

Executive Summary

The New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC), d/b/a Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), as Lead Agency, has prepared this Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) to assess the potential economic, social, and environmental effects of undertaking the proposed Richardson Olmsted Complex (ROC) Master Plan (also referred to as the Project) (see **Appendix A**). The Project is comprised of a collection of programs and activities involving the stabilization, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of the buildings and grounds of the historic Buffalo State Hospital located in the City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York. This DGEIS was prepared in accordance with the requirements of New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) as prescribed by 6 NYCRR Part 617 State Environmental Quality Review [Statutory authority: Environmental Conservation Law Sections 3-0301(1)(b), 3-0301(2)(m) and 8-0113].

The purpose of the Project is to provide for the rehabilitation and reuse of the historically significant buildings to be acquired by the Richardson Center Corporation (RCC) (commonly referred to as Buildings 9, 10, 12, 13, 27, 30, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45), landscape/grounds, and supporting infrastructure in a manner consistent with the ROC Master Plan. The public need for the Project is to provide for the rehabilitation of the historically significant and currently vacant and deteriorating Henry Hobson Richardson (Richardson)-designed Buffalo State Hospital buildings and the Calvert Vaux (Vaux) and Fredrick Law Olmsted (Olmsted)-designed grounds and provide the local community the opportunity for economic development. The Project would involve expending State funds administered by ESDC to undertake activities that are an outgrowth of the ROC Master Plan.

Background

The ROC encompasses approximately 91-acres of New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) owned land situated in the northwest portion of the City of Buffalo. The ROC is comprised of many individual buildings including the historic Buffalo State Hospital buildings, the newer Buffalo Psychiatric Center (BPC), landscaped open space, surface parking lots, and internal roadways and pathways. The ROC is bounded to the north by Rockwell Road; the west by Rees Street; the south by Forest Avenue; and the east by Elmwood Avenue.

Portions of the ROC, including the Buffalo State Hospital and the Vaux and Olmsted-designed grounds are designated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) and are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NRHP).

Of the 91-acre facility, ±38.2 acres – including the NHL and S/NRHP-listed Buffalo State Hospital (480,000 square feet of vacant building space) and grounds have been designated as “surplus” property by OMH, and are available for redevelopment. The remaining ±52.8 acres of the site are expected to be retained by their current owner. The Project also would involve the transfer of property from the State to RCC that was declared “surplus” by OMH. This includes transfer of ±38.2 acres of land that contain the now vacant Buffalo State Hospital buildings. Additionally, RCC has requested from the State the additional transfer of up to 7.2 acres land adjoining the “surplus” area, which includes a portion of the original “South Lawn” area of the facility.

Scope of the DGEIS

This DGEIS evaluates the potential direct, indirect, short-term, and long-term impacts resulting from the Project on the human and natural environment. Resource areas examined in this DGEIS and potentially impacted include cultural resources, visual resources, land use and development policies, socioeconomics, traffic and transportation, hazardous materials, community services, utilities, air quality, noise, physical and ecological resources, public safety, and construction impacts. The DGEIS also addresses potential cumulative impacts that may result from reasonably foreseeable projects in the region. This DGEIS addresses impacts based on full build-out of all four development stages of the ROC Master Plan, including the Core Project, Expanded Core Project, Full Reuse of All Historically Significant Structures, and Development Landholding phases and assumptions made regarding foreseeable reuse of the property. The assumptions were based on the ROC Master Plan, current property use, existing and proposed land use and zoning regulations, and the build-out time line and development mix.

Alternatives

The DGEIS evaluates the potential impacts resulting from the Project and a No-Build Alternative. The Project would be implemented in four stages (i.e., Core Project, Expanded Core Project, Full Reuse of All Historically Significant Structures, and Development Landholding) over a 20-year build-out period. At full build-out the Project would be comprised of a maximum of 880,000 gross square feet (GSF) of building space, including the reuse of approximately 480,000 GSF of existing building space and the construction of up to 400,000 GSF of new building space. In addition, the Project includes the stabilization, rehabilitation, and reuse of the historic Buffalo State Hospital buildings, the rehabilitation of the Olmsted and Vaux-designed hospital grounds, and the

reconfiguration of the on-site vehicle and pedestrian circulation system and parking areas.

