

### **A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) proposes to construct an approximately 275,000 gross square foot (gsf) school facility, housing four school organizations, including one charter school serving grades 5 through 8, one intermediate school/high school (I.S./H.S.) serving grades 6 through 12, and two high schools serving grades 9 through 12. The new school facility would be located on a currently undeveloped site bounded by Concourse Village West to the west, P.S. 156 and I.S. 151 to the north, the MTA Metro-North Railroad tracks (and Concourse Village East) to the east, and an undeveloped site (to become the 153rd Street Bridge) to the south, in the Concourse Village section of the Bronx. The project site is a former rail yard, and is depressed between 15 and 30 feet below street level.

The proposed project would include construction of four school buildings of up to four stories in height on the west side of the site with the school entrances and main drop off area located on Concourse Village West. Several shared facilities—including an auditorium, gymnasiums, libraries, and some District 75 facilities—would be centrally located within a podium and the school buildings would be constructed on the podium at street level. Recreational fields would be located at the existing grade (i.e., below street level), on the eastern side of the site.

Construction of the school facility has been proposed to provide additional capacity at the intermediate and high school levels in the borough of the Bronx. Funding for design and construction of the project is available in the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2005-2009. For the purpose of this environmental review, it was assumed that full student occupancy of the school facility would not occur until September 2010. Accordingly, 2010 has been selected as the Build Year for which the environmental assessment areas have been analyzed. The SCA is the lead agency for the environmental review of the proposed project.

### **B. PLANNING CONTEXT**

Several large development and infrastructure projects are planned in the area immediately surrounding the project site and in the neighboring communities. The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) is planning the construction of the East 153rd Street Bridge immediately south of the project site, which will occur by the proposed project's build year. The new cable-stayed bridge will replace a two-lane bridge that was demolished in 1992, and will create a vital connection between Grand Concourse and Morris Avenue, accommodating four lanes of traffic as well as a bicycle lane and pedestrian walkway. The bridge will serve to improve east-west access and is expected to alleviate traffic congestion along East 161st and East 149th Streets.

In addition, the Nueva Era project—a mixed use development containing residential, commercial, and parking uses—is planned for a site just east of the proposed project. Several

large development projects are also planned in neighboring communities, and will be completed by the proposed project's build year. These projects include a new Yankee Stadium, Gateway Center at Bronx Terminal Market, development in the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area, Plaza at the Hub, and the ongoing construction of the Bronx Criminal Court Complex, among others. (Detailed descriptions of these development projects are provided in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy.") While most of this new development will occur more than ¼-mile from the site of the proposed project, the planned development has been accounted for in the relevant areas of the environmental analyses. The proposed project would provide much needed intermediate and high school facilities to better serve the existing and future educational needs of this rapidly growing area of the Bronx.

## **C. SUMMARY OF THE PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

### **LAND USE, ZONING, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

The proposed project would develop an underutilized and vacant site with a new school facility. The proposed approximately 2,460-seat school facility would contain up to approximately 275,000 gsf of space, including four separate school buildings and several shared facilities, as well as recreational spaces.

The new institutional use would be compatible with the other predominantly residential and institutional uses in the study area, and would increase activity on the site by replacing a vacant former rail yard with a public institutional use. It is not expected that the proposed project would affect the residential uses to the east or south, as it would be separated by the MTA Metro-North rail line and Concourse Village East/Park Avenue, nor residential uses to the north, as it would be buffered by P.S. 156 and I.S. 151. The heavy commercial uses to the west of the project site, along Concourse Village West, would not be affected, as the project would be enclosed with fences and would comply with setback regulations, as required by the zoning code. The new school facility would conform to the existing zoning use requirements, in which school uses are permitted as-of-right, as well as the district's bulk regulations. Overall, no significant adverse impacts would be expected to occur to land use, zoning, and community character as a result of the proposed project.

### **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

#### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES*

##### *Precontact Resources*

There were no recorded precontact archaeological sites within the project site or its immediate vicinity; however there are six sites with such potential located within two miles of the project site. Soil boring logs, both for the project site and for the parcel to the north (which was also once part of the Mott Haven rail yard and now supports P.S. 156) indicate that the uppermost stratum of soil on the parcels consists of mixed fill, ranging from 4 to 15 feet below grade. While the soil borings show naturally occurring soils beneath the fill layer, it is unclear whether the upper strata of these natural soils represent the original ground surface. Based on the criteria for the location of precontact sites, the project site is a likely location for precontact cultural remains. However, the degree to which the land surface has been disturbed by activities

associated with the rail yard is not well known. Therefore, the project site has a moderate (based on a scale of high-moderate-low) level of precontact sensitivity.

