

A. INTRODUCTION

The development and evaluation of project alternatives is central to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Project alternatives for the Fulton Corridor Revitalization Program have been identified by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) and the City of New York as part of early planning studies. This chapter analyzes alternatives that were considered in developing the Fulton Corridor Revitalization Program. The No Action Alternative is examined in each of the technical analyses in this document as the “future without the Proposed Project.”

B. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, the Fulton Corridor Revitalization Program would not occur. Streetscape and façade improvements would not be undertaken. The parking lot at Burling Slip would remain, and a new park would not be created. DeLury Square would not be mapped as parkland and would not be improved, and enhancements would not be made to the Pearl Street Playground or Titanic Memorial Park.

LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

The No Action Alternative would not result in the positive land use changes associated with the Proposed Project. Burling Slip would remain a parking lot, and no improvements would be made to DeLury Square, Titanic Memorial Park, or the Pearl Street Playground. There would be no change to the city map for the mapping of DeLury Square as a public park as would occur under the Proposed Project.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts due to direct or indirect changes in residential and economic activity. Similar to the Proposed Project, the No Action Alternative would not result in the direct displacement of any residents. The No Action Alternative would not result in the displacement of the parking facility on the project site. However, the parking facility does not play a critical role in the community and does not have substantial economic value to the City or regional area. Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in the indirect displacement of residents or businesses.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Like the Proposed Project, the No Action Alternative would not have any significant adverse impacts on community facilities.

OPEN SPACE

In comparison with the Proposed Project, the No Action Alternative would not result in the improvements to Titanic Memorial Park or the Pearl Street Playground, nor would it result in the creation of the playground at Burling Slip and new public parkland at DeLury Square. Area residents, workers, and visitors would not benefit from these important improvements to open space. Additionally, with the expected increase in Lower Manhattan’s residential population, the open space ratio would decline under this alternative.

SHADOWS

Like the Proposed Project, the No Action Alternative would not produce any incremental increase in shadows, as no new structures would be built.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Without the Proposed Project, it is assumed that none of the excavation or construction associated with the Proposed Project would occur, and archaeological resources within the project site, other than any in the bed of Fulton Street (which is being reconstructed as part of an independent project), will remain undisturbed. Therefore, there would not be a potential for the disturbance of archaeological resources. The improvements to the context of historic resources, however, would not occur, as there would be no façade improvement program, no streetscape enhancements, no improvements at DeLury Square, the Pearl Street Playground, and Titanic Memorial Park, and no construction of a new playground at Burling Slip.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no improvements to urban design within the project site, as the storefront and façade improvement program would not be implemented. Design enhancements to the Fulton Street corridor would not be made, and parking lots and existing open space would not be improved.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

This alternative would not result in improvements to neighborhood character. The existing Fulton Street corridor would remain unimproved, and vehicle parking would continue to occupy Burling Slip. There would be no new open space created, and existing open space would not be improved. Like the Proposed Project, there would be no increase in traffic and noise that could affect neighborhood character. Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Project would create a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts on natural resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Under this alternative, there would be no demolition or disturbance of existing structures, and no excavation, disturbance, or removal of existing fill and soil, and therefore there would not be an increased potential for exposure to hazardous materials. However, because contaminated

materials on the project site would not be removed or isolated under the No Action Alternative, there would be no reduction in the long-term risks associated with contaminated materials.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Unlike the Proposed Project, this alternative would not be consistent with all applicable Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP) policies, particularly those encouraging public access to the waterfront.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE AND ENERGY

Like the Proposed Project, this alternative would not have significant adverse impacts on infrastructure, solid waste and sanitation services, or energy.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Future traffic conditions without the Proposed Project would be worse than those in the future with the Proposed Project. Without the Proposed Project, there would be unacceptable LOS F conditions, including an overall LOS F at Fulton Street and Gold Street in the AM and midday peak hours, LOS F on the westbound approach of Fulton Street at Gold Street in the AM, midday, and PM peak hours, LOS F on the southbound approach of Little Pearl at Fulton Street in the midday peak hour, and LOS F on the northbound approach of Water Street at Fulton Street in the PM peak hour. On these movements and at these intersections, conditions would improve to LOS C, D, or E with the Proposed Project.

Also, pedestrian safety benefits would not be realized without the Proposed Project. Without the Proposed Project, there would be more vehicle-pedestrian conflicts in the study area. Pedestrians entering John DeLury Sr. Plaza from the west side of Gold Street and the north side of Fulton Street currently cross an unsignalized, channelized right turn used by vehicles from westbound Fulton Street to northbound Gold Street. The improvements of the Proposed Project would provide a safe, signalized crossing to the northeast corner of Gold Street and Fulton Street at acceptable levels of service. Also, the unsignalized crosswalk on the north side of Fulton Street at Little Pearl Street would be eliminated, providing a continuous sidewalk from Gold Street to Water Street/Pearl Street on the north side of Fulton Street. At Fulton Street and Water Street/Pearl Street, pedestrian-vehicle conflicts would be eliminated at all crosswalks under Build conditions by implementing a pedestrian-only phase. This is compared with an unsafe existing condition on the west crosswalk of Fulton Street and Water Street/Pearl Street, in which northbound left turns and southbound right turns are permitted to turn into the west crosswalk during the “Walk” signal.

