Proposed H.S. 472, Queens

~~Draft~~Final Scope of Work
for a Targeted Environmental Impact Statement

A. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law, the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) intends to prepare a targeted Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)[1] for a new, approximately 3,079-seat high school (H.S.) facility, currently known as H.S. 472, at 51-30 Northern Boulevard in the Woodside section of Queens. This ~~Draft~~Final Scope of Work outlines the technical areas to be analyzed in the preparation of a targeted EIS for the proposed H.S. 472.

The proposed new school would serve students in grade levels nine through twelve within the Borough of Queens; the new high school building would house three different high school programs, including a District 75 (special education) program. In order to develop the new school facility, the SCA would acquire privately-owned Lots 41, 47, 48, and 54 on Block 1192 for the proposed school site. Funding for site acquisition, design, and construction of the proposed school facility would be provided by the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) Five-Year Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2020-2024. It is expected that the new high school would open in September 2023.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Purpose and Need

The new public school facility would serve high school students and special education students in Queens. Construction of the new high school facility has been proposed to provide additional public school capacity in Queens.

Under DOE's Five-Year Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2020-2024, capital funding is allocated for the creation of a total of 8,164 additional seats at the high school level in Queens to address existing overcrowding and forecast changes in student enrollments, and also to support DOE's policies regarding class-size reduction and transition from the use of transportable classroom units (TCUs).

[1] Typographical changes have been made for this Final Scope of Work, including consistent references to "targeted EIS," "Draft Scope of Work," "Final Scope of Work," "Lead Agency,"and SEQR "EAF"

Project Site

The project site is situated amid a mix of commercial and light industrial/warehouse buildings in the Woodside section of Queens, within Community District 2 (see Figure 1, "Project Location").

The project site is an irregularly-shaped parcel bounded by Northern Boulevard to the north, elevated railroad tracks (Amtrak) to the south, 54th Street to the east, and a one-story commercial development (Tower Square Shopping Center) to the west (see Figure 2, "Tax Map"). The project site is approximately 3.15 acres (137,000 square feet) in area and is located within an M1-1 Light Manufacturing zoning district, in which schools are not permitted as-of-right.