When a site has the potential for precontact archaeological resources, a full Phase IA Archaeological Assessment report is typically recommended to further document the history of the project site and possible disturbances to the original ground surface. However, because the historical archaeological sensitivity for the property is low, no additional research to further detail the site history is warranted. A Phase IA report would not change the assessment of precontact sensitivity for the site, since this is dependent on the level of disturbance to the original ground surface, which has already been researched adequately, using recently completed soil borings and archival records.

Additionally, the site has two known areas of significant contamination, which will be remediated prior to construction of the proposed facility. The remaining soils on the property, while not grossly contaminated, do contain some contaminant concentrations that exceed New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) guidelines for unrestricted use. Given the medium precontact sensitivity of the project site, combined with both the known and presumed contamination levels of the site soils, HPI recommends that no further archaeological investigations are warranted. The lack of definitive data concerning possible disturbance to the original ground surface (which currently is buried beneath 4 to 15 feet of fill) coupled with the potential contamination of much of the project site soils suggests that archaeological testing or monitoring is neither practical nor cost effective.

#### *Historic Period Resources*

Although several mid-nineteenth century maps showed the property as undeveloped, the first detailed map that included the project site was made in 1864, when portions of the Morris family lands were partitioned among heirs. The map showed that a large skating pond covered the northeast section of the project site, while the remainder of the project site was undeveloped. A small cottage was located just south of the project site and an old lane crossed the project site between the cottage and the pond. Since there were no structures located on the project site during the time of ownership by the Morris family, there is no evidence to suggest archaeological resources associated with the Morris family's use of the property would be present on the site.

After 1887, the pond was drained, the stream that fed it was covered over, and the property was converted into the New York Central and Hudson Railroad's Mott Haven rail yards. The portion of the yard that included the project site contained numerous railroad tracks, as well as several buildings (including a machine shop and carpenters' shop). These buildings were enlarged between 1891 and 1909, although they were not substantially altered after that period, and continued to operate through the mid-twentieth century. The yard was dismantled in the mid-1970s and subsequently the buildings were removed. The property for the Mott Haven rail yard should not yield any historic-period archaeologically significant resources. The yard is a late example of its kind, not being built until the late 1880s, when rail yard construction was no longer a new design process. The few buildings on the property were of a common construction and are well documented in historic maps and records. Therefore, historic-period archaeological sensitivity for the project site is low.

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### *ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES*

The Grand Concourse Historic District, which extends for over a mile along the Grand Concourse, is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR) and is the only known historic resource in the study area. The proposed project would not be visible from the Grand Concourse Historic District and therefore there would be no potential for adverse visual impacts to this resource. No adverse construction-related impacts on this resource would result, as the district is located beyond 90 feet of the project site. In addition, since there is no relationship between the depressed project site and the District there would not be any contextual impacts from the proposed project.

Potential architectural resources are properties that may meet the criteria of eligibility for S/NR listing or NYCL designation. Based on a survey of the area, The Greater Universalist Baptist Church, located approximately 300 feet from the project site at 253 East 153rd Street, was identified as a potential historic resource. Due to the architectural quality of this potential resource, it is possible that this building will be found eligible for listing on the S/NR or NYCL designation, and/or become S/NR sites or NYCLs in the future. Although preservation is not mandated, state agencies must attempt to avoid adverse impacts on such resources. The proposed school facility would be located beyond the range of construction-related impacts, and would not block views of this potential resource or introduce incompatible visual elements to the resource's setting. In a letter dated September 18, 2006 the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation concluded that there would be no impacts to know or potential architectural resources with the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not be expected to have adverse impacts on architectural resources.

### **URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES**

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

The proposed project would visually modify the project site by adding a school facility to a currently undeveloped lot that is depressed below street level. The proposed school facility would consist of four buildings constructed on a podium at the street level, which would each be up to four stories in height. All building entrances, including the main drop off area, would be located on Concourse Village West. Several shared facilities would be centrally located at grade within the common podium. Playing fields would be located at grade, on the eastern side of the site. The school facility would contain a total of approximately 275,000 gsf of floor area.