Under the No-Build Alternative, the historic buildings and grounds of the surplus lands would be retained by NYS and no transfer of surplus lands would occur. No reuse or redevelopment of the historic Buffalo State Hospital, its grounds, or new development in the northern parcels would occur under this alternative. The historic Buffalo State Hospital buildings would be left vacant and underutilized. Other alternatives were developed, evaluated, and eliminated during the ROC Master Plan planning process.

Summary of Potential Environmental Consequences

Cultural/Historic Resources

Implementation of the ROC Master Plan would not significantly impact properties included on, or eligible for, listing on the S/NRHP (i.e., Buffalo State Hospital buildings). Importantly, the implementation of the first three phases of the ROC Master Plan would be expected to have a beneficial impact. A conceptual design for a proposed addition to Building 45 and implementation of the proposed Development Landholding phase could result in impacts to the adjacent S/NRHP-listed historic properties and landscape. This would be the subject of subsequent reviews at the City and State levels in the future.

The ROC Master Plan identifies that any development in northwest corner of the surplus lands to be acquired by the RCC will be used to enhance and complement the adjoining historic hospital buildings. New development will be compatible with the ROC Master Plan, and have a strong emphasis on green space with the built form dense and urban. The rehabilitation of the ROC buildings to be acquired by the RCC and grounds will be completed in accordance with federal and state historic preservation standards. Consultation with the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) will be required after specific design and construction details are identified to make a determination if the implementation of the ROC Master Plan would result in a significant impact to the S/NRHP-listed historic properties and grounds and to develop measures to avoid, reduce, or mitigate any adverse effect on the historic property.

Archaeological Resources

The implementation of the ROC Master Plan would have the potential to impact archaeological resources, specifically in the northwest corner of the ROC where the Development Landholding phase would occur. Implementation of the first three phases of the ROC Master Plan would not be expected to have a significant impact on archaeological resources. However, there is the potential for archaeological impacts during ground disturbing activities associated with new construction, landscape stabilization, utility improvements, vehicle,

pedestrian driveway, and parking area reconfiguration components of the Project.

Implementation of the ROC Master Plan would require further consultation with OPRHP regarding archaeological resources and additional investigations may be required prior to the start of any future work. In addition, any excavation or other type of ground disturbing activity would require a Phase 1B or other type of excavation-directed investigation in the location of that action to determine the potential extent of archeological resources and appropriate avoidance or treatment plans. Consultation with the OPRHP would identify potential impacts and to develop measures to avoid, reduce, or mitigate any adverse effect on the historic property.

Visual Resources

Implementation of the ROC Master Plan would not significantly impact visual resources at the ROC. Importantly, the implementation of the first three phases of the ROC Master Plan, including the Core Project, Expanded Core Project, and Full Reuse of All Historically Significant Structures, would be expected to have a beneficial impact. Implementation of the proposed Development Landholding phase could result in visual impacts on the adjacent S/NRHP-listed historic properties and landscape. Specifically, construction of the proposed Development Landholding phase would introduce up to 400,000 GSF of new building space into a portion of the ROC that have remained largely undeveloped throughout its history.

In addition, the ROC Master Plan also proposes constructing a structure at the north side of Building 45 that would serve as a new visitor entrance to the ROC and include space for modern public accommodations (e.g., ADA compliance, elevators, restrooms, etc.).

The RCC would consult the OPRHP after specific design and construction details are identified to make a determination if the implementation of the ROC Master Plan would result in a significant impact to the S/NRHP-listed historic properties and grounds and to develop measures to avoid, reduce, or mitigate any adverse effect on the historic property. In addition, public review of the visual effects of such future activities would be conducted as part of City of Buffalo site plan review of these project components.

Land Use and Development Policies

Land Use

The Project would not have a significant adverse impact on existing land use or adjacent uses surrounding the ROC. Implementation of the proposed Development Landholding phase would introduce new structures into the northwest portion of the ROC, an area which has remained largely undeveloped

throughout its history. The Project would result in the relocation of the BPC and Buffalo State College (BSC) maintenance facilities. The RCC will work with the BSC and BPC to consider relocation options for these uses that will meet the long-term needs of both the RCC and its neighboring institutional partners.

