

**Draft Scoping Document
For Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement
For the *Grace Terrace* Senior Housing
Rezoning, Zoning Map Amendment and Site Plan Approval
Mount Vernon, New York
December 19, 2013**

SEQR Classification of Action: Type I Action

Lead Agency: Mount Vernon City Council
City Hall
Mount Vernon, New York

A. PURPOSE OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

This document identifies the environmental features and issues to be addressed in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“DEIS”) for the proposed *Grace Terrace* senior housing development. Accordingly, this Scoping Document addresses the items identified in paragraphs (f)(1) through (7) of Section 617.8 of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQRA”) Regulations.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is to be prepared by Ferrandino & Associates Inc. for the Applicant regarding the Proposed Action: rezoning of the *Grace Terrace* development site from Downtown Business (DB) to the Multi Family Senior Citizen Floating Overlay Zone (RMF-SC), mapping of same and site plan approval thereof.

The purpose of the DEIS is to assess the potential environmental impacts of the rezoning and development of the *Grace Terrace* senior housing site from Downtown Business (DB) to the Multi Family Senior Citizen Floating Overlay Zone (RMF-SC) as well as site plan approval, hereinafter referred to as the Proposed Action. The DEIS is intended to be a comprehensive assessment of impacts which may result from the Proposed Action where a specific building program is defined. The DEIS will be developed pursuant to the requirements of SEQR [617.9(b)] and this Scoping Document. The DEIS will include the areas of analysis outlined below. Where information can be obtained from previous planning, technical or environmental studies performed for and by the City of Mount Vernon, this information will be used.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is a zone change, mapping of the site and site plan approval to accommodate the development of senior housing in accordance with the Multi Family Senior Citizen Floating Overlay Zone (RMF-SC) in the City of Mount Vernon, NY.

The RMF-SC Floating Overlay Zone, adopted by the Mount Vernon City Council on December 11, 2013, is intended to make the zoning code consistent with Federal, New York State and Westchester County initiatives to create affordable housing for senior citizens.

Grace Terrace

This 15,812 square foot lot located at 125-129 South Fifth Avenue (**Map 3.1.2**), hereinafter called the “*Grace Terrace Site*” will be developed as a 10 story (96 foot tall) affordable senior housing facility. The proposed new construction will include 66 affordable senior units (plus one unit for the on-site

superintendent). In addition to the residential units, the development will include a community room, laundry, computer lab, outdoor patio/garden space, management office and seventeen surface parking spaces. The *Grace Terrace* Site, currently zoned for Downtown Business (DB), consists of three parcels identified as Tax Map Section 165.78, Block 3088, Lots 32, 33 and 34 in the City of Mount Vernon. The three lots will be merged into one tax parcel as part of the development process. A small two story building, which will be demolished, currently occupies the site and houses the New Beginnings Educational Institute Day Care Center.

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES

The DEIS will cover, at a minimum, all items in this Scoping Document. Each impact issue will be presented in a separate subsection which includes a discussion of existing conditions, future conditions without the Proposed Action and future conditions with the Proposed Action, alternatives to the Proposed Action and mitigation measures designed to minimize the identified impacts.

Narrative discussions will be accompanied by appropriate tables, charts, graphs and figures whenever possible. If a particular subject can be most effectively described in graphic format, the narrative discussion will summarize and highlight the information presented graphically. Appropriate plans and maps showing the *Grace Terrace* Site will include adjacent properties, neighboring uses and structures, streets and other infrastructure.

Information will be presented in a manner which can be readily understood by the public. Efforts will be made to avoid the use of technical jargon. When practical, impacts will be described in terms which the lay person can readily understand.

Discussions of mitigation measures will clearly indicate which measures have been incorporated into the Proposed Action, versus measures that have not been incorporated into the Proposed Actions plans. Those mitigation measures not incorporated into the Proposed Action and not believed to be practicable will be explained.

The document and any appendices or technical reports will be written in the third person (i.e. the terms “we” and “our” will not be used).

Any assumptions that are not “worst case” assumptions will be clearly identified and the rationale for not incorporating the “worst case” assumption(s) will be provided.

The entire document will be checked carefully to ensure consistency with respect to the information presented in the various sections.

D. INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

Cover Sheet: The DEIS will be preceded by a Cover Sheet that will include the following:

- The report as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- Title and location of the Proposed Action
- Lead Agency for the Proposed Action and the name and telephone number of the contact representing the Lead Agency
- Name and address of the Proposed Action sponsor, and the name and telephone number of the contact person representing the Proposed Action sponsor.

