

A. INTRODUCTION

Over the years a variety of potential developments for the East River waterfront in Lower Manhattan have been considered. Some of these plans were very ambitious and would have created landfill area similar to Battery Park City; however, only Pier 17 at the South Street Seaport has been realized.

As part of developing the Proposed Action, a number of alternatives have been considered and examined. They include alternatives for development of the esplanade, alternatives for the Battery Maritime Building (BMB) Plaza, an alternative without the BMB and the Pier 42 beach, an alternative in-water configuration south of Pier 15, and an alternative retaining half of the existing automobile parking under the FDR Drive.

This chapter analyzes alternatives that were considered in developing the East River Esplanade and Piers Project and alternatives that relate to specific elements of the project. The No Action Alternative is examined in each of the technical analyses in this document as the Future without the Proposed Action.

B. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, the project area would remain as it is in its current condition. LMDC would not provide funding and the City would not take any of the necessary land use actions. The waterfront esplanade would not be improved or expanded, Pier 15 would not be rebuilt, pavilions would not be constructed under the FDR Drive, and the New Market Building would not be demolished and a new building could not be built in its location. The proposed disposition of the pavilions, a special permit for and disposition of the proposed rebuilt New Market Building, and mapping actions for the BMB plaza and tunnel and for South Street would not be undertaken, and other state or federal actions required for the Proposed Action would not be sought. Under this alternative, however, the portion of South Street south of the Brooklyn Bridge would be reconstructed in its current configuration. This is the same scenario that is described throughout the EIS as “The Future without the Proposed Action.” It is summarized here, with a comparison to the potential impacts of the Proposed Action.

LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

If the Proposed Action is not implemented, there would not be a substantial positive effect on land use on the project site, the East River Waterfront between the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and the East River Park. The design of the esplanade would not be improved and no new amenities would be provided. The bikeway/walkway would not be improved. Piers 42 and 35 would remain vacant. Auto, bus and motorcycle parking would remain under the FDR Drive, and the rest of the area under the FDR Drive would remain unused. There would be no new pavilions built underneath the FDR Drive for recreational, cultural, and retail uses to serve the surrounding

East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

communities. Allowing the waterfront area to remain in its current underutilized condition would not be consistent with applicable public policies, which focus on waterfront access and the continued revitalization of Lower Manhattan. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would conflict with public policy.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts due to direct or indirect changes in residential and economic activity. Similar to the Proposed Action, 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 Action would result in the indirect displacement of residents or businesses.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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

OPEN SPACE

By comparison to the Proposed Action, the No Action would not result in the improvements to the East River esplanade, the New Market Building pier, and Piers 35, 36 and 42. There would be no funding for the reconstruction of Pier 15. A beach would not be created on Pier 42 and the BMB Plaza would not be created. 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 Action, the No Action Alternative would not produce any incremental increase in shadows as no new structures would be built.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

This alternative would not involve changes to the bulkhead or to views of the bulkhead due to construction at the bulkhead line and the widening of the esplanade beyond the bulkhead from Broad Street to Old Slip, as would the Proposed Action. The context of surrounding historic resources would not be improved under this alternative.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no improvements to urban design on the project site. Design enhancements to the esplanade would not be made, and vacant piers would not be transformed into publicly accessible open space. Views of the East River, the Harbor, and visual resources such as the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges would not be improved under the No Action Alternative.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

This alternative would not result in improvements to neighborhood character. The existing esplanade and bikeway/walkway would remain unimproved and vehicle parking would continue to occupy most of the project site beneath the elevated FDR Drive. There would be no new open space created on piers. Unlike under the Proposed Action, there would be no corresponding increase in traffic and noise that could affect neighborhood character. Neither the No Action Alternative nor the Proposed Action would create a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

The No Action Alternative would not involve enhancement of the existing esplanade, expansion of the existing 8-foot-wide esplanade between the BMB and Old Slip, reconstruction of Pier 15, demolition and reconstruction of the New Market Building and reinforcement of its pier, the creation of a marina at the New Market Building pier, development of new open space on Pier 35 and 42, or the creation of a cove at Pier 36. No excavation, grading, or in-water construction would occur. Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would result in no 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 Action, this alternative would not be consistent with all applicable Waterfront Revitalization Program policies, particularly those encouraging public access to the water's edge.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE AND ENERGY

While the Proposed Action would introduce new uses that would place some demands on infrastructure, solid waste, and energy systems, the No Action Alternative would not introduce a new user population into the area. Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not have significant adverse impacts on infrastructure, solid waste and sanitation services or energy.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Under the No Action Alternative the existing traffic congestion on and near the project site would continue and certain intersections would continue to operate at Level of Service (LOS) E or F. Under this alternative, the Proposed Action's significant adverse impacts at four intersections along South Street, two intersections along Water Street, and two intersections along Pearl Street would not occur. Under the No Action Alternative, vehicle parking would remain under the FDR Drive and there would be no displacement of bus parking. As under the Proposed Action, the study area would experience a parking shortfall. Unlike under the Proposed Action, there would be no changes to roadway configuration associated with the relocation of

the entrance to the Battery Park Underpass and no resulting diversion of traffic at the southern end of the project site.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

Compared with the Proposed Action, there would be slightly less demand for transit in the study area under the No Action Alternative. With respect to pedestrians, a pedestrian plaza would not be created in front of the BMB and waterfront esplanade and walkway/bikeway would not be enhanced and expanded. As under the Proposed Action, sidewalks and crosswalks would function at acceptable levels.

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 Action Alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse impacts on air quality.

NOISE

Under the No Action Alternative, the slight increase in noise levels due to increased traffic would not occur. Noise levels on the project site would, however, remain high, as they are under existing conditions, and users of the existing esplanade would be subjected to high noise levels. However, the potential significant adverse impact of high noise levels on users of the new open space would not occur under this alternative.

CONSTRUCTION

Under this alternative, there would be no improvements to the esplanade and no new open space created on piers. The temporary disruptions that would result from construction associated with the Proposed Action, including the potential temporary significant adverse impacts on traffic and air quality that could result from the relocation of the entrance to the Battery Park Underpass, would not occur. Likewise, the economic benefits associated with construction related to the Proposed Action, resulting from expenditures on labor, materials, and services, would not occur.

