

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW?

In NYC, all neighborhood rezonings and many development proposals have to go through a public review process called ULURP (or the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure). Part of that process is a review of all the ways the proposed changes might impact the neighborhood — from traffic, to building shadows, to affordability.

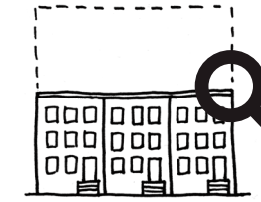
Community members can have a say in what kinds of “impacts” are considered, which is an important way to be involved in local land use decisions.

What’s an “impact”?

Impacts are potential changes the proposal might create in the neighborhood. The city’s basic list of impacts usually includes:

- Affordability & jobs
- Historic & natural resources
- Community facilities
- Solid waste & sanitation
- Neighborhood character
- Traffic & parking
- Air quality
- Open space
- Transit & pedestrians
- Noise & construction
- Land use & zoning

But any change you think might happen because of the proposal could be an impact. Go to the scoping hearing to get yours added to the list!



1 LONG BEFORE ULURP, THE PARTY PROPOSING CHANGES FILLS OUT FORMS DESCRIBING THE PROPOSAL.

If the proposal is... ...a neighborhood rezoning, the Department of City Planning (DCP) fills out the forms.
...a private development, the developer fills out the forms.

These are the forms:



Pre-Application Statement

This is a brief description of the project.



Reasonable Worst Case Scenario Memo

This describes the maximum amount that could ever be built with this proposal.



Environmental Assessment Statement

This is an initial list of the impacts a proposal might have.

DCP reviews these forms to decide if a proposal will have enough impact to require a fuller analysis through something called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An EIS is required for all neighborhood rezonings, but not all private development proposals.

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- Contact your Community Board or local City Council Member’s office to find out if there are any upcoming ULURP proposals in your neighborhood.
- If you’ve heard the city is considering a proposal but you can’t find it online, call your DCP borough office and ask them for these documents.

2 LEADING UP TO ULURP, AN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY IS DONE.



DCP creates a Draft Scope and holds a public scoping hearing.

The Draft Scope includes a detailed description of the project and a list of what will be analyzed in the environmental study. The scope can also address ways to “mitigate” or offset impacts.

DCP presents a draft of the scope to the public at a scoping hearing.

DCP releases the Final Scope.

Based on feedback from the public, DCP modifies the Draft Scope to create the Final Scope, which lists what will be in the environmental study.



The environmental study is carried out.

This can sometimes take more than a year! The information found during the environmental study will be used to write the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Study vs Statement?

The environmental study is the process of analyzing the impacts of a proposal. The findings of that study then make up the Environmental Impact Statement.

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- Go to the scoping hearing and comment on anything you think is missing from their list.
- Remind DCP of other development going on in the area.
- Make recommendations on how big impacts could be offset.
- You can submit written comments too.

3 DURING ULURP, THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT IS REVIEWED.

DCP releases a Draft EIS and starts the ULURP process.



The Draft EIS is a giant document that estimates what each impact of the proposal will be. For impacts that are considered major, the Draft EIS must also include possible steps that could be taken to “mitigate” or offset the impacts.

Once the Draft EIS is released, ULURP starts, and the proposal goes to the Community Board and Borough President for review.

The City Planning Commission (CPC) holds a hearing to give communities a chance to weigh in on the proposal.

CPC has one hearing in which the public can comment on both the actual proposal going through ULURP and whether the Draft EIS covers the right information.



After the hearing, the Draft EIS becomes a Final EIS.

The Final EIS (or just EIS) is usually just the Draft EIS with minor changes. CPC votes on the proposal, and the rest of the ULURP process continues on from there, with the City Council and the Mayor reviewing the proposal.



WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- Read the Draft EIS!
- Comment at CPC’s public hearing on anything in the Draft EIS that doesn’t reflect actual conditions in your neighborhood or doesn’t account for impacts from other developments.
- Use the information collected in the Draft EIS to support your arguments for or against the proposal at any hearing you go to.