

**A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) summarizes and responds to substantive comments received during the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), issued on August 15, 2019, for the proposed Bronx Psychiatric Center Land Use Improvement Project.

State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) requires a public hearing on the DEIS as part of the environmental review process. The DEIS public hearing was held on Monday, September 16, 2019, at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, LeFrak Auditorium, 1301 Morris Park Avenue, Bronx, NY, 10461, at 6:30pm. The comment period remained open through Wednesday, October 16, 2019.

A list of organizations and individuals who commented can be found in Section B. All written and oral comments are included in **Appendix F**, “Comments Received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft General Project Plan.” Where relevant, in response to comments on the DEIS, changes have been made and are shown with double underlines in the FEIS. Section C contains a summary of relevant comments on the DEIS and a response to each. These summaries convey the substance of the comments made, but do not necessarily quote the comments verbatim. Comments are organized by subject matter and generally parallel the chapter structure of the DEIS. Where more than one commenter expressed similar views, those comments have been grouped and addressed together. Commenters who expressed general support or general opposition but did not provide substantive comments on the DEIS are listed at the end of Section C.

**B. LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMENTED ON THE DEIS****OFFICIALS**

1. Marissa Lago, Chair, City Planning Commission, letter dated October 15, 2019 (Lago\_017)

**ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES**

2. Rick Chandler, SVP of Strategic Development Montefiore, The University Hospital for Albert Einstein College of Medicine, letter dated September 12, 2019 (Chandler\_011)
3. Marlene Cintron, President, The Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, letter dated September 6, 2019 (Cintron\_002) (Cintron\_010)
4. Yasmin Cruz Executive Director Westchester Square Business Improvement District, letter dated September 6, 2019 (Cruz\_004) (Cruz\_009)

---

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is new to the FEIS.

## **Bronx Psychiatric Center Land Use Improvement Project**

---

5. Timothy L. Hall, President, Mercy College, letters dated September 6, 2019 (Hall\_008) and September 16, 2019 (Hall\_003)
6. John Murphy, New York City District Council of Carpenters, oral comments delivered September 16, 2019 (Murphy\_012)
7. Dean Ricks, President, Parkchester Little League, oral comments delivered September 16, 2019 (Ricks\_014)
8. Lisa Sorin, President, Bronx Chamber of Commerce, letters dated September 3, 2019 (Sorin\_007) and September 16, 2019 (Sorin\_005), oral comments delivered September 16, 2019 (Sorin\_013)

### **GENERAL PUBLIC**

9. Roxanne Delgado, oral comments delivered September 16, 2019 (Delgado\_015) and email dated September 17, 2019 (Delgado\_006)
10. Vincent Joshua, oral comments delivered September 16, 2019 (Joshua\_016)
11. Joseph M. Sanderson, email dated September 4, 2019 (Sanderson\_001)

### **FORM LETTERS**

12. Eric Bailey, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Bailey\_FL1\_033)
13. Vincent Brett, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Brett\_FL1\_025)
14. Angel Cedero, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Cedero\_FL1\_018)
15. Antham Cosciligano, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Cosciligano\_FL1\_019)
16. Colm Crowley, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Crowley\_FL1\_028)
17. Byron Gilzene, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Gilzene\_FL1\_021)
18. M. Gonlor, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Gonlor\_FL1\_020)
19. Robert Jaquez, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Jaquez\_FL1\_034)
20. Vincent Joshua, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Joshua\_FL1\_023)
21. Eduart Lisi, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Lisi\_FL1\_032)
22. Keith McKenzie, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (McKenzie\_FL1\_022)
23. Patrick Russell, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Russell\_FL1\_027)
24. Gary Simpson, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Simpson\_FL1\_030)
25. Ramo Sroamovio, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Sroamovio\_FL1\_026)
26. Devon Stewart, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Stewart\_FL1\_031)

27. Werner Vandoten, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Vandoten\_FL1\_029)
28. Sinade Wadsworth, New York District Council of Carpenters, form letter dated October 15, 2019 (Wadsworth\_FL1\_024)

## C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

### PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

**Comment 1:** There was insufficient public notice for the DEIS and public hearing. Our Bronx Community Board did not post this on their calendar of their site nor did they send notice via their email distribution list. Our elected officials did not post any public notice on their social media or their email distribution list. There was no public notice on ESD website. There was no public notice on City Record. (Delgado\_006)

**Response:** Noticing of the public hearing complied with all applicable requirements of the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC) Act and the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Legal notice of the hearing was published in the August 16, 2019 edition of the New York Daily News and in the August 28, 2019 edition of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Notice Bulletin. Notice was also provided on the ESD website ([https://esd.ny.gov/esd-media-center/public-notices?tid\[\]=511](https://esd.ny.gov/esd-media-center/public-notices?tid[]=511)). The public hearing was not required to be noticed by community boards, elected officials, or in the City Record.