Generally, when comparing the No Action Alternative with the Proposed Project for vehicles and pedestrians, levels of service would be about the same or better, and no significant adverse traffic impacts would occur.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts on transit facilities or pedestrian circulation. However, the No Action Alternative would not require relocation of a bus stop on Pearl Street, and it would not reconfigure crosswalks on Pearl Street or Gold Street. However, the No Action Alternative would also not improve

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pedestrian access to the Pearl Street Playground by removing vehicular traffic from Little Pearl Street.

AIR QUALITY

The No Action Alternative would not alter traffic conditions, nor would it involve the introduction of buildings with heating systems that would produce emissions. Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts on air quality.

NOISE

Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Project would generate substantial sources of noise, but noise levels on the project site would remain high, as they are under existing conditions.

CONSTRUCTION

Under this alternative, there would be no improvements to the Fulton Street corridor and no new open space created. The temporary disruptions that would result from construction associated with the Proposed Project would not occur. However, the construction of other projects, including the street reconstruction within the project site, would occur. Likewise, the economic benefits associated with construction related to the Proposed Project, resulting from expenditures on labor, materials, and services, would not occur.

C. NO STREET CHANGES ALTERNATIVES

The proposed street changes at the intersection of Pearl Street and Fulton Street, and Gold Street and Fulton Street would be undertaken by the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) as part of their efforts to reconstruct the streets of Lower Manhattan. These changes would be funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). However, in the event that these street and intersection improvements would not be implemented as currently planned, the Fulton Corridor Revitalization Program would be undertaken with minor design modifications. The following sections describe the alternative with no street changes and compare its potential effects with those of the Proposed Project.

Like the Proposed Project, the No Street Changes Alternative would include the proposed façade and sidewalk enhancements along Fulton Street and Nassau Street, the creation of a new playground at Burling Slip, and enhancements to Titanic Memorial Park. However, under the No Street Changes Alternative, Little Pearl Street would remain open to vehicular traffic and a new pedestrian street would not be created west of the Pearl Street Playground. However, the playground itself would be improved with new equipment and plantings. At DeLury Square, the channelized right-turn lane from Fulton Street to Gold Street would remain. DeLury Square itself would be mapped as parkland and would be improved as a seating area for passive recreation use.

LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

The No Street Changes Alternative would result in most of the positive land use changes that would occur with the Proposed Project, though a smaller amount of open space would be

created. While a new playground would be created at Burling Slip and Titanic Memorial Park would be enhanced as with the Proposed Project, the amount of open space at DeLury Square would not be increased, and Little Pearl Street adjacent to the Pearl Street Playground would not be pedestrianized.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Neither the No Street Changes Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts due to direct or indirect changes in residential and economic activity.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Like the Proposed Project, this alternative would not have any significant adverse impacts on community facilities.

OPEN SPACE

The open space benefits associated with the No Street Changes Alternative would be reduced compared with the Proposed Project. The open space at DeLury Square would continue to be divided by a traffic lane turning onto Gold Street. While design improvements would be made, the open space would be smaller, less cohesive and visually appealing, and less safe for pedestrians as traffic would continue to pass through it.

SHADOWS

Similar to the Proposed Project, this alternative would not result in any significant increase in shadows.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The No Street Changes Alternative would result in a reduced amount of ground disturbance compared with the Proposed Project, as construction at DeLury Square and adjacent to the Pearl Street Playground would be more limited. Like the Proposed Project, the improvements at DeLury Square associated with this alternative would create a more attractive setting for the nearby historic resources, including the Royal Insurance Company Building (State and National Registers of Historic Places [S/NR]-eligible, New York City Landmark [NYCL]-eligible). However, the improvement to the setting of this resource would be reduced because the park at this location would be smaller, and a traffic lane would continue to run through this open space.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

URBAN DESIGN

Similar to the Proposed Project, this alternative would be expected to positively affect the urban design of the project site and the study area. Streetscape, storefront, and façade improvements would improve the urban design character of the streets, most specifically those areas traversed and viewed by the pedestrian, including sidewalks and storefronts. The streetscape improvements, including new sidewalks and curbs, plantings, and removal of extraneous signage and other sidewalk obstructions, would create a more uniform and more attractive streetscape. The storefront improvements, where undertaken, would allow for the preservation and/or

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revealing of historic architectural elements of the buildings and the visual integration of the storefront with the upper portion of the building. This goal is in keeping with the urban design of the Fulton/Nassau Historic District and other designated historic resources in the area (see Chapter 2, Section B: “Historic Resources,” for further details). The modifications would result in more appropriate linkages between the World Trade Center, the Fulton Street Transit Center, and the South Street Seaport.