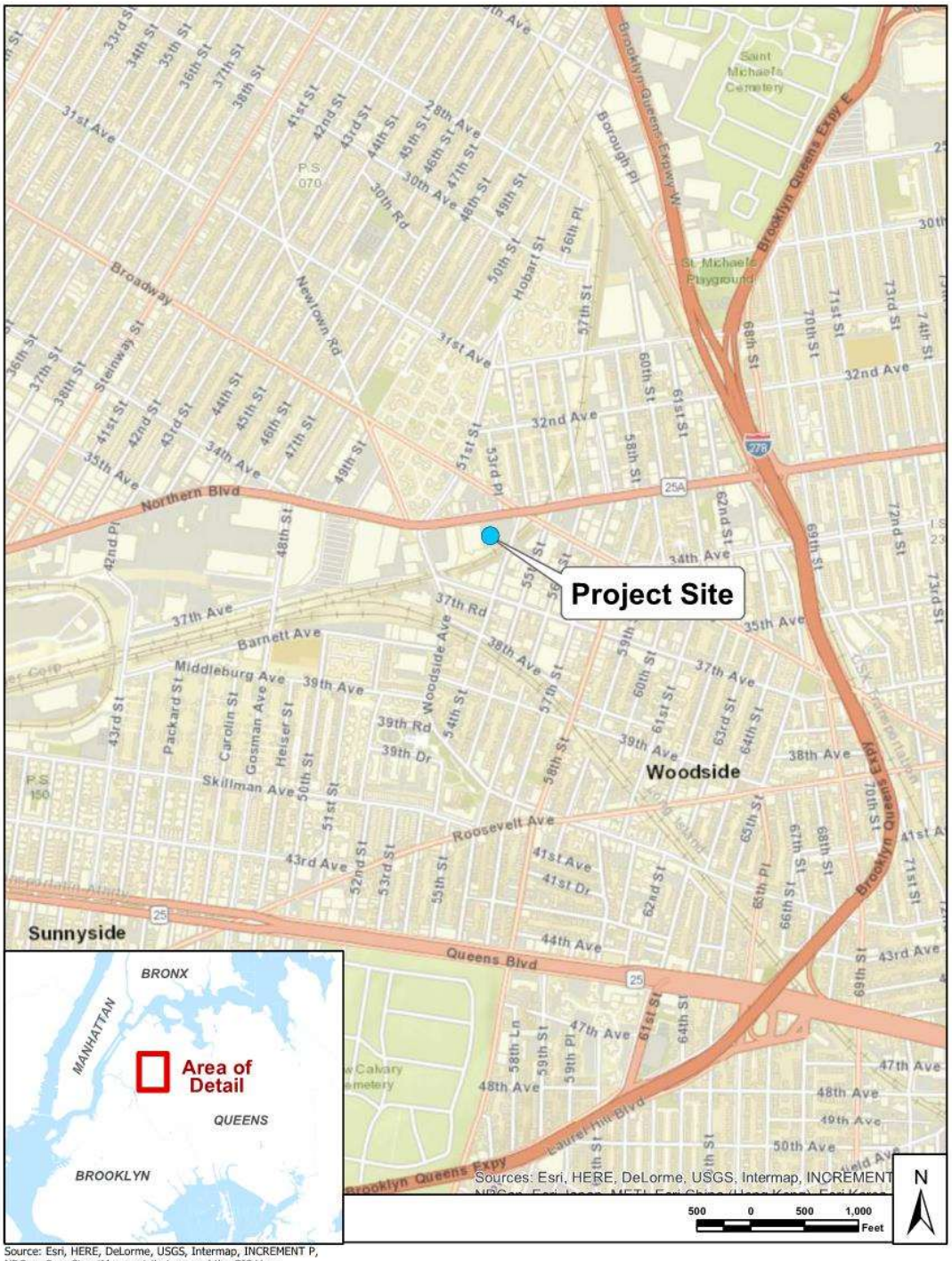
The project site currently contains a vacant, approximately 45,600 square foot (sf), one-story commercial building on the western portion of the project site and a large paved parking lot on the eastern portion of the project site. The on-site building, which was formerly occupied by a sporting goods store (Sports Authority), is currently vacant.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would entail the acquisition of a privately-owned property (Block 1192, Lots 41, 47, 48, and 54) containing a vacant commercial building. As such, the proposed action would entail the demolition of the existing structure on site, and construction of a new, approximately 3,079-seat high school facility in its place.

As contemplated, the proposed new school facility would be a six-story structure and would contain approximately 304,617 sf. The proposed school would be built on the western portion of the project site with frontage on Northern Boulevard. The proposed school's main entrance would be located on Northern Boulevard. An additional entrance would be provided on the western side of the school building for District 75 students arriving and departing the site by school bus. The new public school facility would provide approximately 3,079 seats for students in grade levels nine through twelve, and would include the following: classrooms for grade levels nine through twelve, special education classrooms, two lobby areas, auditorium, gymnasium, library, music rooms, art classrooms, science rooms, exercise rooms, two administration suites, two guidance suites, two staff lunch rooms, and storage. The proposed action would also provide an approximately 26,911 sf outdoor play area on the northeastern portion of the project site.

It is estimated that approximately 308 teachers and staff would be employed at the new school facility. The new high school would generally operate during typical school hours, from September to June.