Internal Circulation Network

The Project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the site's internal circulation network or access. Implementation of the ROC Master Plan would result in the development of an improved system of internal streets and pedestrian paths on the ROC, providing improved site circulation.

Parking

Parking at the ROC is currently divided into surface lots in close proximity to the buildings they serve, with direct access to perimeter roads and some connections between lots. The ROC contains a total of 1,400 off-street parking spaces (BPC-589 spaces, BSC-713 spaces, Burchfield Penney Art Center-98 spaces).

Full build-out of the ROC Master Plan would result in the reconfiguration of the ROC's existing system of surface parking lots. By applying current parking requirements of the Buffalo Zoning Ordinance (which is presently undergoing a comprehensive review) to the use program contained in the ROC Master Plan, a total of 1,002 parking spaces would be required for ROC development. An additional 696 spaces also would be required to accommodate existing user requirements (BPC-589 spaces and Burchfield Penney Art Center-98 spaces). In total, full build-out at the ROC would require 1,698 parking spaces.

At this time, a detailed parking plan for the ROC has not been completed. Therefore, the RCC will assess potential parking impacts following the development of a site parking plan, which should include future parking demand and utilization analysis detailed parking configuration design and a parking management plan to better understand the needs of the users being served at the ROC, particularly as they relate to the design priorities of the ROC Master Plan.

Socioeconomics

Implementation of the ROC Master Plan would not result in a significant adverse impact, and would be expected to have a beneficial impact on regional and local socioeconomic conditions including:

One-Time Construction Impacts

Based on the proposed program, estimated construction activity would generate an estimated total of 3,539 job years (direct, indirect, and induced) for the Western New York (WNY) region. Total construction employment for NYS,

including WNY, is an estimated 3,693 job years over the 20-year construction period.

Total personal income earned by construction-related workers (direct, indirect, and induced) in the region is estimated to be \$170.7 million over the 20-year construction period. Personal income earned by total construction-related workers in NYS, including WNY, is an estimated \$183.1 million.

Tax revenue collected by localities, primarily City of Buffalo and Erie County as a result of construction-related activity and employment is estimated to be \$13.6 million and \$16.9 million by New York State. These tax revenue estimates do not account for the potential use of the PILOT or other subsidy programs, which may reduce realized tax revenues.

Permanent Operational Impacts

The various activities of the permanent operations that may locate at the ROC would generate an estimated total of 866 jobs (direct, indirect, and induced) for the Western New York region. Total operations-related employment for New York State, including Western New York, is an estimated 893 jobs.

Total personal income earned by employees, (direct, indirect, and induced), at ROC operations in the region is estimated to be \$848.9 million over the 20-year period. Personal income earned by operations workers in New York State, including Western New York, is an estimated \$901.9 million.

Tax collections from operations-related activity and employment going to local governments in the City of Buffalo and Erie County, are estimated to be \$32.4 million over the 20-year period. Estimated total New York state tax revenues generated by permanent operations at the ROC are \$61.7 million. These tax revenue estimates do not account for the potential use of the PILOT or other subsidy programs, which may reduce realized tax revenues.

Traffic and Transportation

Implementation of the Project would not be expected to result in a significant adverse impact to traffic or transportation facilities. Overall, traffic impacts resulting from full build-out of the Project are minor and do not create over-capacity, operating conditions at any intersection. Improvements were identified to mitigate the potential impact of the Project-generated traffic on the operations along Traffic Study Area roadways and intersections and include signal timing improvements the intersection of Elmwood Avenue with Iroquois, Elmwood Avenue with Forest Avenue, and Elmwood Avenue with Rockwell Road. Also, the Project would not be expected to adversely impact public transportation including Metro bus, Metro Link, pedestrian access, or bicycle access in the Traffic Study Area and in fact would expand and/or enhance these

other transportation networks. The RCC will need to consult the City of Buffalo regarding future traffic conditions and to mitigate any potential traffic impacts.