The proposed project would not alter the street pattern, block shapes, and natural features in the study area, and there would be no adverse impacts to these urban design features as a result of the proposed project. It is expected that the proposed project would have a beneficial effect, enlivening the area's streetscape by replacing a vacant lot with a school facility that would bring activity to the street level on Concourse Village West.

Although the proposed project would dramatically change the visual appearance of the project site, the proposed school facility would be consistent with buildings and uses in the study area, such as three existing schools—P.S. 156 and I.S. 151, located north of the project site, and Cardinal Hayes High School, located south of the project site. The proposed building would also be similar to the height, bulk, and arrangements of the educational and residential structures found throughout the study area.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

It is not expected that the proposed project would have any adverse impacts on visual resources within the study area. While Cardinal Hayes High School and the Bronx General Post Office are visible from the project site, views are primarily limited to the rear or rear and side façade, as opposed to the main visually interesting façades. Furthermore, views of Franz Sigel Park and the Greater Universalist Baptist Church are primarily limited to the immediately surrounding streets and therefore would not experience visual impacts from the proposed project.

### *SHADOWS*

There would be no significant adverse shadow impacts on the play areas for P.S. 156 and I.S. 151, the two existing schools located just north of the project site. The proposed project would result in new shadows on the existing play space located south of the existing school buildings, and on the paved areas between the two schools. On the May and June analysis days the proposed project would, at most, add only a very small portion of new shadows the play areas in the late afternoon and early evening hours. On the March analysis day the new shadow cast by the proposed project would, at most, reach the play area between the two schools and the area south of the two schools. On the December analysis day, the proposed building would also cast new shadows on this area throughout the day, however students may be less likely to use the yards due to cold or inclement weather. In addition, there would be additional play space for the two schools that would not be in shadow on each of these analysis days and the play spaces are all devoted to active uses so shadows are not likely to affect their use. Therefore, the proposed schools would have no significant shadow impacts on the existing school yards.

### **TRAFFIC AND PARKING**

The proposed school would generate new trips from the approximately 2,460 students and 300 teachers and administrative personnel traveling to and from the project site. The designated drop-off and pick-up area for the proposed school facility would be located along Concourse Village West south of East 156th Street, and therefore for the purposes of the traffic analysis, all drop-off and pick-up activities are assumed to take place on Concourse Village West between East 153rd and East 156th Streets.

### *VEHICULAR TRAFFIC*

The operation of all of the signalized intersections and unsignalized intersections in the study area were assessed to determine the potential for impacts of the proposed school project on traffic in the area. For the streets around the site, capacities at most of the intersection approaches would be sufficient to accommodate vehicular traffic increases resulting from the proposed project. However, based on the criteria presented in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the proposed project could cause significant impacts at the following intersection approaches during the peak periods analyzed, requiring mitigation.

#### *Signalized Intersections*

- The northbound left-turn movement of Grand Concourse at East 161st Street during the AM and PM peak hours;
- The eastbound shared through and right-turn movement of East 161st Street at Grand Concourse during the AM and PM peak hours;

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- The westbound left-turn movement of East 161st Street at Concourse Village East/Morris Avenue during the AM peak hour;
- The southbound shared through and right-turn movement of Concourse Village East at East 161st Street during the AM peak hour;
- The southbound left-turn movement of Grand Concourse at East 153rd Street during the AM and PM peak hours;
- The eastbound shared through and right-turn movement of East 149th Street at Grand Concourse during the PM peak hour;
- The westbound shared through and right-turn movement of East 149th Street and Grand Concourse during the PM peak hour; and
- The southbound shared through and right-turn movement of Morris Avenue at East 149th Street during the AM and PM peak hours.

### *Unsignalized Intersections*

- The eastbound approach of East 153rd Street at Concourse Village West during the AM and PM peak hours.

### *PARKING*

The proposed school would not provide any on-site parking spaces. Since the on-street parking utilization in the study area is near capacity in the 2010 No Build conditions, it is anticipated that staff and students seeking on-street parking during school hours would have to park their vehicles beyond the ¼-mile radius of the project site or would shift to public transit. However, since there are off-street parking facilities in the study area, it is a possibility that teachers and staff, along with the high school students driving to the campus could use off-street parking facilities. This would increase the off-street parking utilization in the study area to approximately 73 percent with 205 available off-street parking spaces. Therefore, the proposed project is not expected to significantly impact the parking supply in the study area.