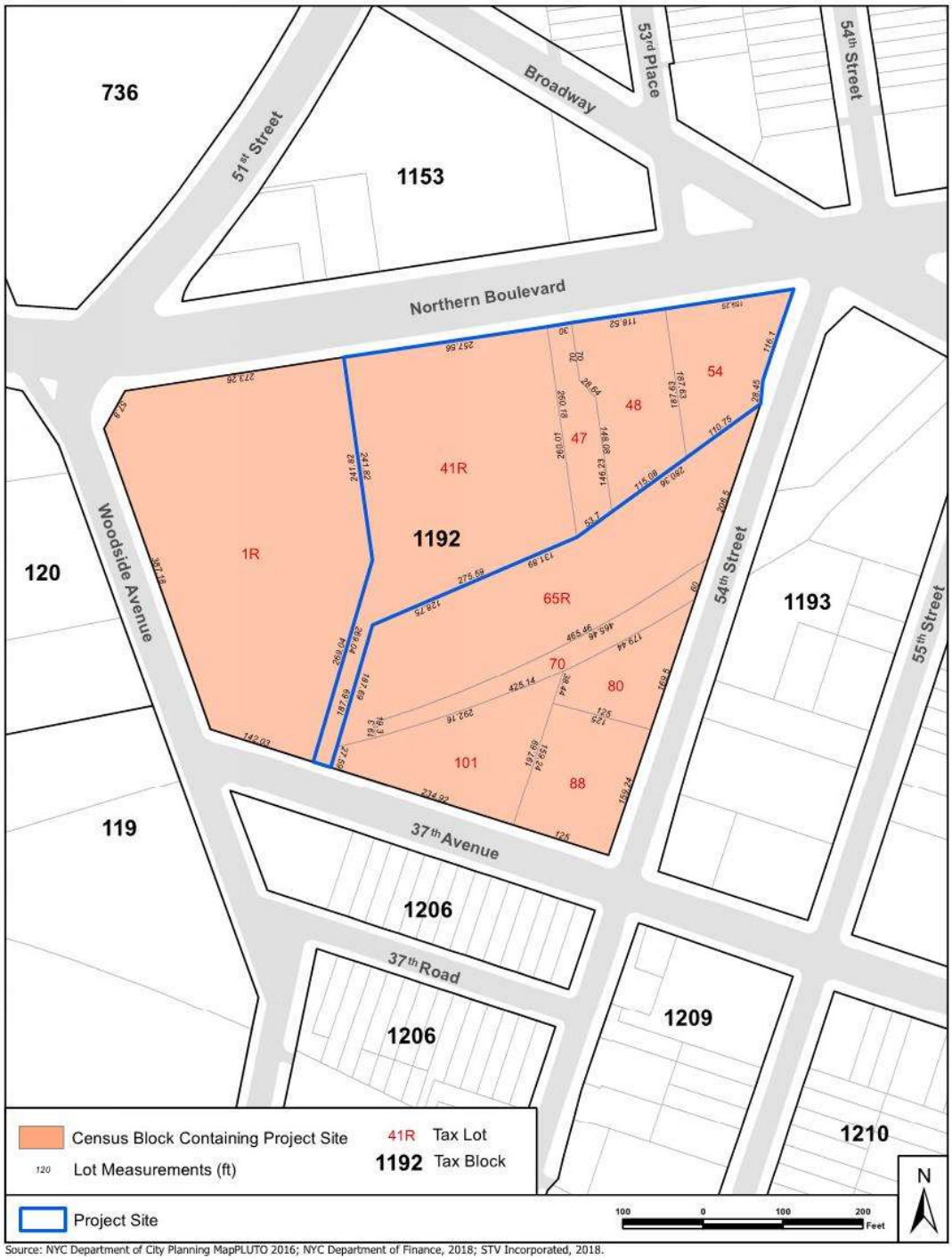


Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, STV Incorprated, 2019.

Figure 1

Proposed HS 472
51-30 Northern Boulevard, Queens

PROJECT LOCATION



Source: NYC Department of City Planning MapPLUTO 2016; NYC Department of Finance, 2018; STV Incorporated, 2018.

Figure 2

Proposed HS 472
51-30 Northern Boulevard, Queens

TAX MAP

C. PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE TARGETED EIS

The proposed action is subject to environmental review pursuant to SEQR procedures. An EAF (Environmental Assessment Form) ~~(including a~~and Supplemental Environmental Studies report~~)~~ ~~was~~were completed on March 18, 2019. A Positive Declaration, issued on March 18, 2019, established that the proposed action (classified as an Unlisted Action) may have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on the environment for selected SEQR technical areas, which may not be mitigable, thus warranting the preparation of a targeted EIS. The SCA, as Lead Agency, has directed that a targeted EIS be prepared.