**Comment 2:** For such a massive project, the presentation about the project at the public hearing was too short and no questions were answered. The DEIS was not posted on ESD's website before the public hearing. I would ask for the sake of transparency and engagement that this public hearing conducted on September 16th is not counted and a public hearing with public notice and a complete presentation is conducted. (Delgado\_006)

**Response:** The DEIS public hearing conducted on September 16, 2019 complied with all applicable requirements of the UDC Act and SEQRA. The public hearing presented information about the proposed project and provided all interested persons the opportunity to provide comments on the General Project Plan (GPP), the DEIS, and the proposed transfer and development of the project site. As noted in the DEIS Notice of Completion, the DEIS was made available on a dedicated project webpage on the ESD website (<https://esd.ny.gov/bronx-psych-redevelopment-project>) on August 15, 2019 and remained available through the public comment period. The DEIS was also available for review by the general public at the office of ESD, and at the Westchester Square Branch of the New York Public Library.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**Comment 3:** The proposed project is adjacent to multiple subway stations and a future Metro-North station, and yet wastes much of the available space on over 4,000 parking spaces that will likely go underutilized in this urban, transit-rich setting. These parking spaces encourage additional vehicle trips that would otherwise be made by transit, increasing congestion and air pollution. Indeed, the DEIS itself seems to acknowledge that the parking is excessive, with only 63 to 75% of spaces being used at peak hours even under its outdated methodology that ignores the dynamic relationship between parking availability and mode choice. (Sanderson\_001)

At over 4,000 planned parking spaces, CPC believe the quantity of parking to be excessive and that it risks undermining the pedestrian condition of the planned development and its proximity to new planned Metro North service. CPC suggests thinking strategically about the phasing of parking and about where additional open space or retail may be accommodated to the benefit of pedestrian comfort, safety, and convenience. (Lago\_017)

**Response:** Because the project site is more than one mile (> 20-minute walk) from the nearest subway station, and the future Metro-North station is only in early planning stages with service not expected until 2023 at the earliest, the project site is not a transit-rich setting compared to other areas of New York City. As discussed in DEIS Chapter 14, “Transportation,” and verified by comprehensive travel demand surveys at the Hutchinson Metro Center, travel by private autos is the predominant mode of transportation to and from the project site. The data collected from the travel demand surveys were used to estimate travel demand and parking conditions for the proposed project, in accordance with the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

The project’s developer, which also operates the Hutchinson Metro Center (HMC), has taken steps to support transit use by operating a shuttle to supplement the City’s Bx24 bus route to connect transit users to the Westchester Square No. 6 train subway station. The shuttle vehicles have recently been equipped with technologies to maximize operational efficiency and provide riders with alerts on shuttle arrival. While the privately operated shuttle service and City buses have improved transit connections to the HMC campus, its geographic location and land uses have continued to attract travel predominantly via auto. As part of the project, the developer has planned for parking capacity that is consistent with the travel behavior experienced today and which is necessary to secure tenants with varying parking requirements. At the existing HMC campus, the overall parking utilization level is similar to what has been projected for the planned parking spaces in the proposed new HMC campus. Although these overall levels are well below the provided supply, utilizations levels at different parts of the existing campus and at the proposed project could vary significantly. For example, the parking garages under and adjacent to 1250 Waters Place in the existing HMC

campus regularly operate close to or at capacity, while others are substantially underutilized or fill up more during latter parts of the day. Hence, even though the proposed parking capacity exceeds the projected parking demand, the additional buffer is necessary to account for the above parking dynamics and more importantly to ensure convenient access to available parking for visitors to the campus. It should be noted that the number of parking spaces in the proposed project has already decreased from 5,400 spaces described in the Draft Scope of Work to approximately 4,000 spaces described in the DEIS. Furthermore, the developer may elect not to build the full proposed number of parking spaces if the projected parking demand does not materialize as the proposed project is built and occupied.

Unrelated to the proposed project, the City has rezoned the adjacent Eastchester area for residential development, in recognition of this area of the Bronx developing into a substantial employment center. Together with the advent of nearby Metro North service, travel in the area could become more transit-, bike-, and pedestrian-oriented over time. This potential change, however, may not materialize to a notable extent for travel to the proposed project. Contrary to the comment, the provision of the planned level of parking spaces would not undermine pedestrian travel to and through the new HMC campus. In fact, the site plans and renderings presented in the DEIS show an integration of improved and safe pedestrian paths that would accommodate the projected levels of pedestrians as well as any additional shifts in travel from auto to transit and other modes of transportation.