### **TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS**

A quantified assessment of transit station operations and pedestrian circulation was conducted to evaluate potential impacts resulting from the proposed project on transit and pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of the project area. As estimated trips generated by the proposed project would not exceed impact thresholds for subway line-haul, these elements were not analyzed. To assess subway stairway and control area (turnstiles, service gates, etc.) operations, the user volume is compared to the element's design capacity, resulting in a volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio. The adequacy of the study area's sidewalks, crosswalks, and corner reservoir capacities in relation to the demand imposed on them was also assessed.

New trips associated with the proposed project would not result in significant subway stairway impacts, but would result in one impacted pedestrian location. This impacted pedestrian facility would occur at the south crosswalk of East 161st and Concourse Village West in the PM peak period.

### *PEDESTRIAN SAFETY*

The *CEQR Technical Manual* considers a location to be a high-pedestrian-accident location if it has 5 or more pedestrian accidents in any 12 month period within the most recent three year period. Based on data on traffic accidents at the study area intersections compiled from New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) records for the period of June 1999 through May 2002, four of the intersections in the study area are high vehicle/pedestrian accident locations. Once the East 153rd Street Bridge reconstruction project is completed, the bridge's western landing at East 153rd Street and Concourse Village West would remain uncontrolled, without providing crosswalks for pedestrian use. This configuration would be appropriate without the proposed project since future background pedestrian levels are expected to be low to moderate. However, the proposed project would provide access to the Mott Haven School Facility at entrances immediately to the north of this intersection, near the northeast corner. Projections show that the project would generate approximately 400 hourly vehicle trips and 850 hourly pedestrian trips at this intersection. Due to the location of the school facility entrance, alternative access routes are not feasible. Thus, without adequate crossing facilities at this intersection, there would be pedestrian safety issues that constitute significant adverse pedestrian safety impacts, which would require mitigation.

### **AIR QUALITY**

#### *MOBILE SOURCE*

Operation of the proposed project would result in increased mobile source emissions in the immediate vicinity of the project; however, carbon monoxide (CO) standards and the de minimis criteria would not be exceeded.

#### *STATIONARY SOURCES*

The primary stationary source of air pollutants associated with the proposed school facility would be emissions from the combustion of natural gas by HVAC equipment. The primary pollutant of concern when burning natural gas is NO<sub>x</sub>. The screening methodology in the *CEQR Technical Manual* was used for the analysis, with the total size of the proposed school buildings in gross square feet (i.e., 275,000 gsf) and the use of natural gas as fuel. At the distance to the nearest receptors of a similar or greater height (approximately 63 feet), the proposed project is below the maximum permitted levels specified in Figure 3Q-9 of the *CEQR Technical Manual*. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any potential adverse air quality impacts from HVAC emission sources.

#### *INDUSTRIAL SOURCES*

Eight addresses were identified to have the potential for pollutant emissions. Of these, two businesses are on file with New York City Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Environmental Compliance or New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and are determined to have potential air pollutant emissions. The conservative screening procedure used to estimate maximum potential impacts from these businesses showed that their operations would not result in any predicted violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) or any exceedances of the recommended annual guideline concentration or short-term guideline concentration. Therefore, based on the data available on the surrounding industrial

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uses, the proposed project would not experience significant adverse air quality impacts from these facilities.

### *CHEMICAL SPILL ANALYSIS*

The chemical spill analysis determined that maximum concentrations at off-site receptors would be below the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration Short-Term Exposure Levels (STEL) for nitric acid. In order to ensure that impacts at receptor sites within the school facility do not exceed the STEL level, exhaust fans would be placed at a minimum distance of 150 feet from the nearest window or air intake, or the exhaust stack would be constructed at a minimum elevation of 80 feet above project site grade.

The results of the analysis of emissions from the proposed school facility's fume hood exhaust system are shown below in Table S-1. The maximum concentration at elevated receptors downwind of the fume exhausts were estimated. The maximum concentration found at the proposed school facility would be below the STEL level.