C. ESPLANADE DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

Other esplanade developments that were considered as part of the planning process for this project included an alternative with residential buildings built over the elevated FDR Drive south of Brooklyn Bridge, and an alternative with the FDR Drive at grade south of the Brooklyn Bridge.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS OVER THE FDR DRIVE

This alternative would allow for the development of new residential buildings west of the East River bulkhead and above the FDR Drive (see Figure 19-1). The new buildings would be elevated on columns above the FDR Drive, potentially requiring the removal of two lanes of roadway (one in each direction). The buildings would be constructed through the middle of the roadway, requiring a reconfiguration of the roadway structure. The lobbies for the building would be located below the FDR viaduct. Pavilions could still be constructed beneath the FDR Drive north of the Brooklyn Bridge. The potential building scenarios are detailed below in Table 19-1.



E A S T R I V E R



Residential Buildings Over FDR Drive Alternative

Figure 19-1

**Table 19-1
Potential Configurations of Residential Buildings**

Scenario	No. of Buildings	Height	Residential GSF	Total GSF	New Park Acreage
Scenario 1	2	33 floors, 492'	290,000	450,000	6.66
Scenario 2	4	33 floors, 492'	580,000	900,000	13.31
Scenario 3	4	2 @ 23 floors, 372' 2 @ 33 floors, 492'	560,000	860,000	12.86
Scenario 4	6	6 @ 33 floors, 492'	541,000	802,200	12.42
Scenario 5	6	2 @ 19 floors, 300' 2 @ 27 floors, 420' 2 @ 33 floors, 492'	438,700	675,700	10.07

Devised as a means of funding the open space improvements, this alternative was considered as a series of scenarios with more towers supporting more open space; for every square foot of residential use development, one square foot of park space would be developed. The parkland would be created on a new structure that would cantilever out from the bulkhead, creating more over-water coverage. The revenue stream from the residential development was also intended to create a source of funding for the construction and future operations of the enhanced esplanade and parkland. The new residential development within the FDR Drive alignment would be designed to respect higher-level views from existing buildings along South Street, and would respect the South Street Seaport Historic District and Extension by limiting the development area to south of the historic district's southern boundary at Maiden Lane.

Although this alternative was considered during the planning process, it was ultimately eliminated as unviable for several reasons, primarily the difficulty of construction above and around the FDR Drive, the potential adverse effects of creating additional over-water coverage, and the blocking of existing views. The potential effects of this alternative are discussed in detail below. In addition, there is currently no identifiable funding strategy for this alternative.

LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

By comparison to the Proposed Action, the Alternative with Residential Buildings over the FDR Drive would create a substantial amount of new residential space and would provide more open space. Similar to the Proposed Action it would have a substantial positive effect on land use by improving the design of and adding amenities to the esplanade and bikeway that runs through the project site. It would also transform vacant piers. Underutilized land beneath the FDR Drive would be used for residential lobbies and for recreational, cultural, and retail uses serving the surrounding communities. Development of the residential towers would require additional land use and zoning actions. However, this alternative would be consistent with public policies which focus on waterfront access and the continued revitalization of Lower Manhattan.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The Alternative with Residential Use over the FDR Drive would not result in the direct displacement of any residents. Similar to the Proposed Action it would displace a parking facility on the project site. However, the parking does not play a critical role in the community

East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

and does not have substantial economic value to the City or region. Further, while it was intended to provide funding to increase the public open space, the complexities of construction may make this alternative infeasible or at least not as financially beneficial as intended.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

By comparison to the Proposed Action, this alternative would increase the demand for community facilities related to residential use, specifically schools, which are already a concern to the growing residential community in the Financial District. Unlike the Proposed Action, this alternative would introduce new public school students and would therefore have the potential to have a significant adverse impact on public schools.

OPEN SPACE

This alternative is intended to produce more open space than would be provided with the Proposed Action by providing a revenue source to finance the creation of additional open space. At the same time it would increase the user population by creating residential units which the Proposed Action does not include. Because this alternative would provide an increased amount of open space in addition to introducing new residents, it would not be expected to result in a significant adverse impact on open space.

SHADOWS

Unlike the Proposed Action this Alternative would create tall new structures which would cast new shadows on the waterfront from the midday into the afternoon. Since the waterfront is currently in shadow later in the afternoon from the tall buildings east of the FDR Drive, this increment would be most noticeable in the early afternoon before the existing shadows reach the waterfront. While the residential buildings could cast new shadows on open space created as part of the project, they would not be considered a significant adverse impact since the additional open space would not be possible without the construction of the residential buildings.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would involve changes to the East River bulkhead—a potential historic resource—and to views of the bulkhead due to construction at the bulkhead line and the widening of the esplanade beyond the bulkhead from Broad Street to Old Slip. However, as the new parkland to be created in this alternative would be developed on a structure cantilevered out from the bulkhead, views of the bulkhead would be more extensively obscured than under the Proposed Action.

This alternative also would require more extensive subsurface disturbance than the Proposed Action, to create the new residential development within the FDR Drive alignment, and therefore could affect to a greater extent areas of potential archaeological sensitivity.

Generally, the context of surrounding historic resources would be improved under this alternative, as the design of the esplanade would be enhanced and new public open spaces from which to view historic resources would be created. The new residential development within the FDR Drive alignment would be designed to respect higher-level views from existing buildings along South Street and would respect the South Street Seaport Historic District and Extension by limiting the development area to south of the historic district's southern boundary at Maiden

Lane. However, views of some historic resources from some locations could be obscured by the residential buildings.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Unlike the Proposed Action, this alternative would include up to six residential buildings with heights of up to 492 feet located between Old Slip and Maiden Lane. These would be located so as not to block view corridors from the upland neighborhood to the East River. The new buildings would be consistent with the urban design of the adjacent neighborhood, which is characterized primarily by tall office and residential towers. Therefore, like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in any significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would improve neighborhood character by enhancing the existing esplanade and creating new open space. The residential buildings would be consistent with the mixed commercial and residential character of Lower Manhattan. This alternative would, however, introduce additional traffic to the neighborhood due to the creation of new residential units and would therefore constitute potentially less of an improvement to neighborhood character than would the Proposed Action. However, the additional new open space as well as the increased activity brought about by the new residents would constitute and improvement to neighborhood character. Overall, like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would involve enhancement of the existing esplanade, expansion of the existing 8-foot-wide esplanade between BMB and Old Slip, reconstruction of Pier 15, demolition and reconstruction of the New Market Building and reinforcement of its pier, the creation of a marina at the New Market Building pier, development of new open space on Pier 35 and 42, and the creation of a cove at Pier 36. The additional open space created on piers and platforms under this alternative would add new over-water coverage and may have the potential to result in additional impacts on natural resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would involve the demolition or disturbance of existing structures as well as excavation, disturbance, or removal of existing fill and soil and therefore there would be an increased potential for exposure to hazardous materials. With the implementation of health and safety measures prior to and during construction, no significant adverse impacts related to hazardous materials would be expected to occur as a result of construction and operation of the residential buildings.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would be consistent with all applicable Waterfront Revitalization Program policies. Residential buildings would be located so as to preserve views of and access to the waterfront. Revenue from the residential buildings would allow a greater amount of waterfront open space to be created.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE, AND ENERGY