**Comment 4:** New York is in a housing crisis. The space that is being wasted on excessive parking should instead be used to create more residential units. Indeed, creating more residential units on-site will encourage people to live near where they work, reducing congestion and pollution. There are few large spaces remaining in New York City capable of accommodating the significant regional housing need efficiently and without displacement of existing residents. This site should not be wasted—ESD should encourage much more residential space on the site. (Sanderson\_001)

The City Planning Commission (CPC) understands and lauds the goals of the proposal but urges ESD and the development team to incorporate residential uses into the project, including affordable housing options. CPC believes a mix of uses would create an improved, more sustainable development that would help meet the dire need for housing as it creates jobs. (Lago\_017)

**Response:** With respect to housing for the general public, the ESD request for proposals (RFP) for the project site did not permit residential use for the general public. However, as described in the DEIS, the developer has proposed including accessory uses, which are defined as accessory housing located within the proposed project and reserved for those working or studying within the Hutchison

## **Bronx Psychiatric Center Land Use Improvement Project**

---

Metro Center or the proposed project (and their families), including (i) students, faculty and staff (and their families) of any university, college or trade school within the proposed project or the Hutchinson Metro Center, (ii) professionals, researchers, scientists and/or employees (and their families) working for and at any medical biotechnical, healthcare or research and development institution within the proposed project or the Hutchinson Metro Center, and (iii) employees (and their families) working for any other industry reasonably approved by ESD that occupies a portion of the proposed project or the Hutchinson Metro Center. This accessory use would accommodate some of the proposed project's future population such that they would not need to commute to and from their workplace.

As noted in DEIS Chapter 1, "Project Description," one of the ESD's development priorities for the project site is maximizing economic impact. The proposed project would support this priority by providing the opportunity for Hutchinson Metro Center to expand so the current economic base may continue to grow, and new companies can be located in the Bronx Community District 11, contributing to new quality employment.

**Comment 5:** How much of the project will be funded by tax dollars or public funds? Will the developer receive any tax breaks? (Delgado\_015, Murphy\_012)

**Response:** The proposed project will be privately funded by the Developer. No public funds will be utilized for the acquisition and development of the proposed project. ESD is not providing any financing or grants, and the Developer is paying all ESD third party costs associated with the project. The Developer may seek certain public benefits available as-of-right, such as participation in the NYC Industrial and Commercial Abatement (ICAP) program.

**Comment 6:** Will construction of the project use local union labor and pay prevailing wages? (Bailey\_FL1\_033, Brett\_FL1\_025, Cedero\_FL1\_018, Cosciligano\_FL1\_019, Crowley\_FL1\_028, Gilzene\_FL1\_021, Gonlor\_FL1\_020, Jaquez\_FL1\_034, Joshua\_FL1\_023, Lisi\_FL1\_032, Murphy\_012, McKenzie\_FL1\_022, Russell\_FL1\_027, Simpson\_FL1\_030, Sroamovio\_FL1\_026, Stewart\_FL1\_031, Vandoten\_FL1\_029, Wadsworth\_FL1\_024)

**Response:** Construction of the proposed project will be open shop (i.e., a workplace where employees are not required to join a labor union) with the owner's construction manager requesting bids from any subcontractor having interest to supply labor and materials to the project. The criteria for selection will be ability to execute in a timely manner, quality of workmanship and price.

**Comment 7:** While CPC notes again its appreciation for the agreed continuous alignment for pedestrians traveling from the north of the site to the Parker building at the south end of the site, CPC suggests shifting this pathway to the west side of the north-

south project drive. This would bring pedestrians and cyclists closer to planned developments on the site, while also reducing the number of pedestrian/vehicular conflicts owing to the reduction of the number of crossings for those walking and cycling, while also placing these paths closer to the edge of planned public space and development. (Lago\_017)

**Response:** As shown in FEIS Figure 1-4, the proposed project would provide new sidewalks and landscaping on the east and west sides of the North-South Spine Road. The proposed bike path on the North-South Spine Road would be located on the east side of the road to minimize bicyclist conflicts with building drop off locations on the west side of the roadway.

**Comment 8:** CPC suggests locating temporary open space within the footprint of the planned “Parking Garage 3.” This would provide for active use in that space until such a time as when the development team would choose to construct that parking, if ever. This would also drastically improve the pedestrian condition to and from planned Metro North service, retail located at the Metro Center Atrium, and pedestrian passage over to the west side of the rail line. Additionally, regarding the eventual construction of the planned garage, CPC suggests including active ground-floor uses in the future parking garage, with active frontages concentrated along the north and east edges of the structure to contribute to the quality of the pedestrian condition along the south side of the east–west project drive, as well as the edge of the planned sculpture park. (Lago\_017)

**Response:** If the demand for parking spaces projected in the DEIS materializes, Parking Garage 3 would need to be built as part of Phase 1 of the proposed project. The garage would have a vegetative façade or decorative screening. If the actual parking demand at this location does not require a garage, a surface parking lot would be built here. These scenarios preclude extensive landscaping in this area. If parking demand is lower than projected in the DEIS and the need for a garage or surface lot does not materialize, the developer will consider landscaping this area. As shown in Figure 1-4, the proposed site plan provides a landscape buffer and bike path around proposed Parking Garage 3.