**Table S-1**  
**Maximum Predicted Concentrations (ppm)**

<b>Chemical</b>	<b>STEL</b>	<b>15-Minute Average</b>
Nitric Acid	2	1.5

Therefore, the results indicate that there would be no predicted significant health effects from the exhaust system of the laboratories in the proposed school buildings and the surrounding community.

### **NOISE**

The proposed project would not result in a doubling of passenger car equivalents (PCEs) that would be necessary to cause a 3 dBA increase in noise levels, and thus would not generate sufficient traffic to have the potential to cause a significant noise impact. However, ambient noise levels adjacent to the project site were considered in order to address CEQR noise abatement requirements for the building, which are based on exterior noise levels. Recommended noise attenuation values for buildings are designed to maintain interior noise levels of 45 dBA or lower, and are determined based on exterior  $L_{10(1)}$  noise levels.

Existing noise levels at four receptor sites adjacent to the project site were analyzed for two weekday peak periods—the AM (7:00–9:00 AM) and PM (2:00–4:00 PM) peak periods. In terms of the CEQR criteria, the existing noise levels at two receptors are in the “marginally acceptable” category, the existing noise levels at a third receptor are in the “acceptable” category, and the existing noise levels at a fourth receptor are in the “marginally unacceptable” category.

To achieve desirable interior noise levels of 45 dBA or below, the building design would include well-sealed double-glazed windows, achieving at least 35 dBA window/wall attenuation. An alternate means of ventilation, such as centralized air-conditioning, will be incorporated in the school design as part of its construction. In addition, the building mechanical system (i.e., heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems) would be designed to meet all applicable noise regulations and to avoid producing levels that would result in any significant increase in

ambient noise levels. These design measures would provide sufficient attenuation to achieve the CEQR requirements.

## **SOIL AND GROUNDWATER CONDITIONS**

In the future with the proposed project, a school facility would be constructed on the project site. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA), Phase II Environmental Site Investigation (ESI), and a remedial investigation (RI) were performed to identify any potential sources of hazardous materials resulting from previous and existing uses on the site that could pose a hazard during and after construction of the proposed project. The results of the Phase II ESI and RI identified soil and groundwater contamination above New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Recommended Soil Cleanup Objectives and groundwater quality standards, specifically associated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs). To ensure that none of the constituents of concern would pose a hazard to workers, future school occupants, and/or the environment during and after construction of the proposed project, the remediation measures below would be implemented in accordance with NYSDEC Brownfield Cleanup Program requirements. These measures were approved by NYSDEC in consultation with the New York State Department of Health in a letter dated July 5, 2006.

- Construction of a hydraulic barrier along the northern and western boundaries of the project site to prevent contaminated groundwater from entering the site and to limit dewatering during site excavation;
- Removal and off-site disposal of contaminated soil (approximately 19,000 cubic yards in a 40,000 square foot area) from the northwestern portion of the project site and backfill this excavated area with environmentally clean soil;
- During the construction of the school, monitor groundwater quality downgradient of the hydraulic barriers and at the downgradient property line to confirm that there are no changes in the existing groundwater quality;
- Installation of a 24-inch layer of environmentally clean fill over any landscaped or exposed soil areas of the site after construction activities are completed to prevent direct contact with the subsurface soils; and
- As an added safeguard, construction of a vapor barrier and active sub-slab depressurization system beneath the proposed school to prevent any potential residual vapors from entering the school in the future.

Construction of the proposed facility will not begin in the area of contamination until the contaminants are removed as detailed in the Remedial Action Work Plan (RAWP). To minimize construction workers' exposure, standard industry practices for the removal of contaminated soils will be utilized, including the employment of an appropriate health and safety plan (HASP). The HASP will include periodic air monitoring and personal protective equipment, as warranted. In addition, measures will be taken to prevent exposure of residents or workers in the area to any fugitive dusts or vapors during construction. The excavation of contaminated soil will be completed within temporary enclosures kept at a negative pressure that will contain and treat (i.e., remove) fugitive dusts and vapors from the air prior to discharge to the outside. The practice of spraying water to suppress any airborne dust outside the enclosures (roadways) will also be conducted. The contaminated soils excavated and removed from the project site will be handled and transported off-site to a licensed and permitted disposal/recycling facility in accordance with all applicable local, State, and Federal regulations. The NYSDEC will monitor

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the remediation program and receive daily site monitoring information. With these measures in place, no significant adverse impacts on soil and groundwater conditions would occur.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY**

#### *WATER SUPPLY*

The proposed school campus would use an average of 69,000 gallons per day (gpd) based on 30 gpd per seat, and another 27,500 gpd for air conditioning during warm weather. The school facility's water usage would not be expected to noticeably reduce water pressure in the surrounding area.