- The name, address and responsibilities of the primary preparer(s) of the DEIS and the name and telephone number of a contact person representing the preparer(s). The names, addresses and responsibilities of any other consultants involved with the Proposed Action will be listed.
- Date of acceptance of the DEIS (to be inserted later)
- Deadline by which written comments will be accepted by the Lead Agency (to be inserted later).
- Web site wherein the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Final Environmental Impact Statement will be posted

Following the cover sheet, a list (name, address and telephone numbers) of all consultants and sub-consultants involved in the project and a list of all Interested and Involved Agencies will be provided.

E. TABLE OF CONTENTS

The DEIS is to be written to specifically follow the format and content sequence of this Scoping Document. This Scoping Document will serve as the DEIS Table of Contents which will indicate the chapters of the DEIS and page numbers, as well as a list of exhibits, tables and appendices, if any.

F. DEIS CHAPTERS

1. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary will include a concise summary of the project and all chapters in the DEIS.

2. Purpose of Environmental Impact Statement

This chapter will give a concise explanation of the purpose of the Environmental Impact Statement.

3. Description of the Proposed Action

This chapter introduces the reader to the Proposed Action, the rezoning and mapping of the *Grace Terrace* Site to RMF-SC and site plan approval thereof, and sets the context in which to assess impacts and alternatives. The chapter will include:

- a. Proposed Action overview, including the location of the proposed project and the geographic boundaries (including appropriate descriptive graphics).
- b. Project description for the Proposed Action, including: project location, site description (including lot square footage, existing conditions, topography and site infrastructure), development concept (including number and type of dwelling units, compliance with affordable housing requirements, common areas and other amenities), building description (including building square footage, building height, architectural description, floor use breakdown for amenities and unit types, green features, landscaping, lighting, parking and a description of the surrounding area including streets and proposed site access, any streetscape enhancements and associated site improvements), facility operations, project affiliations, property restrictions, financing and zoning compliance.
- c. Outline the background and history of the Proposed Action, including a summary of the purpose, needs and benefits of the Proposed Action. This section will focus on the

genesis of the *Grace Terrace* development project, community support for it, and any market information in support of the project.

- d. Explanation and discussion of the approvals, including rezoning and Site Plan Approval, required for the Proposed Action to go forward, including identification of each component requiring action by an Involved Agency prior to implementation of the Proposed Action. Each agency involved in these approvals will be identified.

4. Environmental Setting, Potential Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

4.1 Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy

Building upon the GEIS completed for the RMF-SC zone, this section will describe the existing land use, zoning and public policy for the City of Mount Vernon and evaluate the Proposed Action's compatibility with the community character and development trends in the surrounding area.

- a. Define Land Use Study Area. The Land Use Study Area will correspond to the area roughly within an eighth mile of the *Grace Terrace* Site, where the Proposed Action may have the potential to affect existing land use, land use trends and land use plans, and overall neighborhood character. The Land Use Study Area is outlined on the attached map (**Figure 1**).
- b. Based upon existing GIS data, inventory existing land uses in the Land Use Study Area, focusing on major uses that could be affected, such as other residential uses, parking, retail and industrial uses, community and cultural facilities, churches, open space and recreation. Include a GIS-based land use map of the Study Area. This section will also include a description of any recent or proposed developments in the area.
- c. Map (based upon existing GIS data) and analyze the existing zoning districts in the Land Use Study Area and provide a summary of the existing zoning regulations and any pending zoning actions and/or *City of Mount Vernon 2011 Draft Comprehensive Plan* changes proposed (if any). Provide background and history of the current zoning for the site of the Proposed Action and of the newly adopted RMF-SC zone. This analysis will provide a description of the permitted uses, lot and bulk requirements, parking and loading requirements, etc.
- d. Provide a matrix showing any differences between existing land use and zoning and proposed land use and zoning to implement the Proposed Action.
- e. Assess the compatibility of the Proposed Action with City zoning, and City and County land use plans and traffic studies for the Land Use Study Area. Studies and reports impacting public policies, including the *City of Mount Vernon 2011 Draft Comprehensive Plan* and the County's *Westchester 2025: Land Use in Westchester* and *Patterns for Westchester* reports will be assessed for compatibility (this will provide the basis for the "no build" scenario).
- f. Analyze the anticipated impacts of the Proposed Action on land, land use, land use trends, zoning, and neighborhood character within the Land Use Study Area. Based on the existing land use, zoning and recent development trends identified above, assess future conditions in land use, zoning and neighborhood character without the Proposed Action.

