BR 9:
INCLUDE CLIMATE CHANGE IN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

Proposal developed by the Climate Adaptation Committee

Summary

Issue:
"CEQR" is the process by which city agencies review proposed actions in order to identify the effects those actions may have on the environment. CEQR guidelines are currently being updated to include an assessment of the impact of climate change on proposed actions.

Recommendation:
The technical committee supports the amendments to the CEQR guidelines underway in the Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination, which will incorporate climate change. The Mayor’s Office began implementing this proposal independently of the Task Force, prior to the issuance of this report.

Proposed Legislation, Rule or Study

Expression of Support for the NYC Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination's effort to provide guidance for analyzing climate change in environmental assessment conducted pursuant to CEQR.

The Committee endorses the City’s effort to provide guidance for both (1) an analysis of an action’s greenhouse gas the Committee supports the use of a methodolodgy which pro-rated emissions per square footage and adjusts for building type. Some alternative methodologies are based on total carbon emissions, which can have the unintended consequence of discouraging density, which is typically the least carbon intensive way to build since it facilitates mass transit options. The former type of analysis is proper one as it will promote efficient development without inhibiting high densities. Emissions emissions and (2) an analysis of climate change and an action’s adaptation to climate change. In particular,

Supporting Information

Issue – Expanded
The City Environmental Quality Review, or “CEQR” is a process by which City agencies review proposed discretionary actions for the purpose of identifying the potential effects those actions may have on the environment, and in some instances, the effects the environment may have on the proposed action. The goal of CEQR is to ensure disclosure of all the potential environmental impacts of an action under consideration so that the decisionmakers are fully informed of its effects before determining whether to directly undertake, approve, or fund that action.

The CEQR Technical Manual (the Manual) provides guidance for City agencies, project sponsors and the public in the procedures and substance of the CEQR process. Chapter 3 of the Manual currently includes a discussion of 22 analysis areas, including land use, zoning and public policy, open space, infrastructure, energy, air quality, solid waste and sanitation services, hazardous materials, etc. For each of the areas, guidance is provided in assessing the existing and future environmental settings, defining study areas, evaluating existing conditions, predicting future changes, identifying significant impacts and developing mitigation measures for any significant adverse impacts. Possible assessment methodologies are explained for each technical area.

The Manual was last updated and published in 2001. This version of the Manual did not include any discussion of, or the need for, assessment of climate change and the effects that such change will have on any proposed action. The Mayor’s Office of Environmental Coordination (MOEC) is currently undertaking a complete revision of the Manual, set to be released in 2010. The Committee has been informed by MOEC that this revision will provide guidance for an analysis of climate change. The climate change analysis guidance is being developed by MOEC in collaboration with the New York City Panel on Climate Change; the Mayor’s Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability; the Law Department; the Department of City Planning; the Parks Department; and the Department of Environmental Protection.

Environmental & Health Benefits
This proposal was found to have no significant positive environmental impact.

This proposal was found to have no significant positive health impact.
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Cost & Savings
This proposal was not part of the cost analysis.

Precedents
There are no known precedents for this proposal.

LEED
There are no LEED credits affiliated with this proposal.

Implementation & Market Availability
There are no known implementation or market availability issues for this proposal.