The residential development associated with this alternative would introduce a new residential population to the area and would therefore place additional demands on infrastructure, solid waste, and energy. However, it is expected that existing infrastructure, solid waste, and energy systems would be able to accommodate the demand and therefore, as under the Proposed Action, there would be no significant adverse impacts on infrastructure, solid waste, and energy.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The FDR Drive south of the Brooklyn Bridge is underutilized. This alternative would maintain the separation of through traffic on the FDR Drive from South Street. However, as noted above, it would potentially require the elimination of one or possibly two lanes of traffic on the FDR Drive. Additional trips generated by the residential development associated with this alternative would have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on traffic.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

The new residential population introduced to the project site under this alternative would result in increased demand for transit service as well as increased pedestrian traffic. Therefore, this alternative has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on transit and pedestrians.

AIR QUALITY

The heating systems in the residential buildings would produce stationary source emissions and the vehicle trips generated by the new residents would produce mobile source emissions. Therefore, this alternative has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on air quality.

NOISE

The additional vehicle trips generated by residents introduced to the project site under this alternative would add to the high noise levels on and around the project site. Attenuation measures would need to be taken to achieve an acceptable interior noise level in the residential buildings given their proximity to noise sources including the FDR Drive, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the heliport on Pier 6.

CONSTRUCTION

Tower cranes would be used to construct the proposed buildings. Construction would likely require some lane closures on the FDR Drive and South Street. Because of the difficult logistics of building large structures over an active highway, this alternative is not feasible or financially viable.

FDR DRIVE AT GRADE SOUTH OF BROOKLYN BRIDGE

This alternative would dismantle and remove the elevated FDR Drive from the Brooklyn Bridge to Broad Street and create a green, tree-lined boulevard on South Street. The elevated section of the FDR Drive north of the Brooklyn Bridge would transition to an at-grade intersection just north of Robert F. Wagner Senior Place. The South Street/FDR Drive roadway south of the resulting intersection to Broad Street would be 10 lanes (approximately 176 feet) wide with five lanes in each direction (including turning lanes). At 176 feet wide, the roadway would exceed the available space between the building lines on the west side of South Street and the bulkhead

line of the East River. Therefore, the roadway would cantilever over the existing bulkhead potentially requiring its reconstruction.

This alternative would require a significant reconfiguration of the existing South Street roadway as well as considerable modifications to the existing ramp structures that connect the FDR Drive to the Brooklyn Bridge. A number of existing intersections along the South Street/FDR Drive alignment would also have to be reconfigured and/or signalized to accommodate the new roadway. No pavilions would be developed in this alternative. As with the Proposed Action, public parking and commuter and tour bus parking that currently exists under the FDR Drive would be eliminated. At present, there is no identifiable funding for the roadway reconfiguration.

LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

Like the Proposed Action, the FDR Drive at Grade South of Brooklyn Bridge alternative would have a positive effect on land use by improving the design of and adding amenities to the esplanade and bikeway that runs through the project site and transforming vacant piers and underutilized land for recreational, cultural, and retail uses. However, due to the increased width of the at-grade FDR Drive roadway, a smaller amount of open space would be produced under this alternative.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in the direct displacement of any residents. The parking facility that would be directly displaced from the project site does not play a critical role in the community and does not have substantial economic value to the City or regional area. No indirect displacement of residents or businesses would occur.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This alternative would not introduce new users of community facilities and would not have any significant adverse impacts on community facilities.

OPEN SPACE

Due to the increased width of the at-grade FDR Drive roadway, a smaller amount of open space would be produced under this alternative, as the ten lanes of traffic would encroach on space that would serve as an esplanade and walkway/bikeway under the Proposed Action. Furthermore, the widened at-grade roadway would create a barrier to pedestrians trying to access the waterfront esplanade and piers.

SHADOWS

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in the construction of new buildings requiring a shadows analysis.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Compared to the Proposed Action, the pile-supported structure outboard of the bulkhead line would need to be wider in order to accommodate the widened at-grade roadway. Therefore, views of the East River Bulkhead, an historic resource, would be more extensively obscured than under the Proposed Action. It is also possible that portions of the original granite bulkhead

East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

might require extensive reconstruction, which could constitute a significant adverse impact. It is also possible that the Tin Building, which is a contributing building within the South Street Seaport Historic District and Extension, would have to be demolished in order to accommodate the roadway. This would constitute a significant adverse impact to historic resources. This alternative also would require more extensive subsurface disturbance to South and Marginal Streets than the Proposed Action, and therefore could affect to a greater extent areas of potential archaeological sensitivity.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

This alternative would remove the physical and visual obstruction to views of the East River created by the elevated FDR Drive. However, the widened roadway at grade would be a physical barrier cutting off the upland neighborhood from the waterfront, the esplanade, and the piers. Additional lanes of traffic at grade would be unsightly.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would improve neighborhood character by enhancing the existing esplanade and creating new open space. However, this alternative would constitute less of an improvement to neighborhood character due to the additional lanes of traffic at grade, which would create a street-level barrier separating the upland neighborhood from the waterfront. Additionally, as described below, pedestrians would experience more traffic at street level and noise levels would be correspondingly higher.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

Compared to the Proposed Action, this alternative would have similar effects on natural resources and water quality. However, construction of this alternative would create a greater amount of new shade coverage over the East River and therefore could have a potential to adversely impact water quality and natural resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

As under the Proposed Action, significant adverse impacts with regard to hazardous materials would be avoided with the implementation of appropriate health and safety measures prior to and during construction.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

