-laden runoff from the Project Site into the East River, thereby resulting in a net benefit to water quality and aquatic life. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impact to natural resources.

13. Hazardous Materials

The relocated facility would not generate any hazardous materials requiring treatment or other forms of management. Contamination of any property under consideration would be addressed during the site selection process. Therefore, the relocation of the salt storage facility would not result in significant impacts related to hazardous materials.

14. Urban Design & Visual Quality

A facility with a storage capacity equivalent to the existing facility (i.e., approximately 10,000 tons of rock salt) would require an approximately ½-acre area. The impact of the relocated facility would depend on the precise site to which it would be relocated. No significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual quality would be anticipated, however, given the relatively small size of the facility, and that it would be located in a manufacturing zone. Unlike the existing facility, it is anticipated that the salt storage pile would be located within a shed or similar structure, and that it would not be situated within a designated visual corridor near the waterfront. Therefore, the relocation of the salt storage facility would not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design and visual quality.

15. Waterfront Revitalization

Since the site to which the salt pile would be located is unknown, it is uncertain whether it would be located within the designated Coastal Zone. However, relocating the facility from its current location would support the goals of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program by removing a possible source of contamination within the designated coastal zone, thereby protecting and restoring the quality and function of ecological systems, and improving water quality within the New York City coastal area. Siting the facility within the designated Coastal Zone would be consistent with established policies since it would provide necessary services during winter storm events to support and facilitate the operation of commercial, residential, water-dependent, and industrial uses located within the coastal area. Siting would not prohibit the use of New York City's waterways for commercial or recreational boating or interfere with water-dependent transportation centers. Application of a waterproof enclosure, impervious surface or pad, and appropriate curbing would also serve to protect and restore the quality and function of ecological systems and water quality in the New York City coastal area. The relocated facility would also not cause flooding or erosion, nor, as a consequence, result in any loss of life, structures or natural resources, nor would it result in the release of any solid waste or hazardous substance and, as a consequence, environmental degradation. Relocation of the facility would also require review under CEQR, including development of measures to protect significant historic and visual resources. Relocation of the facility from its current waterfront location would also serve to improve public access to and along the Queens coastal waters. As a consequence, it is anticipated that relocation of the facility would be consistent with all established policies of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.