#### *SANITARY SEWAGE*

The proposed school facility's sewage generation, conservatively estimated to average 69,000 gpd, would be transported to the Wards Island WPCP. The sewage flow would represent well less than one percent of the WPCP's capacity of 230 million gallons per day. The Wards Island plant has sufficient excess capacity to handle this additional flow.

#### *STORM WATER*

A system of control flow roof drains, area drains, and leader would be provided to drain storm water from the building. Flat roof areas would be utilized for storm water retention, if required by NYCDEP. Areas that cannot drain by gravity would be discharged into the city sewer system by sump pumps.

#### *SOLID WASTE*

The proposed school facility would be expected to generate fewer than 6,900 pounds of solid waste per week during the school year. Representing a small percent of the total volume of solid waste that is currently handled by the New York City Department of Sanitation (NYCDOS), the school facility would not have a significant effect on New York City's solid waste disposal system, nor would it affect its Solid Waste Management Plan.

#### *ENERGY*

It is estimated that added electrical demand would be minimal and would require no special appurtenances.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The 6.6-acre project site contains areas of rubble and piles of railroad ballast, unpaved paths, and areas containing a successional plant community characteristic of those that develop on urban vacant lots. Vegetation cover in the project site consists of herbaceous plants such as mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), and young trees such as gray birch (*Betula lenta*), honey-locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), and tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). Vegetation species found in the project site are commonly found in urban vacant lots, and are generally fast growing and tolerant of harsh urban environments. Wildlife likely to utilize the project site include those species generally tolerant of urban conditions. The USFWS National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps, and the NYSDEC Freshwater Wetland maps, as well as field investigation, indicate that there are no wetlands on the project site. No Federally-listed or proposed endangered or threatened

species are known to exist in the vicinity of the project site. Additionally, there are no designated or proposed “critical habitat” in accordance with provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) within the vicinity of the project site.

Although construction of the proposed project would result in the loss of the successional habitat currently found on the project site, individual birds and other wildlife currently using this habitat would likely be displaced to nearby suitable habitats, such as Franz Sigel Park. Furthermore, the wildlife species expected to occur on the project site are common to urban areas and the loss of some individuals would not result in a significant adverse impact on the bird and wildlife community of the New York City region. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan is being developed for the proposed project and the project would comply with New York Guidelines for Urban Erosion and Sediment Control and the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual. Overall, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to terrestrial natural resources, wetlands, aquatic resources, endangered species, threatened species, or species of special concern.

## CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the proposed school facility would be temporarily disruptive to the surrounding area and would result in temporary effects on air quality, and noise, as follows:

- Possible impacts on local air quality during construction of the project include fugitive dust (particulate) and mobile source emissions, but neither is anticipated to result in significant impacts during the construction period. Dust suppression measures, including water spraying practices, will be implemented to prevent exposure of students, residents or workers to any fugitive dust during construction. In addition, a comprehensive Community Air Monitoring Program (CAMP) will be implemented to provide an added level of protection for occupants of adjacent schools and residences from potential airborne releases. Excavation of all contaminated soil will be conducted within temporary enclosures (tent structures) which will be maintained at a negative pressure to contain and treat any fugitive dust and vapors from discharging to the outside air.
- Construction equipment, excavation, and construction and delivery vehicles traveling to and from the site would also result in noise and vibration. Federal and city noise control regulations would be carefully followed, and appropriate low-noise emission level equipment and operational procedures would be used.
- A Phase I ESA, Phase II ESI, and a remedial investigation (RI) were performed to identify any potential sources of hazardous materials resulting from previous and existing uses on the site that could pose a hazard during and after construction of the proposed project. The results of the Phase II ESI and RI identified soil and groundwater contamination above NYSDEC’S Recommended Soil Cleanup Objectives and groundwater quality standards, specifically associated with VOCs and SVOCs. With the implementation of the following measures, no significant adverse soil and groundwater impacts would result: 1) Construction of a hydraulic barrier along the northern and western boundaries of the project site to prevent contaminated groundwater from entering the site and to limit dewatering during site excavation; 2) Removal and off-site disposal of contaminated soil (approximately 19,000 cubic yards in a 40,000 square foot area) from the northwestern portion of the project site and backfill this excavated area with environmentally clean soil; 3) During the construction of the school, monitor groundwater quality downgradient of the hydraulic barriers and at the downgradient property line to confirm that there are no changes in the existing groundwater