This alternative, like the Proposed Action, would be consistent with applicable Waterfront Revitalization Program policies. However, while this alternative would provide continued public access to the waterfront, this access would be less readily available due to the fact that the widened at-grade roadway would create a physical barrier for pedestrians.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE, AND ENERGY

This alternative would not introduce a greater amount of development than the Proposed Action and would therefore not result in increased demands on infrastructure, solid waste and sanitation services, or energy systems.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

This alternative would disrupt traffic flow for extended periods of time since it would be necessary to signalize intersections along the roadway to allow for pedestrian circulation and therefore has a potential to result in significant adverse impacts on traffic. This alternative, like the Proposed Action, would displace the public parking and commuter and tour bus parking that currently exists under the FDR Drive.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

This alternative could adversely affect pedestrian safety by creating longer crosswalks and increasing through traffic on South Street. This alternative would not affect transit routes or access for operations, and could enhance access between the intersections of South Street/FDR Drive and Broad Street. The express bus routes that currently utilize the elevated FDR Drive to bypass South Street would be required to stop at the resulting signalized intersections. While this may affect the overall route times for these buses, it could provide an opportunity to install additional bus stops along the corridor. A dedicated bicycle route could be accommodated along the South Street/FDR Drive corridor, and this route could connect to the existing bicycle path under the elevated FDR Drive north of the Brooklyn Bridge. Other existing and planned bicycle routes would be maintained.

AIR QUALITY

Compared to the Proposed Action, this alternative would result in worse conditions with respect to air quality. With a widened roadway at grade, exhaust from vehicles would be closer to pedestrians. Additionally, the signalization that would be required under this alternative would result in a greater concentration of emissions from vehicles idling on the project site.

NOISE

Because an increased amount of traffic would be at street level under this alternative, there would be increased ambient noise levels on and near the project site south of the Brooklyn Bridge compared with the Proposed Action.

CONSTRUCTION

As the Brooklyn Bridge and the FDR Drive are major highway facilities within Manhattan, the construction of this alternative would require extremely complex maintenance and projection of traffic schemes that would extend the duration of construction. The required width of the resulting South Street/FDR at grade roadway would require significant reconstruction of existing platforms and buildings along the East River bulkhead line as well as the construction of new over-water structures.

D. BATTERY MARITIME BUILDING PLAZA ALTERNATIVES

Three alternatives to BMB plaza as proposed are assessed below. Two alternatives, a Stepped Ramp and a Partial Stepped Ramp, were considered as alternatives that would remove pedestrian-vehicular conflicts at the BMB entrance. The third alternative is the East River Esplanade and Piers project as proposed without any change to the BMB plaza.

STEPPED RAMP ALTERNATIVE

The Stepped Ramp Alternative (see Figure 19-2) would provide a ramped pedestrian plaza connecting Peter Minuit Plaza, the East River Esplanade, and Broad Street through a stepped ramp that would elevate pedestrian traffic over the Battery Park Underpass (BPU). This alternative would create an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant (ADA), grade-separated connection for pedestrians while providing the feel of an esplanade. The southern boundary of the stepped ramp would consist of an at-grade landing, approximately 110 feet wide, at the northern curb line of Whitehall Street between One New York Plaza and Marginal Street. The stepped ramp would rise from this landing at a rate that is consistent with that of the BPU until it reaches an elevation of approximately 24 feet, which corresponds to the northernmost point of the BMB. At this elevation, the stepped ramp would connect to a bridge/platform, which would span from the southwest corner of the intersection of South and Broad Streets and the East River Esplanade. Access from the intersection of Broad and South Streets to the elevated bridge/platform would be provided from the southern sidewalk of Broad Street via a staircase, while access from the East River Esplanade would be provided through a ramp. The entrance to the Battery Park Underpass would remain in its existing location under this alternative.

LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would be consistent with land use, zoning, and public policy for the project site and the surrounding study areas. This alternative would have a positive effect on land use by improving the design of and adding amenities to the esplanade and bikeway that runs through the project site and by transforming vacant piers and underutilized land beneath the FDR Drive for recreational, cultural, and retail uses.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in the direct displacement of any residents. The parking facility that would be directly displaced from the project site does not play a critical role in the community and does not have substantial economic value to the City or regional area. No indirect displacement of residents or businesses would occur. Therefore, neither this alternative nor the Proposed Action would have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts with respect to socioeconomic conditions.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