**Comment 9:** CPC recommends that for the entirety of the site, especially along the east–west project drive, diverse and active landscape design strategies are incorporated. These may include, but are not limited to, pedestrian paths, retaining ponds and bioswales, passive areas, active programming, varied seating, and diverse plant/tree types. All these strategies will ensure that these spaces contribute to an active and lively public realm. (Lago\_017)

**Response:** As described in DEIS Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the proposed project would include new walking/biking paths with benches and other landscaped passive recreation areas. These open spaces would be available throughout the year to the public. In addition, upon completion of the proposed project these

## **Bronx Psychiatric Center Land Use Improvement Project**

---

walking/biking paths would connect to the existing Hutchinson River Greenway open space, which is currently fenced-off from the project site. This new open space would encourage the public to enjoy a previously restricted area, make the site more accessible, and would complement the proposed uses of the site, including its increased worker population. In addition, as described in DEIS Chapter 9, “Natural Resources,” post-construction, landscaping and green infrastructure (including the protection of existing vegetation to remain within the project site and proposed planted roadway medians, plaza plantings, parking area plantings, perimeter buffer plantings, creation of vegetative in-fill park-like areas between existing and proposed buildings, and building foundation plantings including trees, shrubs and lawn areas) would improve the condition of vegetation and ecological communities within the study area. Green infrastructure measures including the use of bio-swales, raingardens, and bioretention basins within the project site would be implemented in Phase I of the project.

**Comment 10:** CPC recommends including active retail frontages at the southwest corner of the planned retail building (building M) to complement planned Metro North service and to provide an active frontage at this location. Access should not be provided only internally facing the project drive. (Lago\_017)

**Response:** The developer intends to provide an active retail frontage at the southwest corner of the planned retail building.

**Comment 11:** CPC recommends preserving the existing smoke stack located next to building L. Except for the Thompson and Parker buildings—both of which would be re-clad with new materials and would thus lose some of their existing character—the smoke stack is the only reminder of the area’s industrial past and as such could serve both as a symbol of that past and as an important visual wayfinding element for future visitors to the development. (Lago\_017)

**Response:** The developer intends to retain the smokestack. Additionally, the developer would remove the surface parking spaces on the western side of the Powerhouse Building and replace them with landscaping. This would improve the appearance of the entrance to the project site along Marconi Street.

**Comment 12:** CPC recommends introducing greater variety into the architecture. While CPC understands the desire for a unified look across both this site and other projects owned and operated by the development team, it urges the team to explore a greater variety of articulation strategies, material, and colors. (Lago\_017)

**Response:** Comment noted. As described in DEIS Chapter 8, “Urban Design,” the renovations to the Thompson Building and Parker Building’s façades, as well as the new buildings on the project site, are intended to be similar to and complement that of the existing Hutchinson Metro Center. As the project design has progressed, the project has incorporated greater height articulation into Buildings

3, 4, 5, and 7, which were initially contemplated to be the same height. In addition, to provide flexibility as the proposed project is developed, the GPP would allow approximately 25 feet in height (two stories) and associated floor area to be shifted among buildings within each phase. Any increases in height and floor area for one building would be accompanied by a commensurate decrease in height and floor area for another building in the same phase. If exercised, this flexibility would also provide for additional height articulation.

## CONSTRUCTION

**Comment 13:** During the phase of construction, there's going to be a period where we are going to be displaced. And we hope to use the facility at Lehman High School, which is going to require for paid permits for the duration of the construction, and we are hoping that that expense can be taken care of from the small corporation. (Ricks\_014)

**Response:** The Parkchester Little League will not be displaced during construction. Its existing field on the northeastern portion of the project site will remain in operation for use by the League (subject to temporary interruptions required to ensure public safety and seasonal closures) until the new little league baseball field is constructed. As described in the DEIS, two new state-of-the-art fields will be constructed. One new baseball diamond would be regulation size for intermediate and adult leagues, and one would be Little League regulation size. Both fields will feature turf fields, bleachers, stadium lighting and support facilities.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

### *GENERAL SUPPORT*

**Comment 14:** The commenters support the proposed project because it will facilitate economic development and job growth in the Bronx. (Cintron\_002, Cruz\_004, Hall\_003, Sorin\_005)

**Response:** Comment noted.

**Comment 15:** As a tenant, partner, and neighbor of the Hutchinson Metro Center, we support the plan submitted by Simone Development Companies to redevelop the Bronx Psychiatric Center and their commitment to the Morris Park community. (Chandler\_011)

**Response:** Comment noted.

\*