quality; 4) Installation of a 24-inch layer of environmentally clean fill over any landscaped or exposed soil areas of the site after construction activities are completed to prevent direct contact with the subsurface soils; and 5) Construction of a vapor barrier and active sub-slab depressurization system beneath the proposed school to prevent any potential residual vapors from entering the school in the future. To minimize construction workers' exposure, standard industry practices for the removal of contaminated soils will be utilized, including the employment of an appropriate health and safety plan. In addition, measures will be taken to prevent exposure of residents or workers in the area to any fugitive dusts or vapors during construction. With these measures in place, there are no anticipated exposure pathways to the surrounding community from construction operations and there would be no significant adverse construction impacts related to soil and groundwater conditions.

Overall, construction of the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse construction impacts.

## **D. MITIGATION**

### **TRAFFIC AND PARKING**

A number of intersection turning movements and approaches in the study area would experience significant traffic impacts as a result of vehicular traffic generated by the proposed project. With the mitigation measures in place, all of the impacted intersection approaches/lane groups would operate at the same or better service conditions than under the No Build conditions, except for the intersection of East 153rd Street and Concourse Village West, which would remain unmitigated during both the AM and PM peak hours. All the traffic mitigation measures proposed are subject to review and approval from New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT). Once approved, NYCDOT generally implements the mitigation measures before the project is operational. The SCA will coordinate with NYCDOT on the implementation of all appropriate mitigation measures before the opening of the proposed school facility. Mitigation measures for each affected intersection are as follows:

#### *East 161st Street (WB) at Grand Concourse*

The impacts at the northbound left-turn movement at this intersection during the AM and PM peak hours could be mitigated by revising the signal timing plan.

#### *East 161st Street (EB) at Grand Concourse*

The impact at the eastbound shared through and right-turn movement at this intersection during the AM and PM peak hours could be mitigated by revising the signal timing plan.

#### *East 161st Street at Concourse Village East/Morris Avenue*

The impacts at the westbound left-turn movement and the southbound shared through and right-turn movement at this intersection during the AM peak hour could be mitigated by revising the signal timing plan as presented in Table 15-1.

#### *East 153rd Street at Grand Concourse*

The impact at the southbound left-turn movement at this intersection during the AM and PM peak hours could be mitigated by shifting eleven seconds of green time from the westbound

phase; and by shifting another six seconds from the northbound/southbound phase to the southbound lead phase.

The impact at the southbound left-turn movement at this intersection during the PM peak hour could be mitigated by shifting ten seconds of green time from the westbound phase.

*East 153rd Street and Concourse Village West*

The impacts at the eastbound approach at this intersection during the AM and PM peak hours could be mitigated by restriping the eastbound approach with one exclusive left-turn lane and a through lane, and by installing a new traffic signal. The installation of a new traffic signal at this intersection was discussed with NYCDOT in June 2005. Based on that discussion, NYCDOT did not approve the installation of a new traffic signal at this intersection, but agreed to install new crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian traffic. In addition, it is anticipated that NYCDOT would investigate the provision of signage on the 153rd Street Bridge which would instruct motorists not to block the access to Concourse Village West while waiting for green signal indication at the Grand Concourse intersection. The provision of signage on East 153rd Street in the absence of a new traffic signal at the East 153rd Street and Concourse Village West intersection would not mitigate the traffic impacts at the eastbound 153rd Street approach. Therefore, traffic impacts to the intersection of Concourse Village West and East 153rd Street would remain unmitigated in the 2010 Build conditions.

*East 149th Street at Grand Concourse*

The impact at the eastbound and westbound approaches at this intersection during the PM peak hour could be mitigated by shifting two seconds of green time from the northbound/southbound phase to the eastbound/westbound phase.

