

CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

7.1. OVERVIEW

The emergency ventilation plant would be constructed within the neighborhood of Greenwich Village. In accordance with SEQRA, this FEIS presents potential impacts of the construction and operation of this facility on social and economic conditions. These conditions include: land use, zoning, and public policy; economic conditions such as business activity and employment opportunities; and community character, incorporating consideration of population, housing, and community facilities.

The assessment of social and economic impacts requires consideration of potential impacts analyzed in other chapters of the FEIS, including traffic and transportation, noise and air quality, and safety. The analysis evaluates the potential significant adverse impacts associated with the emergency ventilation plant that may affect socioeconomic and community characteristics, temporarily or permanently as a result of either construction or operation. An analysis of the cumulative effects associated with the emergency ventilation plant and other actions in the study area is contained in Chapter 20: Cumulative Effects Assessment.

The chapter is divided into three separate sub-chapters as follows:

- Sub-Chapter 7A: Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy;
- Sub-Chapter 7B: Economic Conditions; and,
- Sub-Chapter 7C: Community Character.

Each sub-chapter includes a description of the relevant study area, analysis methodology, a profile of the affected environment, impact analysis, and proposed mitigation measures.

7.2. CONTEXT AND KEY ISSUES

Three alternative sites for the emergency ventilation plant are the Preferred Alternative, Alternative SB1, and Alternative SB5, located, respectively, at the intersection of Greenwich Avenue and Seventh Avenue, in Greenwich Avenue south of Seventh Avenue, and in Perry Street between Seventh Avenue and Greenwich Avenue. The social and economic condition studies include: land use, zoning, and public policy; economic conditions such as employment and business; and, community character. The land use analysis was completed using a study area with an approximate 800-foot radius around the intersection of Greenwich and Seventh Avenues. The Community District 2 boundary is used to describe the study area in the analysis of socioeconomic conditions. Furthermore, more specific attention is given to retail establishments in the area within a 400-foot radius around the three alternative sites.

7.2.1. LAND USE

Land use in the study area is characterized by irregularly shaped blocks filled with low to mid-rise brick buildings with commercial activity concentrated on “key” through streets and avenues, such as Seventh and Greenwich Avenues. Commercial activity is usually limited to ground floor retail, primarily attracting pass-by visitors and tourists. In addition to commercial and residential uses, St. Vincent’s Hospital is nearby, as are notable religious institutions such as The Church of the Village, Manhattan Seventh Day Adventist Church, as well as The Episcopal Church of St. John. The study area is famous

for its narrow streets lined with nineteenth-century townhouses and early twentieth-century apartment buildings.

7.2.2. ZONING

Zoning in the study area generally consists of low-density commercial districts with some medium-density residential districts along the midblocks. The alternative sites are located in commercially zoned districts that are predominately residential in character. The Preferred Alternative is located in a C2-6 commercial district that extends from approximately West 14th Street to West 10th Street along Seventh Avenue. Alternatives SB1 and SB5 are partially located in the C2-6 commercial district as well as a C1-6 commercial district that extends along Greenwich Avenue to the north and south of Seventh Avenue.

7.2.3. POLICIES AND PLANS

The study area is designated as a historic district and is filled with landmarked buildings. It is fully built out and there are no large-scale development plans proposed for this area other than the proposed redevelopment of St. Vincent's Hospital. Those plans currently include a new 21-story hospital building on the site of the O'Toole building and, once that is complete, a new 21-story residential building along with townhouses would be constructed on the site of the existing hospital complex.

7.2.4. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Retail businesses located in the area of the proposed ventilation facility are characterized as "Pass-by Attractors" and "Destination Shopping." The numerous restaurants, cafes, specialty retail, and service-oriented businesses attract people from both nearby, from New York City overall, as well as tourists from outside the City visiting this historic district. The area is highly dependent on tourism for its revenue and is particularly active during weekends and evenings.

7.2.5. COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

An assessment of community cohesion in the Mulry Square study area indicates a stable residential community with limited opportunities for large-scale residential development and associated changes to population. Economic conditions in the area are also stable. Overall, conditions in the area provide for a neighborhood steadied by a well-established residential character and enlivened by small-scale restaurants and retail establishments serving local residents as well as tourists, workers and visitors from other parts of the City.