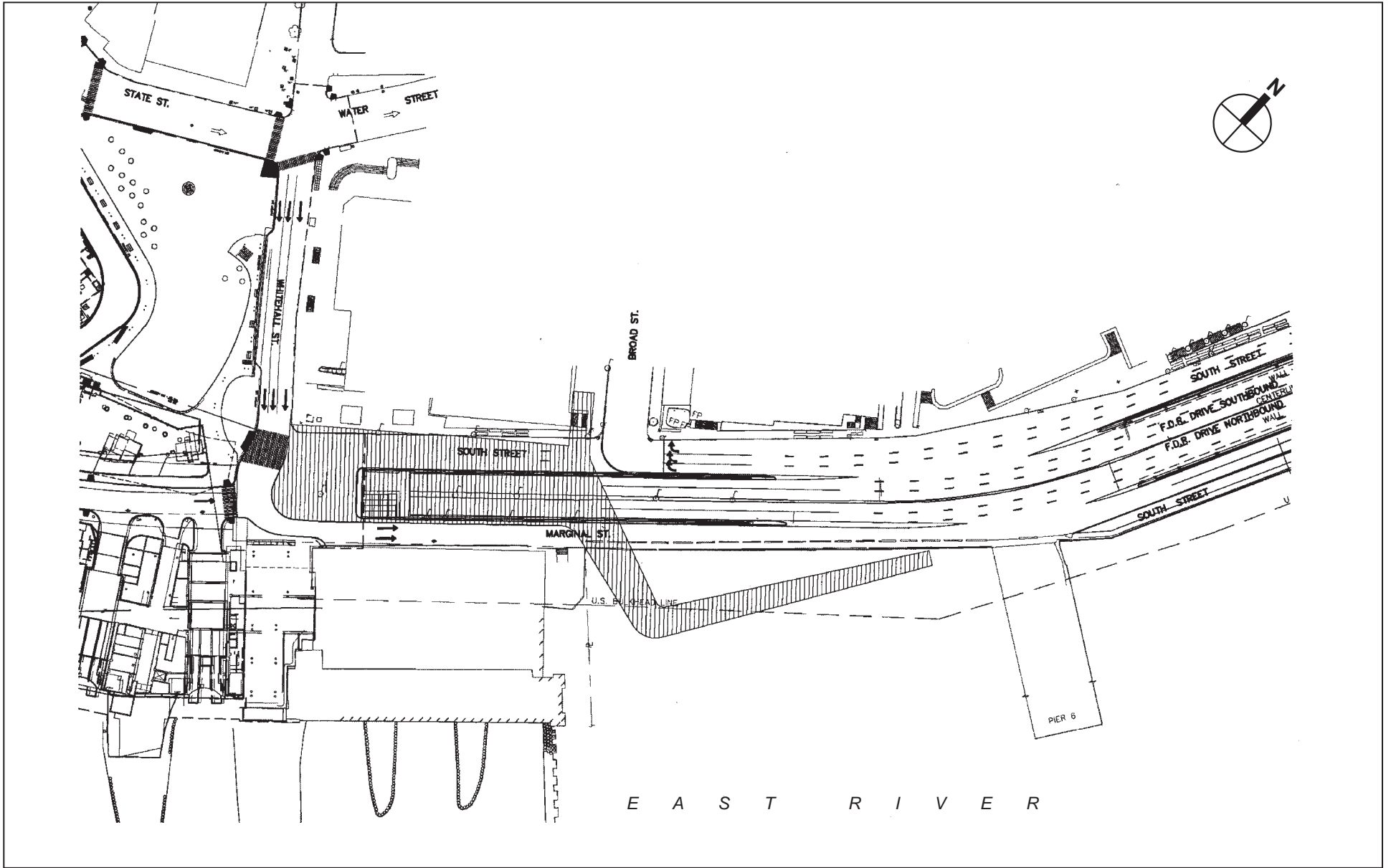
This alternative would not introduce new users of community facilities and would not have any significant adverse impacts on community facilities.

OPEN SPACE

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would result in the improvements to the East River esplanade, the New Market pier, and Piers 35, 36 and 42. Pier 15 would be reconstructed to provide recreational space and a beach would be created on Pier 42. While open space would be created in front of the BMB, it would be on an elevated plaza rather than a street-level plaza.

SHADOWS

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in the construction of new buildings requiring a shadows analysis.



HISTORIC RESOURCES

Under this alternative, the elevated ramped plaza would interfere with views of the BMB, an historic resource. However, as shown on Figure 19-2, this alternative would also involve the construction of an over-water esplanade structure from which the East River bulkhead, an historic resource, could be viewed. In this regard, this alternative would have a positive effect on historic resources.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

As described above, this alternative would obstruct views of the BMB. This would result in a significant adverse impact on visual resources. However, the elevated ramp structure in front of the BMB and over the East River would create new views of the harbor and would in this way have a beneficial effect on visual resources.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would improve neighborhood character by enhancing the existing esplanade and creating new open space. However, because views of the BMB, an important historic and visual resource, would be obscured, this alternative would have less of a beneficial effect on neighborhood character as compared to the Proposed Action.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

Construction of the Stepped Ramp Alternative, with its raised esplanade ramp structure extending outboard of the bulkhead line, would have similar effects on natural resources and water quality compared with the Proposed Action and would create approximately the same amount of new shade coverage over the East River as would the Proposed Action. The locations and amount of pile driving and dredging would be roughly the same as under the Proposed Action. This alternative, like the Proposed Action, would result in no significant adverse impacts on natural resources and water quality.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

As under the Proposed Action, significant adverse impacts with regard to hazardous materials would be avoided with the implementation of appropriate health and safety measures prior to and during construction.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would be consistent with all applicable Waterfront Revitalization Program policies.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE, AND ENERGY

This alternative would not introduce a greater amount of development than the Proposed Action and would therefore not result in increased demands on infrastructure, solid waste and sanitation services, or energy systems.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The Stepped Ramp Alternative would require the closure of South Street between Broad and Whitehall Streets. Therefore, the existing travel direction of Whitehall Street would be reversed to meet traffic circulation needs, and southbound traffic would be rerouted to Water Street. These changes would affect traffic operations at the intersections of Water and Broad Streets and Water and Whitehall Streets. In addition, the required foundations for the stepped ramp's eastern edge support structure would minimize the width of Marginal Street, the at-grade roadway east of the Battery Park Underpass (BPU). The narrower cross section of Marginal Street would affect access to and from the BMB, which could in turn affect future access to a re-activated Governors Island. No vehicle queuing/waiting area would be provided in front of the BMB. These changes would have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on traffic.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

The Stepped Ramp Alternative would be expected to improve pedestrian circulation between the Whitehall Ferry Terminal / Peter Minuit Plaza and Broad Street, as well as the East River Esplanade, by creating a bridge between the three locations. However, it would require pedestrians to cross Whitehall Street at a signalized location. In addition, this alternative lacks a connection to the BMB and thus does not address pedestrian circulation to and from the BMB. Therefore, pedestrians accessing the BMB from either the Whitehall Ferry Terminal / Peter Minuit Plaza or the East River Esplanade would have to walk along the Marginal Street sidewalk, which is currently four feet wide, not programmed for reconstruction, and broken by curb cuts for vehicle access to the BMB.

In addition, the construction of the Stepped Ramp Alternative would require a significant support structure on the west curb line of Marginal Street, which would reduce the effective pavement width and adversely affect pedestrian circulation as well as bicycle operations. The Stepped Ramp Alternative does not accommodate bicyclists, and therefore would not significantly alter existing bicycle operations along the East River Esplanade. Traveling southbound along South Street between Broad and Whitehall Streets, bicyclists would be rerouted to Water Street until they can enter Battery Park. Along Marginal Street northbound, bicyclists would be accommodated as in existing conditions until they reach the East River Esplanade bikeway.

AIR QUALITY

As with the Proposed Action, it is not expected that there would be significant adverse impacts with respect to air quality under this alternative.

NOISE

Under this alternative, ambient noise levels on the project site would continue to be high but would not be appreciably higher than under the Proposed Action.