*East 149th Street at Morris Avenue*

The impact at the southbound shared through and right-turn movement at this intersection during the AM and PM peak hours could be mitigated by shifting two seconds of green time from the eastbound/westbound phase to the northbound/southbound phase.

The impact at the southbound shared through and right-turn movement at this intersection during the PM peak hour could be mitigated by shifting three seconds of green time from the eastbound/westbound phase to the northbound/southbound phase.

**TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS**

With the proposed project, the south crosswalk at the intersection of East 161st Street and Concourse Village West would deteriorate from a No Build LOS D with a maximum surge of 21 square feet per minute (SFP) to a Build LOS D with a maximum surge 19 SFP during the PM peak 15-minute period. A one-foot widening of this crosswalk would restore the Build operating conditions to acceptable levels.

The proposed project could result in a significant pedestrian safety impact at the intersection of East 153rd Street and Concourse Village West. As discussed in the preceding section, NYCDOT has not approved the installation of a new traffic signal at this intersection. However, they have agreed to install a crosswalk across the east side of East 153rd Street and Grand Concourse intersection, and another crosswalk will be installed across Concourse Village West (north of 153rd Street). In addition, NYCDOT will install a barrier on the south side of East 153rd Street to prohibit pedestrians from crossing East 153rd Street at Concourse Village West. This would

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force the pedestrians to cross East 153rd Street at the newly proposed crosswalk at the east side of East 153rd Street/Grand Concourse intersection. Pedestrian capacity analysis was conducted for this crosswalk to determine the service conditions in relation to the pedestrian flows. Based on the analysis results, the crosswalk would operate at an acceptable LOS C during both the AM and PM peak periods in the 2010 Build conditions.

In addition to the above measures, it is recommended that high-visibility crosswalks be provided for the newly proposed crosswalks at Concourse Village West and East 153rd Street. Also, school area traffic control devices including the School Advance Warning Sign, School Crosswalk Warning Sign, and School Reduced Speed Ahead Sign should be considered for the study area streets/roadways—specifically, on East 153rd Street—to further enhance the pedestrian safety conditions. Furthermore, using School Crossing Guards, specifically at the intersection of East 153rd Street and Concourse Village West—during the AM and PM peak hours of pedestrian activity—is also anticipated to improve pedestrian safety conditions.

It is anticipated that implementation of the measures described above would mitigate the potential pedestrian safety impact at East 153rd Street and Concourse Village West intersection during both the analysis periods.

### **AIR QUALITY**

As discussed above under “Traffic and Parking,” potential traffic mitigation measures have been assessed for predicted significant adverse traffic impacts. No potential significant adverse air quality impacts are expected due to mobile sources with the traffic mitigation in place.

## **E. ALTERNATIVES**

### **NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE**

This chapter considers a No Build Alternative to the proposed project (the Build Alternative) and compares the environmental conditions and impacts under the proposed project with conditions under this alternative. Under the No Build Alternative, the proposed school facility would not be built. The project site would remain in its current state as a vacant property depressed below street level. As with the proposed project, this alternative would not result in adverse impacts to land use, zoning, and community character, historic resources, urban design and visual resources, parking, transit, air quality, noise, soil and groundwater conditions, infrastructure and energy, or natural resources. Unlike the proposed project, no additional traffic trips would be generated and therefore, there would be no adverse traffic or pedestrian impacts. However, with the No Build Alternative no new school facilities would be provided.

### **AS-OF-RIGHT RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE**

This chapter also considers a hypothetical As-of-Right Residential Alternative, in which the project site would be developed in accordance with its R8 zoning. The project site is approximately 288,803 square feet. With an allowable FAR of 6.02 for residential development, the project site could be developed with a maximum of approximately 1,738,594 zoning square feet (zsf) of development, and approximately 1,738 new residential dwelling units. Overall, it is expected that this alternative would have similar impacts to the Build Alternative. As with the Build Alternative, the AOR Alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, and community character; historic resources; urban design and visual resources;

shadows; air quality; noise; soil and groundwater conditions; infrastructure; and construction. As compared with the Build Alternative, the AOR Alternative would likely result in greater shadow effects than the proposed project. Although the AOR Alternative would have lesser effects on traffic, transit, and pedestrians than the proposed project would, it would not include mitigation measures. By comparison, the proposed project includes mitigation measures to address significant adverse traffic, transit, and pedestrian impacts at all but one intersection. \*