No new residential or long-term worker population would be introduced by the proposed project as part of emergency ventilation plant operations. Therefore, major long-term effects to community character would be limited to those effects related to urban design and visual character (see Chapter 9). Project-related construction activities, however, may affect local business activity, aesthetic conditions, traffic and pedestrian circulation patterns, in addition to the habits and quality of life enjoyed by local residents. Therefore, special emphasis is given in this FEIS to potential effects to community character during the years 2010–2013/2014, when construction and operation of the Preferred Alternative (2013) and Alternatives SB1 and SB5 (2014) would occur.

7.3. CONCLUSIONS

7.3.1. CONSTRUCTION

Emergency ventilation plant construction activities would not result in lasting changes to land use and are not subject to zoning or similar development policies (see Table 7-1). Adverse effects would be likely in the form of temporary disruption to local businesses; traffic and pedestrian access would be maintained and potential air quality, noise and vibration impacts would be mitigated (principally through the requirements that would be imposed by MTA NYCT on their construction contractors through the project construction specification and CEPP). Construction effects to local businesses (see Chapter 20: Cumulative Effects Assessment) may result from the combination of dust and noise, potentially making shopping or dining in the immediate area uncomfortable. Outdoor dining tables would likely need to be temporarily moved for construction, which during colder weather would result in less of an impact. Notwithstanding these temporary effects, no permanent displacement of businesses is predicted to result from construction.

Approximately 40 construction-related jobs and additional secondary jobs would be created throughout the estimated three- to four-year construction period. Retail businesses in the area of construction would likely be disrupted as related to temporary pedestrian and loading access. “Pass-by attractor” retail establishments would experience the greatest impact on patronage. Site-specific maintenance and protection of traffic measures would be implemented during construction to mitigate these impacts (see Chapter 4: Construction Methods and Activities).

Community character could be affected by temporary construction activities. There is a potential for significant adverse noise impacts during construction of all three alternatives from which Alternative SB1 would have the longest duration – 4 years. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the CEPP to minimize these adverse impacts. Potential vibration impacts that would result during construction would be mitigated to below levels that would cause annoyance (see Chapter 13: Noise & Vibration). Potential air quality impacts would also be fully mitigated. There is a potential for significant traffic impacts during evening and weekend periods for a period of 12 months when the Greenwich Avenue SB approach to Seventh Avenue is closed to traffic. MTA NYCT will work with NYCDOT to develop a Maintenance and Protection of Traffic (MPT) Plan that would monitor and minimize these impacts and NYCDOT representatives have agreed to participate in those efforts. Although the general aesthetic quality of the immediate construction area may be temporarily diminished, housing and population would be unaffected; likewise community facilities in the area would remain unaffected. Likewise, the removal of mature street trees from that section of Perry Street between Seventh Avenue and Greenwich Avenue for Alternative SB5, would alter the visual character of that one block. In addition, under Alternative SB5 Perry Street between Seventh Avenue and Greenwich Avenue would be closed to thru vehicular and pedestrian traffic for a period of approximately three years. Although access would be provided to residents and emergency vehicles, this would have a temporary adverse effect on community character for the residents of Perry Street.

TABLE 7-1: SUMMARY OF COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Alternative	Description	2010-2013/2014 (Construction)	2013/2014 (Operation)
No Action	No emergency ventilation plant is constructed. The three alternative sites remain unchanged from existing conditions.	No impact.	No impact or improvement of conditions without the project.
<u>The Preferred Alternative</u>	Construction of above-ground emergency ventilation plant at 61 Greenwich Avenue	<p>No significant adverse impact to land use, zoning and public policy.</p> <p>Temporary adverse effects to local businesses from the temporary disruption of usual and customary routes of direct access to business patronage, deliveries, etc.; increases in noise, vibration and dust and the visual effects of sidewalk sheds and construction equipment and activity.</p> <p>Potential for significant traffic impacts during evening and weekend periods on Seventh Avenue. Measures to mitigate this condition, These efforts and the development and review of mitigation measures, if needed, will be undertaken in consultation with the NYCDOT whose representatives have agreed to participate in this effort.</p>	No significant adverse impact to land use; would be compatible with zoning and consistent with public policy. Portion of site set aside to remain open area.
Alternative SB1	Construction of emergency ventilation plant in the streetbed of Greenwich Avenue, south of Seventh Avenue.	<p>No significant adverse impact to land use, zoning and public policy.</p> <p>Temporary adverse effects to local businesses from the temporary disruption of usual and customary routes of direct access to business patronage, deliveries, etc.; increases in noise, vibration and dust and the visual effects of sidewalk sheds and construction equipment and activity.</p> <p>Potential for significant traffic impacts during evening and weekend periods on Seventh Avenue. Measures to mitigate this condition, These efforts and the development and review of mitigation measures, if needed, will be undertaken in consultation with the NYCDOT whose representatives have agreed to participate in this effort.</p>	No significant adverse impact to land use; would be compatible with zoning and consistent with public policy.