The scoping process is intended to focus the targeted EIS on those issues that are most pertinent to the proposed project. ~~This~~The draft scoping document, which was issued on March 18, 2019, set~~s~~ forth the analyses and methodologies that will be utilized to prepare the targeted EIS. During the period for scoping, anyone interested in reviewing the Draft Scope of Work ~~may do so and~~ were able to provide their comments to the Lead Agency. Written comments on the Draft Scope of Work ~~will be~~were accepted by the Lead Agency until the close of business on May 9, 2019. Written comments received ~~will be~~would be considered and incorporated as appropriate into ~~a~~this Final Scope of Work; however, the Lead Agency did not receive any comments during the public comment period. The Lead Agency ~~will oversee~~oversaw preparation of ~~a~~this Final Scope of Work, which remains unchanged from the Draft Scope of Work~~incorporates relevant comments made on the Draft Scope and revises the extent or methodologies of the studies, as appropriate, in response to comments made during scoping~~. The Draft EIS (DEIS) will be prepared in accordance with ~~the~~this Final Scope of Work for a targeted EIS.

The targeted EIS will contain:

- A description of the proposed project and its environmental setting;
- A statement of the environmental impacts of the proposed project, including its short- and long- term effects, and typical associated environmental effects;
- An identification of any significant adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is completed;
- A discussion of alternatives to the proposed project;
- An identification of any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved if the proposed project is built; and
- A description of mitigation measures proposed to avoid or minimize any significant adverse environmental impacts.

The targeted EIS analyses for the proposed project will be performed for 2023 (the "build year"), when the project is expected to be completed and fully operational. For this build year, the targeted EIS will assess the potential for the proposed project to result in any significant adverse impacts by comparing conditions anticipated with the proposed project ("Potential Effects of the Proposed Project") to conditions expected without the proposed project ("The Future Without the Project").

The targeted EIS will assume that the physical condition of the project site without the proposed project would resemble existing conditions. In addition, the targeted EIS also will account for other "background projects" and/or changes expected to occur independent of the proposed project but in the vicinity of the project site, as appropriate.

This document provides a description of the proposed project and includes task categories for all technical areas to be analyzed in the targeted EIS. The EAF (and Supplemental Environmental Studies report) prepared for the proposed action identified several technical areas in which the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts and, therefore, do not require further analysis in the EIS. Therefore, the EIS will be "targeted" in that it will have a detailed focus on those technical areas that could not be screened out at the EAF level. As per the EAF, the technical areas that do not warrant analysis in the targeted EIS are: Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy; Socioeconomic Conditions; Community Facilities and Services; Open Space; Shadows; Historic and Cultural Resources; Urban Design and Visual Resources; Natural Resources; Hazardous Materials; Water and Sewer Infrastructure; Solid Waste and Sanitation Services; Energy; Air Quality; Noise; Public Health; Neighborhood Character; and Construction-Related Impacts.

The proposed scope of work to be analyzed in the targeted EIS follows. As the project site is located in New York City, the SCA, although a State-enabled authority, relies upon the New York *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* for guidance regarding technical methodology.

TASK 1: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The first chapter of the targeted EIS will introduce the reader to the proposed project and set the context in which to assess impacts. The chapter will contain project identification; the background and history of the project and project site; a statement of purpose and need for the proposed project; a detailed description of the proposed action necessary to achieve the project; a description of the development program, project siting, and design; and a discussion of approvals required, procedures to be followed, and the role of the targeted EIS in the process. This chapter is the key to understanding the proposed project and its impacts, and gives the public and decision-makers a base from which to evaluate the project against the future without the proposed project.

TASK 2: TRANSPORTATION

The transportation analyses conducted for the proposed action will include traffic, transit (subway and bus), and pedestrian analyses to determine the potential impacts associated with the proposed action. In addition, vehicular crash analyses will also be presented. Parking demand generated by the proposed action will also be considered in a parking analysis.

Traffic Analysis

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, significant adverse impacts would be unlikely (and a detailed traffic assessment typically not warranted) with a project that would generate fewer than

50 new vehicle trips in any peak hour. However, the proposed project would be expected to exceed the 50-trip *CEQR Technical Manual* analysis threshold, compared to No Action conditions. Therefore, detailed traffic analyses are proposed. These traffic analysis tasks will be undertaken as described following:

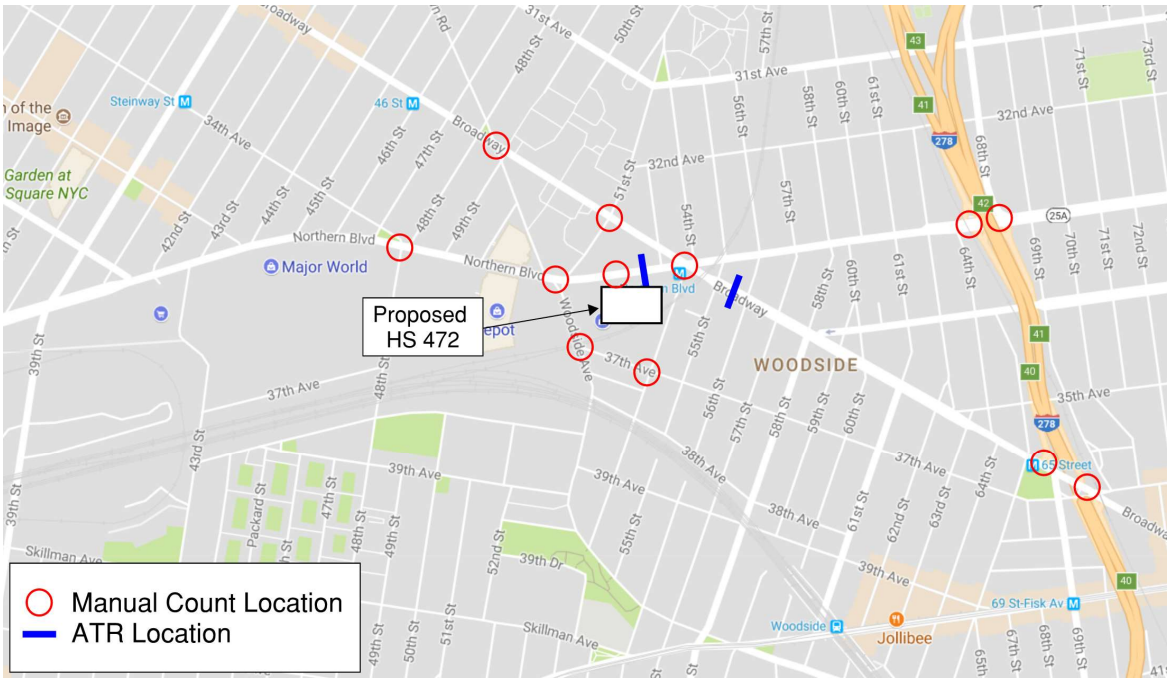
- **Existing conditions.** To develop the understanding of existing conditions, data collection will be undertaken as follows:

    - Conduct traffic counts at traffic analysis locations via a mix of automatic traffic recorder (ATR) machine counts and manual intersection turning movement counts (TMC). ATRs will provide continuous 24-hour traffic volumes for a minimum of nine days (including two weekends) along the principal corridors serving the project site. ATRs will be placed on east and westbound Northern Boulevard and north and southbound Broadway. Manual vehicle classification turning movement counts will be conducted during the weekday AM and PM peak periods. Where applicable, available information from recent studies in the vicinity of the study area will be compiled.

  Time periods. Data will be collected for Weekday AM (7-9 AM) and PM (2-4 PM) peak hours.

  Study intersections. The twelve traffic study intersections identified include as follows and as illustrated on the following Figure 3, "Proposed Traffic Study Area":

    - Northern Boulevard at 48th Street
    - Northern Boulevard at Woodside Avenue/51st Street
    - Northern Boulevard at Sports Authority driveway
    - Northern Boulevard at Broadway/54th Street
    - Broadway at Newtown Road
    - Broadway at 51st Street
    - 37th Avenue at Woodside Avenue
    - 37th Avenue at 54th Street
    - Northern Boulevard and I-278 northbound ramps
    - Northern Boulevard and I-278 southbound ramps
    - Broadway and I-278 northbound ramps
    - Broadway and I-278 southbound ramps



Source: STV Incorporated & GoogleMaps **Figure 3: Proposed Traffic Study Area**

The analysis will continue with the following:

- Inventory physical and operational data as needed for capacity analysis purposes at each of the analyzed intersections. The data collected will be consistent with current *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines and will include such information as street widths, number of traffic lanes and lane widths, pavement markings, turn prohibitions, parking regulations, and signal phasing and timing data. Official signal timings will be obtained from NYCDOT.

