Frequently Asked Questions: Mitigation, Monitoring, and the Environment

181 Mercer Street Project

NYU is committed to minimizing the effects of construction in the vicinity of the 181 Mercer Street construction site. With the project’s construction manager, Turner Construction Company, and in accordance with the Restrictive Declaration governing the site, NYU has developed construction mitigation plans to address a variety of project components relating to the environment. The Restrictive Declaration also requires that an independent third party monitor oversee the implementation and performance of NYU’s mitigation plans. The independent monitor reports directly to the NYC Department of City Planning.

Who is monitoring NYU to ensure implementation of and compliance with the required mitigation plans?

With the approval of the NYC Department of City Planning, Henningson, Durham & Richardson Architecture and Engineering, P.C. (HDR) has been retained as the independent third party monitor for the 181 Mercer Street project. HDR reports directly to City Planning and oversees the implementation and performance of NYU’s mitigation plans as set forth in the Restrictive Declaration. HDR provides independent monitoring services on other major New York City construction projects, including Columbia University – Manhattanville, Rockefeller University, and Seward Park.

HDR monitors compliance with NYU’s construction mitigation commitments through a combination of field inspections, review of relevant project documentation, and ongoing communication with NYU and the NYC Department of City Planning. Status reports are regularly submitted to City Planning; these reports are available on the 181 Mercer construction page.

What mitigation procedures are in place to address air emissions?

The Construction Air Emissions Reduction Plan is expected to help reduce air emissions at the site. The construction mitigation measures outlined in the plan include:

- reducing the amount of diesel equipment onsite and planning for the use of electric equipment;
- using clean fuel with lower sulfur for diesel equipment;
- using newer equipment and keeping it well-maintained;
- using the best-available tailpipe technology to filter diesel emissions;
- placing generators away from windows, fresh air intakes, and public open spaces;
- restricting idling time for construction vehicles to approximately 3 minutes.
What mitigation procedures are in place to address dust control?
The Fugitive Dust Control Plan is expected to help minimize and control fugitive dust during all the construction phases. The construction mitigation measures outlined in the plan include:

- washing, covering, wetting, and spraying mist on trucks and construction equipment throughout the day to suppress demolition dust;
- using wheel washing stations and hosing vehicles prior to leaving the site;
- using wet blade misting for any grinding, drilling and saw cutting operations;
- equipping trucks with tight fitting tailgates and covered loads when hauling loose soil, rocks and sediment;
- regular cleaning of roads adjacent to the project site to supplement cleaning by the City.

What mitigation procedures are in place to address construction noise?
Building contractors are required to have a Noise Reduction Plan as part of their scope of work. The construction mitigation measures outlined in the plan include:

- installing permanent and portable noise barriers, including the sound-attenuating fence;
- configuring the site to minimize noise from back up alarms, loud equipment, and activity in noise sensitive locations;
- using electric equipment and mufflers on equipment where practical;
- noise testing equipment prior to arrival on site to ensure compliance with City approved noise requirements for certain types of construction equipment;
- complying with the City’s Noise Control Code.

What mitigation procedures are in place to address vibration monitoring of historic resources?
The Construction Protection Plan put in place a vibration monitoring program for historic resources within a 90-foot radius of the project site, including Silver Towers II (a landmark building) and six buildings within the NoHo Historic District. The vibration monitoring program was in place during the below-grade excavation, foundations, slab, foundation walls, and permanent bracing of the foundation wall construction and is now complete.

What mitigation procedures are in place to address dewatering?
A dewatering plan in accordance with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulations was in place for the discharge of runoff and water encountered during the excavation and foundations phases of construction and is now complete.

What mitigation procedures are in place to address pest management?
A Pest Management Plan, developed by a licensed pest control firm, will be implemented to control pests at the site during each construction phase. Current pest management plan methodology includes:

- removing shrubs that attract and house pests;
- installing rat bait stations and/or traps around the periphery and within the construction site, and
regular bait station maintenance to ensure they are functioning correctly;
  • keeping the construction site clean with lidded trash cans and regular garbage collection;
  • pumping standing water before water becomes septic.

What mitigation procedures are in place to address hazardous material remediation?
For the duration of the construction period, NYU will follow strict protocols to safely remove and dispose of hazardous materials from the project site. Prior to the start of construction, a Remedial Action Plan (“RAP”), Construction Health and Safety Plan (“CHASP”), and Community Air Monitoring Plan (“CAMP”) were developed for the project and reviewed and approved by the NYC Office of Environmental Remediation (“OER”). These plans and protocols establish the means and methods for removal of hazardous soils during construction activities, and include daily air monitoring during certain construction phases, and a health and safety plan for workers at the site. All plans were developed and will be implemented in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. OER’s oversight of NYU’s implementation of these plans will be on-going for the duration of the construction project. Hazardous materials remediation and protection measures on the site include:
  • providing two feet of clean fill on landscaped areas
  • incorporating a vapor barrier into the design of 181 Mercer Street;
  • covering stockpiled soils on site;
  • suppressing dust during excavation, grading, and other construction activities;
  • continuing to remediate Spill No. 0910543 in accordance with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation requirements.

What mitigation procedures are in place to address traffic?
The Maintenance and Protection of Traffic Plan (MPT) details street and sidewalk closures necessary to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety on the periphery of the construction site. The Maintenance and Protection of Traffic Plan for the 181 Mercer Street project may be modified depending on the construction phase. Adequate sidewalk access to existing residences, retail stores, and buildings will be maintained at all times. Notices of sidewalk and lane closures or any change to the existing MPT plan will be posted on the 181 Mercer Street construction website. The MPT Plan is reviewed and approved by the NYC Department of Transportation.