

A. INTRODUCTION

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has requested funds from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) for a project involving the reconstruction of the Catherine, Rutgers, and Montgomery Slips in Lower Manhattan (Proposed Action). The work at Catherine Slip would take place between Madison and South Streets; the work at Rutgers Slip would take place between Cherry and South Streets; and the work at Montgomery Slip would take place between Madison and South Streets (see Figure 1-1).

B. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action aims to provide pedestrian connections to the waterfront in order to enhance the quality of life in Lower Manhattan and contribute toward the restoration, stabilization, and enhancement of the community. Not only would the Proposed Action provide for recreational space and amenities, it would improve the overall visual character of the Slips, and would serve as a gateway to the East River Esplanade from interior blocks. The specific goals of the Proposed Action are to provide:

- Open spaces that provide passive recreation;
- A strengthened connection and universal access to the East River waterfront for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Outdoor spaces that embrace the diversity of the city and unique characters of the adjacent neighborhoods;
- Uniquely lit spaces with opportunities for integration in graphics, signage, and interpretive materials;
- An expression of a broad landscape narrative reflecting natural history with upland planted areas of trees and grass gardens;
- A reference to cultural, industrial, and maritime heritage with the thoughtful use of appropriate materials.

The reconstruction of the Slips would begin in late 2009 and be completed by 2010 or 2011. The City of New York would coordinate construction activities with the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center. Furthermore, the City would comply with the requirements of New York City Local Law 77, the New York City Noise Control Code, and the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's Environmental Performance Commitments.

LMDC would provide a portion of the funding for the proposed reconstruction of the three slips. Established in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, LMDC coordinates the rebuilding and revitalization efforts in Lower Manhattan. LMDC is a subsidiary of the New York State Urban Development Corporation, doing business as Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), a political subdivision and public benefit corporation of the State of New York.

The proposed design for each of the three slips is described below.

CATHERINE SLIP

The improvements at Catherine Slip include the widening of the existing planted median between Water and Cherry Streets and merging it into Tanahey Park for one, continuous open space, thus closing off the northbound lane of traffic along the slip. The southbound lane would remain unaffected. This expanded median between Water and Cherry Streets would include a seating area with benches, additional trees and other plantings, a lawn mound, and asphalt brick pavers marking the entrance to Tanahey Park (see Figure 1-2). A small patch of ground cover would also be installed on the east side of the slip, just north of Cherry Street and the crosswalk at Cherry Street would be restriped with reflective striping (see Figure 1-3).

The Proposed Action would also include improvements to the existing median between South and Water Streets. There would be no changes to traffic patterns, however, the median would be planted with new trees and other plantings, and asphalt brick pavers, maritime-themed bollards, and a seating area with benches would be installed.

North of Cherry Street, the existing parallel parking on the eastern side of Catherine Street would be restriped and converted to diagonal parking (see Figure 1-4).

RUTGERS SLIP

The improvements at Rutgers Slip would include the addition of a neck-down on the east and west sides of the slip to formalize the parking lane, the planting of additional street trees, and the reconstruction of the curb on both sides of the slip. A pedestrian passageway would be constructed on the east side of the street to facilitate pedestrian traffic as there is currently no sidewalk on this side. Crosswalks running east/west across Rutgers Slip would also be striped at Cherry and South Streets (see Figure 1-5).

MONTGOMERY SLIP

The improvements at Montgomery Slip would include the reconstruction of the existing striped median between South and Cherry Streets as a raised, planted median bisecting north and southbound traffic. A neck-down would be added to the east and west sides of the slip to formalize the parking lane, and additional street trees would be planted. Additional street trees would also be planted along both sides of the slip north of Cherry Street to Madison Street (see Figure 1-6).

C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

LMDC is responsible, pursuant to federal statute 42 U.S.C. § 5304(g) as the recipient of United States Department of Housing and Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant program funds, for conducting environmental reviews of projects receiving HUD funds in accordance with 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 58, as well as other laws and regulations. LMDC is serving as lead agency for the environmental review of the Proposed Action under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) and its implementing regulations are referenced as appropriate. Because the Proposed Action is located in New York City and will involve actions by the City, the *CEQR Technical Manual* (Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination, 2001) generally serves as a guide with

respect to methodologies and impact criteria for evaluating the Proposed Action. In addition to NEPA and SEQRA, the review of the Proposed Action has been coordinated with review pursuant to other applicable laws and regulations, such as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). The City is serving as a cooperating/involved agency through relevant departments including DPR, NYCDOT, and New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC). *