- Using *2000 Highway Capacity Manual* methodologies, determine existing traffic conditions at each analyzed intersection including capacities, volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratios, average control delays per vehicle and levels of service (LOS) for each lane group and intersection approach, and for the intersection overall.

- **No Action conditions.** For the proposed project, planned projects that would be developed in the area in the future without the proposed project (the No Action condition) will be identified, and the associated future No Action travel demand generated by these projects will be determined. The future traffic volumes from No Action projects will be estimated using published environmental assessments or forecasted based on current *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines, U.S. Census data, and/or data from other secondary sources. An annual growth rate (typically, such factors are in the 0.5 to 1.0 percent range) will be applied to existing traffic volumes to account for general background growth, per *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines. Mitigation measures planned for No Action projects will also be reflected in the future No Action traffic network as will any relevant initiatives planned by NYCDOT and other agencies. No Action traffic volumes will be determined, v/c ratios, and

levels of service will be calculated, and congested intersections will be identified.

- **With Action conditions.** The following steps will be taken for analyses of the proposed project:

    - Based on available sources, including U.S. Census data, standard references, and other approved EIS documents, forecast the travel demand generated by the proposed project's land uses, and the modes of transportation expected to be used for these trips.

    - Determine the volume of vehicle traffic expected to be generated by the proposed project, assign that volume of traffic in each analysis period to the approach and departure routes likely to be used, and prepare balanced traffic volume networks for the future condition with the proposed project (the With Action condition) for each analysis period.

    - Determination of potential traffic impacts will again follow a two-step process similar to that for the No Action conditions. Determine the resulting v/c ratios, delays and LOS for the future With Action condition, and identify significant traffic impacts in accordance with current *CEQR Technical Manual* criteria.

    - Identify and evaluate potential traffic mitigation measures, as appropriate, for all significantly impacted locations in the study area in consultation with the Lead Agency and NYCDOT. Potential traffic mitigation could include both operational and physical measures such as changes to lane striping, curbside parking regulations and traffic signal timing and phasing, roadway widening, and new traffic signal installations.

Subway Station Analysis

As the proposed project potentially would add 50 or more trips per direction through the Northern Boulevard subway station, an analysis of the vertical circulation elements (VCEs) at the subway station is warranted and will be undertaken according to the following steps:

- **Existing conditions.** A detailed level of service analysis will be performed for the AM and PM peak hours for all subway station VCEs that exceed *CEQR Technical Manual* thresholds for analysis. Existing peak hour subway station VCE volumes (entries and exits) will be documented. The study will focus on the southbound and northbound platforms of the subway station that serves the M and R subway routes, just east of the site.

- **No Action and With Action conditions.** Future No Action and With Action conditions will be determined, in a manner similar to that described above for traffic analyses. The effects of new project-generated peak hour trips will be determined, and subway station VCE mitigation, if warranted, will be identified in consultation with New York City Transit ("NYCT").

Subway Analysis

As the proposed project potentially would add 50 or more trips per direction through the peak load point on one or more subway routes, a subway analysis is warranted and will be undertaken according to the following steps:

- **Existing conditions.** A detailed subway-line haul analysis will be performed for the AM and PM peak hours for all subway routes that exceed *CEQR Technical Manual* thresholds for analysis. Existing peak hour subway service levels and maximum load-point ridership will be documented. The study will focus on the M and R subway routes that are served by the Northern Boulevard subway station, just east of the site.

- **No Action and With Action conditions.** Future No Action and With Action conditions will be determined, in a manner similar to that described above for traffic analyses. The effects of new project-generated peak hour trips will be determined, and subway transit mitigation, if warranted, will be identified in consultation with NYCT.

Bus Analysis

As the proposed project potentially would add 50 or more trips per direction through the peak load point on one or more bus routes, a bus analysis is warranted and will be undertaken according to the following steps:

- **Existing conditions.** A detailed bus-line haul analysis will be performed for the AM and PM peak hours for all bus routes that exceed *CEQR Technical Manual* thresholds for analysis. Existing peak hour bus service levels and maximum load-point ridership will be documented, including counts of ONs, OFFs, and bus occupancies. The study will focus on the Q18, Q66, and Q104 routes that surround the block and the bus stops nearest the site.