CONSTRUCTION

Unlike the Proposed Action, this alternative would not involve the relocation of the entrance to the Battery Park Underpass. The 30-month period of excavation and construction of the portion of the FDR Drive leading into the underpass would not occur under this alternative, nor would the potential significant impacts with respect to traffic and air quality during that construction

period. It is expected that disruption of traffic through the Battery Park Underpass would be minimal during the construction of the stepped ramp in front of the BMB, though there would likely be some rerouting of traffic at grade.

PARTIAL STEPPED RAMP ALTERNATIVE

Similar to the Stepped Ramp Alternative, the Partial Stepped Ramp Alternative would provide a connection between Peter Minuit Plaza, the East River Esplanade, and Broad Street through a stepped ramp that elevates pedestrian traffic over the BPU (see Figure 19-3). Like the Stepped Ramp Alternative described above, this Alternative would create an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant (ADA), grade-separated connection for pedestrians while providing the feel of an esplanade. However, the ramp in front of the BMB would not extend as far north as it would under the Stepped Ramp Alternative. The southern boundary of the partial stepped ramp would consist of an at-grade landing, approximately 65 feet in width, at the northern curb line of Whitehall Street between South and Marginal Streets. The partial stepped ramp would rise from the landing at a rate that is consistent with that of the BPU until it reaches an elevation of approximately 24 feet, which corresponds to the northernmost point of the BMB. At this elevation, the partial stepped ramp would connect to a bridge/platform, which would span between the southwest corner of the intersection of South and Broad Streets and the East River Esplanade. Access from the intersection of Broad and South Streets to the elevated bridge/platform would be provided from the southern sidewalk of Broad Street via a staircase, while access from the East River Parkway would be provided through a ramp.

Under this alternative, the potential impacts would be the same as those identified above under the Stepped Ramp Alternative with the exception of open space and traffic and parking.

OPEN SPACE

A slightly smaller amount of open space would be provided on the elevated ramped plaza in front of the BMB under the Partial Stepped Ramp Alternative as compared with the Stepped Ramp Alternative described above.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The Partial Stepped Ramp Alternative would not require the closure of South Street between Broad and Whitehall Streets; however, it would require the elimination of an existing exclusive u-turn movement between South Street southbound and Marginal Street northbound. Therefore, traffic in this area would be rerouted to south of the partial stepped ramp. In addition, the construction of both the eastern and western foundations of the partial stepped ramp as it rises over the Battery Park Underpass would require some roadway narrowing of South and Marginal Streets between Broad and Whitehall Streets. The narrower cross section of Marginal Street would affect access to and from the BMB, which could in turn affect future links to the reactivated Governors Island. No vehicle queuing/waiting area would be provided in front of the BMB.

ALTERNATIVE WITHOUT CHANGES IN FRONT OF THE BATTERY MARITIME BUILDING

Although this environmental review takes into consideration the plaza in front of the BMB, that project is dependent on funding that is currently being sought by the City of New York. Therefore, this alternative considers a scenario in which the proposed changes to the BMB plaza

East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

do not receive funding and are not implemented. The current roadway and sidewalk configuration in front of the BMB, which creates an unpleasant pedestrian experience as well as a difficult connection from the East River waterfront to Peter Minuit Plaza and Battery Park, would be maintained. The ramp to the Battery Park Underpass and the multiple at-grade traffic lanes surrounding the ramp on the south, east and west would continue to pose constraints to pedestrian and vehicular movement to and around the BMB. No additional vehicular access to the BMB and Whitehall Ferry Terminal would be created via a pick-up/drop-off lane. No changes to street direction on Broad or Whitehall Streets would occur.

LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would have a positive effect on land use by improving the design of and adding amenities to the esplanade and bikeway that runs through the project site and transforming vacant piers and underutilized land for recreational, cultural, and retail uses. However, the area in front of the BMB would not be enhanced to become a landscaped plaza and access to the BMB would not be improved as it would under the Proposed Action.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in the direct displacement of any residents. The parking facility that would be directly displaced from the project site does not play a critical role in the community and does not have substantial economic value to the City or regional area. No indirect displacement of residents or businesses would occur. Therefore, neither this alternative nor the Proposed Action would have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts with respect to socioeconomic conditions.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This alternative would not introduce new users of community facilities and would not have any significant adverse impacts on community facilities.

OPEN SPACE

Compared with the Proposed Action, a smaller amount of new open space would be created due to the fact that the area in front of the BMB would continue to be used for vehicular circulation rather than being transformed into a landscaped pedestrian plaza.

SHADOWS

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in the construction of new buildings requiring a shadows analysis.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts on archaeological or architectural resources. However, the context of the Battery Maritime Building, an architectural resource, would not be improved with the creation of a new BMB plaza.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Views of the Battery Maritime Building would not be improved with the creation of a new BMB plaza under this alternative. However, neither this alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would improve neighborhood character overall by enhancing the existing esplanade and creating new open space. However, because the unsightly and dangerous pedestrian conditions would remain in front of the BMB, neighborhood character would not be improved in the area surrounding the BMB.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

The in-water elements under this alternative would be the same as under the Proposed Action. Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would result in no significant adverse impacts on natural resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

As under the Proposed Action, significant adverse impacts with regard to hazardous materials would be avoided with the implementation of appropriate health and safety measures prior to and during construction.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would be consistent with all applicable Waterfront Revitalization Program policies.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE, AND ENERGY

This alternative would not introduce a greater amount of development than the Proposed Action and would therefore not result in increased demands on infrastructure, solid waste and sanitation services, or energy systems.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Unlike under the Proposed Action, there would be no changes to roadway configuration associated with the relocation of the entrance to the Battery Park Underpass and no resulting diversion of traffic at the southern end of the project site. Vehicular access to the BMB would remain constrained.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

Under this alternative, pedestrian access to the BMB would continue to be constrained and dangerous. In contrast to the Proposed Action, no pedestrian plaza would be created in front of the BMB.

AIR QUALITY

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would alter traffic conditions and would introduce buildings with heating systems that would produce emissions. However, neither this alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse impacts on air quality.

NOISE

Similar to the Proposed Action, a slight increase in noise levels due to increased traffic would occur. Noise levels on the project site would remain high, as they are under existing conditions, and users of the existing esplanade would be subjected to high noise levels.