- g. Based upon results of the above analyses, where necessary, provide and describe mitigation measures.

4.2 Urban Design and Visual Character

- a. Building upon the GEIS completed for the RMF-SC Floating Overlay Zone, describe and analyze visual and urban design relationships between the Proposed Action and the Land Use Study Area, including identification of any important views. Existing conditions will be documented through the use of captioned photographs and an accompanying map with notes describing views. Areas that are closer to the *Grace Terrace* Site will be analyzed in greater detail than those areas that are further from the site.
- b. Discuss any changes in the visual character of the area as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action. Specific relationships between the Proposed Action and adjacent properties and pedestrian areas with regard to height, bulk, scale, shadows, light and air will be generally described. This will include an examination of visual impacts on the character of the Land Use Study Area.

The visual analysis will illustrate the topographic relationship of the Proposed Action site to the surrounding properties, which would be determined by viewer distance, location and mobility.

- c. Building upon studies undertaken in the RMF-SC GEIS, a shadow study will be undertaken to assess the potential impact of shadows from new structures on nearby properties with residential units, important natural features, publicly accessible open space, historic features or other sunlight-sensitive resources that are dependent on natural light.

The shadow study will determine the longest possible shadow (which occurs on the December 21 winter solstice) that could result from the Proposed Action to determine if it could reach any sunlight-sensitive resources at any time of the year. The analysis will be documented with graphics that compare the shadows resulting from the "No Action Alternative" with shadows resulting from the Proposed Action on four representational days: the June 21 summer solstice, the December 21 winter solstice, the March 21 vernal equinox (or the September 21 autumnal equinox which is considered equivalent) and a spring or summer day halfway between the summer solstice and equinoxes such as May 6 or August 6 (which are approximately equivalent).

- d. Analyze the anticipated impacts of the Proposed Action on the urban design and visual character within the Land Use Study Area.
- e. Propose and describe mitigation measures if applicable. In particular, describe the efforts that will be made to screen parking areas from pedestrian areas and to incorporate design standards that are compatible with neighborhood character and scale.

4.3 Historic and Archaeological Resources

- a. Identify any architectural or historic resources which are on, or eligible for listing on, the Federal or New York State Landmark Register that may be affected by the Proposed Action, including those which have a view of the Proposed Action area.

- b. The preparer will coordinate the task above with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. If it is determined that there are historic or archaeological resources in the area that must be examined, a Stage 1A study will be prepared.
- c. Propose and describe mitigation measures if applicable.

4.4 Natural Resources

- a. Using existing databases, document generic existing conditions for the following natural resource categories: hazardous waste, wildlife and habitat.
- b. Describe and analyze any potential impacts that the Proposed Action will have upon the above natural resource categories within the City.
- c. Propose and describe mitigation measures if applicable.

4.5 Infrastructure

This impact analysis will document demand for major utility services generated by the Proposed Action, as well as existing supply. The utilities of concern are primarily water supply, stormwater, sanitary sewage, solid waste and gas and electric.

- a. Water Supply
 - i. Obtain information on the existing distribution network of water supply pipes, pressures, conditions and an assessment of any problems with the networks serving the *Grace Terrace* Site. The availability of adequate water supply from the Mount Vernon Water Department will be ascertained.
 - ii. Estimate total water demand for the Proposed Action, and peak usage.
 - iii. Determine whether or not the City of Mount Vernon Water Department can supply adequate water of sufficient pressure under all conditions of flow, per Westchester County Health Department and New York State Department of Health Code, Sub-part 5, using the existing water distribution system. All conditions of flow will include domestic consumption, commercial industrial consumption and fire flows.
 - iv. Analyze cumulative impacts on water supply.
 - v. Propose and describe mitigation measure, if appropriate.
- b. Sanitary Sewage and Stormwater Management
 - i. Obtain information on existing stormwater and sanitary sewer conditions, including information from the City of Mount Vernon Department of Public Works and Westchester County Department of Environmental Facilities regarding the existing capacity of the wastewater treatment plant servicing the proposed project.
 - ii. Estimate stormwater and sanitary sewage generation.
 - iii. Assess the Proposed Action's potential impact on the sanitary and stormwater sewer system, including the wastewater treatment plant's ability to accept and treat wastewater generated by the Proposed Action. Analyze the impact of the

incremental increase in stormwater and sewage generation, as well as cumulative impacts.