- **No Action and With Action conditions.** Future No Action and With Action conditions will be determined, in a manner similar to that described above for traffic analyses. The effects of new project-generated peak hour trips will be determined, and bus transit mitigation, if warranted, will be identified in consultation with NYCT.

Pedestrian Analysis

Project-generated pedestrian demand may be significant given the proposed number of high school seats, which would be expected to generate substantial numbers of walk trips in the immediate area to connect to residential areas, bus stops and the subway station. This task will be undertaken in accordance with the following steps:

- **Existing conditions.** Pedestrian locations that serve the local buses in the area will be examined, including sidewalks and crosswalks in the immediate vicinity of the project site. A quantitative analysis of pedestrian conditions will be prepared focusing on sidewalks, corner areas and crosswalks in the vicinity of the project site expected to be used by 200 or more project-generated pedestrian trips during one or more peak hours.

- **No Action and With Action conditions.** The analysis will evaluate No Action and Action

conditions during the weekday AM and PM peak hours, and the potential for incremental demand from the proposed project to result in significant adverse impacts based on current *CEQR Technical Manual* criteria. Potential measures to mitigate any significant adverse pedestrian impacts will be identified and evaluated.

Vehicular Crash Analysis

An examination of vehicular crash analyses will be conducted. Accident data for study area intersections from the most recent three-year period will be obtained from NYCDOT. These data will be analyzed to determine if any of the studied locations may be classified (according to *CEQR Technical Manual* criteria) as "high" vehicle crash or high pedestrian/bike accident locations and whether trips and changes resulting from the proposed project would adversely affect vehicular and pedestrian safety in the area. If any high-crash locations are identified, feasible improvement measures will be explored to alleviate potential safety issues. As appropriate, improvements expected to alleviate identified potential vehicular and pedestrian safety issues will be described in the Transportation chapter of the EIS.

Parking Analysis

Parking demand attributable to the proposed school will be analyzed. To begin, on-site parking will be evaluated to determine whether project-generated demand will be accommodated. A detailed parking assessment will be conducted. The detailed parking assessment will comport with guidance provided in the *CEQR Technical Manual* and consist of the following steps:

- **Existing conditions.** Inventory existing public parking lots and garages within ¼-mile (which represents a typical "walkable" radius) of the project site, noting locations, capacities, and peak weekday and Saturday utilization levels.

- **No Action conditions.** Future parking availability in the ¼-mile study area will be projected, based on anticipated background growth rates and forecasts of demand from the proposed school.

- **With Action conditions.** The future conditions with the proposed action will be evaluated based on consideration of two factors: the proposed on-site parking supply attributable to the proposed project, and the potential capacity off-site that would be expected to be available to accommodate any overflow parking demand from the proposed project, thus adding to the overall new on-street parking demand. Any potential parking shortfall within the study area will be identified. If the parking analysis determines that the on-site parking supply would meet future parking demands, then an analysis of the off-site parking supply would not be warranted or conducted for the EIS.

TASK 3: MITIGATION

Where significant project impacts are identified, measures will be identified and assessed to mitigate those impacts. This chapter will summarize those findings. Where impacts cannot be mitigated, they will be identified in the targeted EIS as unavoidable adverse impacts.

TASK 4: ALTERNATIVES

The purpose of an alternatives analysis is to examine reasonable and practicable options that avoid or reduce project-related significant adverse impacts while achieving the goals and objectives of the proposed project. As stated in the *CEQR Technical Manual,* "SEQR requires that alternatives to the proposed project be identified and evaluated in an EIS so that the decision-maker may consider whether alternatives exist that would minimize or avoid adverse environmental effects." It is understood that the alternatives under consideration are No Action and With Action alternatives.

TASK 5: SUMMARY CHAPTERS

The targeted EIS will include the following summary chapters:

Executive Summary

This chapter will include the key information that has been ascertained through this SEQRA environmental review process, and that is disclosed within the body of this targeted EIS and any accompanying appendices. The information comprising the executive summary will include findings of analyses, identification of impacts, and proposed mitigation measures.

Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

It is anticipated that unavoidable adverse impacts may be expected with the proposed action; these effects would be summarized in this chapter.

Growth-Inducing Aspects of the Proposed Project

The proposed action is not anticipated to induce growth off-site.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

This chapter will summarize the development associated with the proposed action, as commitments of resources for development of the proposed school.