TABLE 7-1: SUMMARY OF COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS (CONTINUED)

Alternative	Description	2010-2013/2014 (Construction)	2013/2014 (Operation)
Alternative SB5	Construction of emergency ventilation plant in the streetbed of Perry Street between Seventh Avenue and Greenwich Avenue.	<p>No significant adverse impact to land use, zoning and public policy.</p> <p>Temporary adverse effects to local businesses from the temporary disruption of usual and customary routes of direct access to business patronage, deliveries, etc.; increases in noise, vibration and dust and the visual effects of sidewalk sheds and construction equipment and activity.</p> <p>Potential for significant traffic impacts during evening and weekend periods on Seventh Avenue. Measures to mitigate this condition, These efforts and the development and review of mitigation measures, if needed, will be undertaken in consultation with the NYCDOT whose representatives have agreed to participate in this effort.</p>	No significant adverse impact to land use; would be compatible with zoning and consistent with public policy.

7.3.2. OPERATION

During its operation, the emergency ventilation plant would have minimal effect on the land use, social and economic conditions, or community character and would achieve, in part, MTA NYCT's goal to improve the emergency ventilation system throughout the City's subway system. Under the Preferred Alternative, its principal effect on community character would relate to the presence of a substantial structure at a location that is presently an MTA NYCT equipment and emergency vehicle storage property. However, the above-ground structure would be designed with NYSHPO guidance pursuant to a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure that it would be consistent with the character of the historic district.

7.4. CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PLAN (CEPP)

The social and economic impact analysis of the emergency ventilation plant was conducted taking into account mitigation measures, which would be part of the project's CEPP, and would be implemented as part of the emergency ventilation plant's construction activity to avoid or minimize adverse effects on social and economic conditions (see Chapter 10: Displacement and Relocation and Chapter 20: Cumulative Effects Assessment). They include the following:

- Coordination with the Community Board and other entities to minimize residential and retail impacts of the emergency ventilation plant as required through MTA NYCT's usual community outreach programs through its Government & Community Relations; the MOA/MOU to be entered into with NYSHPO concerning the design of the above-grade structure proposed under the Preferred Alternative; and the mitigation measures committed to in the FEIS to minimize and/or avoid the potential significant adverse impacts of the proposed project, which are described in detail in the relevant FEIS chapters.
- Provision of appropriate signage for affected businesses and amenities to maintain their visibility, when obscured as a result of construction activities associated with the emergency ventilation plant. In addition to these mitigation measures, which are specifically tailored to business and economic interest, potential effects would also be proactively addressed through mitigation measures that are intended to avoid or minimize effects on pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation, noise and vibration, air quality and historic and cultural resources; all of which may indirectly affect economic and business interests, as presented in Chapter 2: Analytical Framework and in any MOU/MOA with NYSHPO. Discussions of the relevant mitigation measures are presented in the technical chapters addressing the related resources.

MTA NYCT will maintain diligent open communications with local businesses and work with them to develop mitigation strategies as necessary. Provided business owners are fully informed as to project schedule and the scope of activities that will occur at all phases of the schedule, they may be able to prepare their business strategies accordingly (e.g., change seating arrangements, schedules, and reallocate staff). Similarly, MTA NYCT may be better able to manage nuances of the construction schedule as construction progresses in order to preclude or reduce impacts. For example, the activities creating effects that would be most noticeable to café patrons dining al fresco, may be scheduled for cold weather (e.g., late fall through early spring) when al fresco dining is typically not available or less preferred.

MTA NYCT would also initiate communication with local business owners to learn of any specific impacts that business owners experience, so that MTA NYCT may be able to make specific changes to

prevent or reduce such impacts as construction is underway. While communication may not prevent impacts, its goal would be to lessen such impacts wherever possible.

Measures to mitigate the potential significant traffic impact on Seventh Avenue during evening and weekends, if it should occur, could include: the use of variable message signs to advise motorists of the construction activity in the area and encourage the use of alternate routes to Seventh Avenue; potential changes in the means and methods used in construction; and other public information methods. These mitigation measures would be further developed during MPT planning with NYCDOT during planning, design, and construction of the proposed project.

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