- iv. Propose and describe mitigation measures, if applicable.
- c. Solid Waste
 - i. Estimate solid waste generation.
 - ii. Document the impacts of solid waste disposal on land filling and resource recovery in Mount Vernon.
 - iii. Determine the impacts of solid waste generation on noise.
 - iv. Describe disposal plans for construction debris.
 - v. Propose and describe mitigation measures, if applicable.
- d. Gas and Electric Consumption
 - i. Estimate energy usage with the Proposed Action. This analysis will take into account energy conservation features included in the proposed construction.
 - ii. Determine the impact of the increased energy demand caused by the Proposed Action, including the effect of this increased demand on current utility capacity.

4.6 Transportation, Traffic and Parking

The transportation, traffic and transportation elements will evaluate the impacts of the Proposed Action on traffic flow and parking conditions in the area and propose measures to mitigate the impacts if necessary.

- a. Existing Conditions
 - i. Inventory of existing road conditions and traffic control in the site vicinity, including access.
 - ii. Determine existing traffic volumes in the weekday AM and PM peak hours. Calculate existing Levels of Service for each of the following study intersections:
 - 1. West Second Street at South Fifth Avenue
 - 2. West Third Street at South Fifth Avenue
 - 3. E/W Second Street at South Fourth Avenue
 - 4. E/W Third Street at South Fourth Avenue
 - iii. Describe existing off-street and on-street parking resources.
 - iv. Describe existing public transit options, including bus and municipal (Office of the Aging) jitney services, in the site vicinity.
 - v. Observe and document pedestrian patterns.
- b. No Build Analysis
 - i. Increase traffic volumes from the existing counts to reflect background growth in the project area using a factor acceptable to the City Planning Department. Next, include traffic from proposed/approved developments in the vicinity of

the project. Those increases will constitute the No Build traffic volumes and will be applied to the study intersections identified in 2.6a above.

- ii. Calculate No Build Levels of Service for the study intersections.
- c. Build Analysis (anticipated traffic and transportation impacts)
 - i. Estimate trip generation from the completed 66-unit senior housing development as well as the parking demand. The combination of new traffic with the No Build traffic will result in the design year (full build-out is projected for 2016) for the proposed project. Parking demand will be based on applicable City Codes and compared with the proposed parking supply per the site plans.
 - ii. Calculate Build Levels of Service for the study area intersections.
 - iii. Perform a parking demand analysis, which is to include a description of the adequacy of the nearby parking supply.
 - iv. Evaluate the potential impacts that may result from changes in traffic patterns, particularly new pick-up and drop-off patterns, associated with the Proposed Action.
 - v. Evaluate potential impacts on public transportation facilities.
 - vi. Describe anticipated construction traffic impacts.
 - vii. Compare traffic generated by proposed project with alternate scenarios as described in Section 8b and 8c.
- d. Proposed Mitigation
 - i. Recommend traffic, access and parking improvements if mitigation of impacts is required.
- e. Alternative Analyses
 - i. As-of-Right and Lower Density Alternative Analyses - Estimate trip generation as well as the parking demands based upon the as-of-right and lower density with ground floor retail alternatives as described in 8.b and 8.c below. Parking demand will be based upon applicable City Codes and proposed parking ratios for the RMF-SC Floating Overlay Zone.

4.7 Air Quality and Noise

Utilizing data collected in the GEIS, generic air quality and noise analysis will be undertaken to compare the impacts associated with the Proposed Action versus the existing development and zoning. Available resources such as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation monitoring reports and the *New York State Annual Air Quality Report*, as well as County monitoring, will be used.

4.8 Economic Development

The economic development analysis will draw upon existing demographic and market data, including the *2011 Mount Vernon City-wide Market Study*. In addition, noteworthy population and demographic data from the 2010 Census and trends from *American Community Survey (ACS)* data will be utilized. The Applicant's proprietary market study for the Site will also be used as a basis for analysis.