CONSTRUCTION

Unlike the Proposed Action, this alternative would not involve the relocation of the entrance to the Battery Park Underpass. The 30-month period of excavation and construction of the portion of the FDR Drive leading into the underpass would not occur under this alternative, nor would the potential significant impacts with respect to traffic and air quality during that construction period. The temporary disruptions that would result from construction would be greatly reduced and the potential temporary significant adverse impacts on traffic and air quality that could result from the BPU construction would not occur. Likewise, the economic benefits associated with construction, resulting from expenditures on labor, materials, and services, would be reduced.

E. ALTERNATIVE WITHOUT THE BMB PLAZA AND THE PIER 42 BEACH

This alternative considers the differences in impacts if both the BMB plaza and the Pier 42 Beach are not constructed. All other portions of the Proposed Action would remain the same and not be changed.

LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

Without the BMB Plaza and the Pier 42 Beach, the substantial land use benefits associated with the Proposed Action would be reduced. They would affect a smaller area and the linkages to other open spaces to the south and the north would not be improved. The design of the esplanade would be improved and other new amenities would be provided. The bikeway/walkway would be improved beginning north of the BMB. Pier 42 would remain vacant, but Pier 35 would be redeveloped and the cove would be created at Pier 36. However, the setting of the cove would be less attractive without the Pier 42 Beach. Auto, bus and motorcycle parking would be removed under the FDR Drive, and the area under the FDR Drive would be improved for public open space and pavilions. The new pavilions would house recreational, cultural, and retail uses to serve the surrounding communities. Improving the waterfront area would be consistent with applicable public policies, which focus on waterfront access and the continued revitalization of Lower Manhattan. However, this alternative would be less supportive of public policies that call for increased open space and public access to the waterfront and the overall beneficial impacts would be substantially less with this alternative than with the Proposed Action.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Neither this alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts due to direct or indirect changes in residential and economic activity.

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would not result in the direct displacement of any residents. Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would displace 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 this alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in the indirect displacement of residents or businesses.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would not have any significant adverse impacts on community facilities.

OPEN SPACE

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would result in improvements to the East River esplanade, the New Market pier, and Piers 35, and 36 and reconstruction of Pier 15. A beach would not be created on Pier 42 and the BMB Plaza would not be created. Without these two amenities area residents, workers, and visitors would have substantially fewer public open space amenities to enjoy.

SHADOWS

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

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would involve changes to the East River bulkhead—an historic resource—and views of the bulkhead due to construction at the bulkhead line and the widening of the esplanade beyond the bulkhead from Broad Street to Old Slip. The context of surrounding historic resources would be generally improved under this alternative, with the exception of the BMB and the former Gouverneur Hospital and Gouverneur Hospital Dispensary. The BMB would still suffer from difficult access and the close proximity of moving traffic, and the derelict pier shed on Pier 42 would not be removed. Neither the Proposed Action nor this alternative would have significant adverse impacts on archaeological or architectural historic resources.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Under this alternative, two significant improvements to urban design on the project site would not occur. There would be no beach on Pier 42, and there would be no plaza in front of the BMB. Design enhancements would be made to the esplanade. There would be a new New Market Building and its pier would be improved and opened to the public. Pier 15 would be reconstructed and opened to the public. Pier 35 would be repaired, improved, and opened to the public. Views of the East River, the Harbor, and visual resources such as the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges would be improved. However, the new cove would be next to the vacant, unused pier shed of Pier 42 and the BMB would face directly on moving traffic.

East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

This alternative would make lesser improvements to neighborhood character as compared to the Proposed Action. The existing esplanade and bikeway/walkway would be improved. Vehicle parking would be removed beneath the elevated FDR Drive and new pavilions would be created. New open space created on all the piers on the project site except Pier 42. As under the Proposed Action, there would be some increase in traffic and noise due to new trips to the site, but there would be no significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would enhance the existing esplanade, expand of the existing 8-foot-wide esplanade between BMB and Old Slip, reconstruct Pier 15, demolish and reconstruct of the New Market Building, create a marina at the New Market Building pier, develop new open space on Pier 35, and create a cove at Pier 36. No reinforcement of Pier 42 would occur. Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would result in no significant adverse impacts on natural resources.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Under this alternative, Pier 42 would not be reinforced and a new beach would not be created on that pier. None of the excavation and construction associated with the BMB plaza would occur. However, as under the Proposed Action, contaminated materials on other parts of the project site would be removed or isolated, reducing the long-term risks associated with those contaminated materials.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would be consistent with all applicable Waterfront Revitalization Program policies, particularly those encouraging public access to the water's edge. However, this alternative would be less supportive of this policy because it would leave a vacant unused structure on Pier 42 rather than creating a beach and it would not improve access to the BMB, a significant historic, maritime use.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE AND ENERGY

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would not have significant adverse impacts on infrastructure, solid waste and sanitation services, or energy. Without the Pier 42 beach the new user population would be less and infrastructure demands would be somewhat less.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The removal of the beach at Pier 42 would result in nominal, if any, effect on traffic circulation as compared to the Proposed Action. Unlike under the Proposed Action, there would be no changes to roadway configuration associated with the relocation of the entrance to the Battery Park Underpass and no resulting diversion of traffic at the southern end of the project site. Vehicular access to the BMB would remain constrained. Like the proposed action, this alternative would result in a shortfall of off-street parking in the study area.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

This alternative would attract fewer users to the area of Pier 42 because it would not include the beach, which would reduce the number of new transit and pedestrian trips in the study area. However, with the Proposed Action, significant adverse transit and pedestrian impacts were not anticipated. Without the BMB plaza pedestrian circulation in this area and pedestrian connections to the waterfront esplanade would not be improved, leaving a potentially dangerous condition in front of the BMB. However, as under the Proposed Action, sidewalks and crosswalks would function at acceptable levels.

AIR QUALITY

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would alter traffic conditions and would introduce buildings with heating systems that would produce emissions. However, neither this alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse impacts on air quality.

NOISE

Similar to the Proposed Action, a slight increase in noise levels due to increased traffic would occur. Noise levels on the project site would remain high, as they are under existing conditions, and users of the existing esplanade would be subjected to high noise levels. To the extent there would be less new open space and fewer users of the open space, the potential significant adverse impact of high noise levels on users of the new open space would be reduced under this alternative.