Environmental Concerns

New on-site development and ground disturbing activities, associated with the Project, including the construction of an addition to Building 45, build-out of the Development Landholding phase (up to 400,000 GSF of building space), landscape activities, and reconfiguration of circulation paths and parking areas would not be expected to result in a significant adverse environmental management impact.

The ROC does include the BSC and BPC maintenance facilities which are currently utilized for vehicle maintenance and storage and plant operations. In addition, the facilities include fuel pumps and underground fuel storage tanks. Both of these facilities are proposed to be relocated and the land area redeveloped as new building space. There is the potential that previous maintenance activities (e.g., vehicle maintenance) and the presence of underground fuel storage tanks at these facilities have resulted in environmental concerns (e.g., fuel, industrial cleaners, oil leaks, etc.) at this site. Redevelopment of maintenance facility area will require the removal of the underground storage tanks and environmental testing to determine the presence of environmental contamination and if the area is suitable for future reuse.

Also, there are a reported seven USTs located at the ROC property that are still active. The location of the active tanks will need to be considered in the future reuse of the property. Environmental testing of these areas will be required, and if applicable, the tanks removed and soil remediated prior to redevelopment. The removal, management, storage, and disposal of these materials would be conducted in accordance with applicable state and federal safety and environmental regulations.

Community Services

Full build-out of the ROC Master Plan would not result in a significant impact on hospitals and emergency services in the City of Buffalo. The BPC and OMH facilities are co-located on the ROC property. Implementation of the Project would result in the relocation of the BPC Maintenance Facility, relocation of the BPCs existing surface parking areas, reconfiguration of the existing ROC circulation system, and it could potentially result in traffic and short-term construction impacts on the BPCs operations. The RCC will consult with BPC and OMH to ensure that future RCC activities and operations do not conflict with and can be integrated (if appropriate) with both the short- and long-term needs of the BPCs staff, patients, and visitors and OMH operations.

Full build-out of the ROC Master Plan would not result in a significant impact on public and private elementary and secondary educational facilities located in the City of Buffalo. However, the BSC campus is located immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the ROC. Implementation of the Project would result in the relocation of the BSC Maintenance Facility, relocation of BSC parking, and construction of the proposed East-West Address Road that would intersect and divert ROC traffic onto Rockwell Road, a private roadway utilized by BSC. The relocation of the BSC maintenance facility and BSC parking spaces would be expected to necessitate relocation costs (e.g., capital and land) and could potentially result in BSC parking and operational impacts. In addition, it would be expected that the implementation of the ROC Master Plan would result in short-term construction impacts. The RCC will need to consider relocation options for these uses such that the long-term needs of the BSC are satisfied. Also, the RCC will need to work with BSC to ensure that future RCC activities and operations do not conflict with and can be integrated (if appropriate) with both the short- and long-term needs of the college.

Utilities

Under the Project, it is assumed that the RCC would take ownership of the existing on-site utility infrastructure following transfer of the surplus NYS owned lands. The RCC would be responsible for the maintenance, upgrade, and operation of all on-site utility infrastructure located within the transferred lands. There is the potential for archaeological impacts during ground disturbing activities associated with utilities upgrades and installations.

Implementation of the ROC Master Plan would require further consultation with OPRHP regarding the presence of archaeological resources. Excavation or other type of ground disturbing activity may require a Phase 1B or other type of excavation-directed investigation in the location of that action to determine the potential extent of archeological resources and appropriate avoidance or treatment plans.

Water Supply

Implementation of the Project would not be expected to have a significant impact on the regional water supply system. Upon full build-out, water demand would be expected to exceed existing demand. The existing municipal system is expected to have sufficient capacity to meet any future water supply demands resulting from implementation of ROC Master Plan. Upon disposition of the surplus ROC property, the RCC will need to consult with the City of Buffalo and Buffalo Water Authority to estimate the impact of development on the existing water system, including flow volume estimates; identify needed improvements to the water distribution system; and obtain all applicable local permits and approvals.

Wastewater

Implementation of the Project would not be expected to have a significant impact on the municipal wastewater system. Upon full build-out, the average daily volume of wastewater from the Project would be expected to increase above existing conditions. The Buffalo Sewer Authority would be expected to have the capacity within its existing system to meet any future wastewater flows resulting from the implementation of ROC Master Plan. Upon disposition of surplus NYS property, the RCC will need to estimate the impact of anticipated future development on the existing wastewater system; identify who is responsible for needed infrastructure improvements and what those improvements are; identify the ownership and management of installation infrastructure; and obtain all applicable local permits or approvals.