The improvements to existing open spaces and the creation of the new open space at Burling Slip, to include greenery and other natural features such as water elements and boulders, would soften the dense urban character of the area, providing greenery and resting areas where there are presently few. These open spaces would be located on existing blocks, since the closure of streets (the turning lane between Fulton and Gold Streets, and Little Pearl Street between Fulton and Pearl Streets), would not occur. Under this alternative, the continued use of the turning lane between Fulton and Gold Streets would keep John DeLury Sr. Plaza and the open space in front of the Southbridge Towers complex as two separate areas. Both areas would be re-landscaped, but John DeLury Sr. Plaza would continue to exist as a traffic island surrounded by three lanes of traffic. Retaining Little Pearl Street as a vehicular street would eliminate the potential for a pedestrian street in this location and the linking of the Pearl Street Playground to the block to the west. Retaining both this street and the turning lane between Fulton and Gold Street would essentially retain the existing pedestrian conditions in the area. The elimination of the street closures from the Proposed Project would prohibit the creation of more accessible, usable, safe and attractive open spaces as proposed by the Proposed Project, namely the creation of DeLury Square and the expansion of the Pearl Street Playground.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Similar to the Proposed Project, it is expected that the creation of the new open space at Burling Slip would constitute a new visual resources in the study area. In addition, improvements would be made to existing open spaces, with new landscaping positively affecting views east on Fulton and John Streets to the East River waterfront. This alternative would not result in the creation of two open spaces, John DeLury Square and the pedestrianized Little Pearl Street, and as such, would result in less new visual resources in the area. The streetscape improvements and façade improvements (where implemented) would positively affect historic buildings in the area that are visual resources by removing superfluous and chaotic signage. In addition, a cohesive streetscape in the area would improve view corridors in general, in that the urban design characteristics of the project site and study area, including its narrow and winding streets and unique views can best be appreciated by the viewer without interruptions by sidewalk obstructions and jarring ground floor treatments.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Like the Proposed Project, the No Street Changes Alternative would have a positive effect on neighborhood character. The improvement to neighborhood character under this alternative would be reduced, however, because the elimination of the street closures would lessen the safety, attractiveness, and accessibility of the improved open spaces at DeLury Square and the Pearl Street Playground.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

Neither the No Street Changes Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts on natural resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Both the No Street Changes Alternative and the Proposed Project could disturb potential containments identified within soils beneath all four parcels where open space would be created or enhanced (the Pearl Street Playground, Titanic Memorial Park, DeLury Square, and Burling Slip). Like the Proposed Project, construction of the No Street Changes Alternative would be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP). With the implementation of these measures, no significant adverse impacts related to hazardous materials would result from construction activities on the project site.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Similar to the Proposed Project, this alternative would be consistent with all applicable WRP policies, particularly those encouraging public access to the waterfront.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE AND ENERGY

Like the Proposed Project, this alternative would not have significant adverse impacts on infrastructure, solid waste and sanitation services, or energy.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

With respect to traffic and parking, conditions under this alternative would be the same as those described above under the No Action Alternative, and would be worse than those in the future with the Proposed Project. Without the street changes, there would be unacceptable LOS F conditions, including an overall LOS F at Fulton Street and Gold Street in the AM and midday peak hours, LOS F on the westbound approach of Fulton Street at Gold Street in the AM, midday, and PM peak hours, LOS F on the southbound approach of Little Pearl at Fulton Street in the midday peak hour, and LOS F on the northbound approach of Water Street at Fulton Street in the PM peak hour. In contrast, with the Proposed Project's street closures, conditions would improve to LOS C, D, or E on these movements and at these intersections.

Similarly, as described above under the No Action Alternative, the pedestrian safety benefits of the Proposed Project would not be realized without the street closures.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

Neither the No Street Changes Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts on transit facilities or pedestrian circulation. However, the No Street Changes Alternative would not require relocation of a bus stop on Pearl Street, and it would not reconfigure crosswalks on Pearl Street or Gold Street. However, the No Street Changes Alternative would also not improve pedestrian access to the Pearl Street Playground by removing vehicular traffic from Little Pearl Street.

AIR QUALITY

This alternative would not alter traffic conditions, nor would it involve the introduction of buildings with heating systems that would produce emissions. Neither the No Street Changes Alternative nor the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse impacts on air quality.

NOISE

Neither the No Street Changes Alternative nor the Proposed Project would generate substantial sources of noise, but noise levels on the project site would remain high, as they are under existing conditions.

CONSTRUCTION

Like the Proposed Project, the No Street Changes Alternative would result in demolition and construction activities. Like all construction projects, work at the project site would result in temporary disruptions to the surrounding community. These activities would occur over approximately 24 months. These effects would be temporary and are not considered significant.*