CONSTRUCTION

Under this alternative, the improvements to the esplanade would be the same as with the Proposed Action, but less new open space would be created on piers. The Pier 42 pier shed would not be demolished and the beach would not be created. The major construction effort associated with the BMB Plaza, specifically extension of the BPU tunnel, would not occur. The temporary disruptions that would result from construction would be greatly reduced and the potential temporary significant adverse impacts on traffic and air quality that could result from the BPU construction would not occur. Likewise, the economic benefits associated with construction, resulting from expenditures on labor, materials, and services, would be reduced.

F. ALTERNATIVE IN-WATER CONFIGURATIONS SOUTH OF PIER 15

If the operator of the proposed marina at the New Market Building pier requires additional over-water coverage, it may be necessary to reduce the over-water coverage south of Pier 15 in order to avoid an overall increase in over-water coverage. This could be accomplished by reducing the amount of over-water coverage at Pier 14 in the future.

Piers 13 and 14 are currently in poor condition and will be removed by the fall of 2007. There are no current plans to rebuild the piers, and no capital funding yet devoted to reconstruction. If, however, the piers are rebuilt at some time in the future, this redevelopment would occur beyond the Proposed Action's Build year. Currently, potential redevelopment scenarios contemplate either the rebuilding of both piers with retail pier shed structures and boats moored around their sides; the rebuilding of just Pier 13 with a retail pier shed structure; or the rebuilding of just Pier 13 for transportation (ferry) use. This alternative considers the potential effects of rebuilding only a portion of Pier 14 at some time in the future, assuming a reduction in net over-water

coverage is necessary for the project as a result of an increase in the overwater coverage associated with the marina. Of the impact categories discussed in this EIS, only land use and natural resources would be affected under this alternative.

LAND USE

Under this alternative, there would be a reduced amount of program space available for the future redevelopment of Pier 14. The future amount of open space on Pier 14 would, however, remain constant as compared to the Proposed Action. The increased amount of space used for the New Market marina would result a smaller amount of space at Pier 14 that would be used for program elements such as retail space and/or maritime uses currently contemplated at that pier. Neither this alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in a significant adverse impact on land use.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

Compared with the Proposed Action, this alternative would result in a greater amount of overwater coverage at the New Market Building marina. However, because the reduction in overwater coverage at Pier 14 would compensate for this increase, this alternative would not have the potential to result in additional impacts on natural resources or water quality.

G. ALTERNATIVE RETAINING A PORTION OF AUTOMOBILE PARKING

This alternative assumes that approximately half of the parking under the FDR Drive is retained. This would reduce the amount of recreational open space created by the Proposed Action. To the extent that this reduces the area where pavilions could be located under the FDR, there would be fewer or possibly smaller pavilions. All other parts of the Proposed Action are assumed to remain unchanged.

LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

As described above, this alternative would provide less public open space and would potentially reduce the number or size of the pavilions provided for recreational, cultural and retail uses. The open space adjacent to the remaining parking areas would require visual buffers to make them less unattractive. However, this alternative would still constitute an improvement over current land use conditions. Therefore, as under the Proposed Action, there would be no significant adverse impacts on land use.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

This alternative would only displace a portion 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 this alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in the indirect displacement of residents or businesses, and neither would have a significant adverse impact on socioeconomic conditions.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would not have any significant adverse impacts on community facilities.

OPEN SPACE

This alternative would provide less public open space under the FDR Drive than the Proposed Action. It potentially would also provide fewer or smaller pavilions. Further, the open space adjacent to the remaining parking areas would require visual buffers to make them less unattractive.

SHADOWS

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

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Like the Proposed Action, this alternative would involve changes to the East River bulkhead—an historic resource—and to views of the bulkhead due to construction at the bulkhead line and the widening of the esplanade beyond the bulkhead from Broad Street to Old Slip. Since this alternative would construct fewer or smaller pavilions, it would involve less subsurface disturbance, and therefore could affect areas of potential archaeological sensitivity to a lesser extent than the Proposed Action. The context of surrounding historic resources would not be as improved under this alternative, as views from and around the esplanade would still include parking below the FDR Drive.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Retaining parking under the FDR Drive would reduce the urban design and visual benefits of the Proposed Action. Visitors to the open space approaching across South Street would be confronted by parked cars and parking booths in some locations making the waterfront less accessible and less attractive. However, all the other urban design and visual benefits of the Proposed Action would still be attained.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

This alternative would make a lesser improvement to neighborhood character as compared to the Proposed Action because a portion of the existing parking would still occupy part of the area under the FDR Drive. This would reduce both the amount of the open space and the visual improvements associated with the Proposed Action. Compared to the Proposed Action, a portion of the vehicle trips that would be diverted to off-site facilities with the Proposed Action would remain on the project site. As a result, delays at some of the analysis locations may be greater. However, overall, this alternative would not result in a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER QUALITY

The parking would be retained in areas distant from the water and would remain on sites that currently are used as parking and are devoid of natural resources. Therefore, the impacts of this alternative would be the same as the Proposed Action.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Similar to the Proposed Action, contaminated materials on the project site would be removed or isolated, reducing the long-term risks associated with those contaminated materials.

East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Similar to the Proposed Action, this alternative would be consistent with the Waterfront Revitalization Program policies, particularly those encouraging public access to the water's edge. However, this alternative would be less supportive of this policy because it would retain some parking areas on the project site.

INFRASTRUCTURE, SOLID WASTE AND ENERGY

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

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Under this alternative, a portion of the vehicle trips that would be diverted to off-site facilities with the Proposed Action would remain on the project site. As a result, delays at some of the analysis locations may increase as compared to the Proposed Action, but it is not expected that the proposed mitigation would need to be substantially different. Retaining these parking spaces would reduce the parking shortfall anticipated with the Proposed Action.

TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIANS

Retaining a portion of the parking under the FDR Drive would not affect transit and pedestrian conditions.

AIR QUALITY

Retaining some parking under the FDR would only divert a small number of vehicle trips and consequently would not affect air quality as analyzed for the Proposed Action. Neither this alternative nor the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse impacts on air quality.

NOISE

Under this alternative, noise levels would be similar to the Proposed Action. Noise levels on the project site would remain high, as they are under existing conditions and as they would be with the Proposed Action.

CONSTRUCTION

Under this alternative, the improvements to the esplanade would be the same as with the Proposed Action, but less new open space would be created on piers. Construction methods and impacts would be approximately the same as under the Proposed Action. *