Stormwater

It is assumed that full build-out would result in the construction of new and reconfiguration of existing roadways, parking lots, and other impervious surface areas. The majority of runoff from reuse would be generated from roof structures and paved surfaces. As a result, stormwater could contain trace levels of contaminants typically found in residential, office, and commercial developments, as well as pesticides and fertilizers used on maintained lawns and landscaped areas.

The RCC will consult with the City of Buffalo and BSA to ensure that any new stormwater infrastructure is designed and installed in accordance with all rules, terms, and conditions of the BSA. Future development will require site plan review, permitting, and adherence to applicable City stormwater and sewer policies and regulations. Potential capacity and infrastructure impacts will have to be examined as specific details become available.

Air Quality

The Project would result in increased vehicular traffic to and from the project area and may cause at key intersections elevated ground-level concentrations of carbon monoxide (CO) associated with vehicular exhaust. Using guidelines provided in the NYSDOT Environmental Procedures Manual (EPM) a screening analysis was conducted to determine whether the Project will require a quantitative CO intersection analysis. The results of the screening analysis indicated there would be no significant CO impacts as a result of the proposed Project, and mitigation would not be required.

Noise

Implementation of the ROC Master Plan would result in temporary noise increases from construction operations and delivery vehicles traveling to and from the ROC. Noise generated would be temporary and would occur during regular daytime working hours. Long-term activities associated with the Project

(e.g., visitor center, commercial land use, etc.) are not expected to generate significant noise impacts both on-site and in the adjacent neighborhoods.

Physical and Ecological Resources

Implementation of the Project would not result in a significant impact to general ecology and wildlife.

Construction Impacts

Potential construction-related impacts associated with the Project would include site preparation (e.g., grading) which may increase sediment loadings in site runoff; disposal of any contaminated soils/fill and building materials (i.e., lead based paints and asbestos), and potential exposure to on-site workers; and temporary impacts to air quality and ambient noise levels. In addition, construction workers could also be exposed to hazardous situations typically associated with construction activities. Construction activities would not result in any significant impacts with the application of appropriate construction techniques, compliance with local and federal regulations, inspection and monitoring associated with permitting processes, and mitigation measures as discussed below. Project construction would be expected to occur over the 20 year build-out period for the project

Cumulative Impacts

No long-term, significant adverse cumulative impacts are expected from implementation of the ROC Master Plan along with the other planned construction projects. Minor traffic and parking impacts would be expected due to the growth in traffic associated with both the implementation of the ROC Master Plan and growth of the BSC campus and student population. Specifically, construction of the East-West Address Road would require a curb cut onto and would direct site traffic onto Rockwell Road. Implementation of the Project would also result in the loss of BSC surface parking. It would be expected that the demand for parking generated by the reuse of the Buffalo State Hospital combined with the loss of BSC parking and the demand generated by the BPC and BSC (i.e., staff and students) would generate significant demand for parking on the ROC and in the neighborhoods adjacent to it.

An assessment of potential ROC and BSC parking impacts will need to be made following the development of a site parking plan which should include a future parking demand and utilization analysis, detailed parking configuration designs, and a parking management plan to better understand the needs of the users being served at the ROC and the BSC.

Construction activities associated with the implementation of the ROC Master Plan and development and renovation of the BSC campus would be expected to result in short-term cumulative construction impacts. Construction impacts

could include localized and temporary impacts to sound levels, air quality, on-site parking, traffic, and visual impacts. The RCC will consult with BSC to develop measures to maintain Project Area, ROC, and BSC parking, vehicular, and pedestrian traffic and circulation. In addition, the RCC will coordinate with BSC and other entities co-located (e.g., BPC, OMH, and Burchfield Penney Art Center, etc.) at the ROC in advance of the start of construction activities.

The RCC will need to work with BSC to ensure that future development activities and operations do not conflict with and can be integrated (if appropriate) with one another's short- and long-term operational needs.