- a. Define the target market. The market segment will be defined in accordance with the market data. The market data will document the need for affordable rental housing for seniors.
- b. Any plans officially adopted or presently being prepared that impact the course of housing development will be analyzed to ascertain whether or not the Proposed Action is in keeping with the objectives of these plans.
- c. Estimate construction expenditures and economic impacts of construction activities – jobs (expressed in person years of employment). Estimate multiplier impacts associated with the construction of the Proposed Action, e.g. secondary spending during construction.
- d. Estimate the number and type of jobs to be generated and/or lost from the Proposed Action.
- e. Estimate the real property taxes to be generated from implementation of the Proposed Action.
- f. Based on a. through f. above, address quality of life concerns in the Land Use Study Area, especially issues related to growth inducement, such as potential secondary growth.
- g. Provide and describe mitigation measures as needed based upon the above analyses.

4.9 Municipal Services

This section will determine if community services are adequate to meet the needs of the Proposed Action. This section will provide site-specific information pertinent to police, fire, EMS, schools, library and recreational and health facilities. The DEIS will:

- a. Describe neighborhood trends and characteristics in a general way using U.S. Census data.
- b. Analyze existing community facilities and services applicable to the Proposed Action site. This analysis will include facilities and services provided by the City of Mount Vernon, the School District and Westchester County, as applicable. It will also include an analysis of crime statistics, fire and emergency service calls within the Land Use Study Area over the last three to five years to determine the impact the Proposed Action will have on the area.
- c. Using standard or locally-based multipliers and/or experience based upon similar projects, project the number of school age children, if any, to be generated by the Proposed Action.
- d. Assess any potential impacts on the provision of community facilities or services as a result of the Proposed Action (e.g. need for additional police, fire or ambulance services, personnel or equipment, facilities, etc. and the cost thereof). Cross reference this section with fiscal impacts, Section 2.8.
- e. Propose and describe mitigation measures, if appropriate.

4.10 Construction

The construction impact section will describe the extent of the Proposed Action's construction activities, including equipment that would be used on site, hours of operation, routing of equipment/construction vehicles to and from the site, the number of employees and deliveries, and any safety plans, as well as short term impacts on temporary parking, air quality and noise. The controls (i.e. dust control plans) to be employed by the developer during construction will be described. Construction impacts will be evaluated qualitatively, including any impacts on adjacent roadways, traffic routing plans, neighborhoods, and public facilities during the construction period. The construction on adjoining sites will be taken into consideration. Mitigation measure will be proposed and described.

5. Growth-Inducing Impacts

This chapter of the DEIS will assess and analyze, together with the impacts of the Proposed Action, whether additional off-site growth would be stimulated and the type of growth anticipated. The DEIS will address specific impacts on the immediate neighborhood, community and health and other service providers, and cross referenced where appropriate with Section 2.8.

6. Adverse Impacts That Cannot Be Avoided

Where significant impacts of the Proposed Action cannot be mitigated, these will be described as unavoidable adverse impacts and identified in this chapter. Impacts may be both short term (construction) and long term in nature.

7. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

An evaluation must be made of the environmental resources that would be irretrievably and irreversibly committed to the development of the Proposed Action.

8. Analysis of Alternatives

SEQRA mandates that impact statements analyze a reasonable range of alternatives. These analyses must include a description of the impacts (adverse, beneficial, long and short term, cumulative) created by the Alternatives, as well as their probability and significance in comparison to those of the proposed Action. The alternatives will be analyzed qualitatively, except where project impacts have been identified, in which case quantitative analyses comparing impacts will be performed. This comparative analysis will be provided in both narrative and matrix form.

The following Alternatives will be examined:

- a. No Action Alternative – Assumes a scenario in which the project site is not rezoned, no development takes place and the current land use continues.
- b. As-of-right Alternative - Assumes a scenario in which the project site is not rezoned and maximum development occurs under existing zoning as-of-right.
- c. Reduced Height Alternative – Assumes a scenario in which the height of the proposed Grace Terrace building is reduced to 8 stories (77 feet 4 inches) with the same number of dwelling units.

9. Appendices

The DEIS will provide a glossary and listing of sources consulted to ensure that the public can adequately comment on technical analyses within the DEIS. The Appendices will also identify supplemental sources of information used in preparing the document as well as all technical studies, traffic counts, etc.

DRAFT

Grace Terrace Land Use Study Area

Figure 1



City of Mount Vernon, New York
Prepared by: Ferrandino & Associates Inc.
Data Source: Westchester County Data
Date: December 2013