



**Community United to Protect
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMNH DEIS CALLED INTO QUESTION, NEW CONSTRUCTION COULD RESULT IN WIDESPREAD HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORTATION EMERGENCIES

New York, NY – The recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) focusing on the proposed Richard Gilder Center for the American Museum of Natural History has been questioned by noted engineering firm, GHD. Commissioned by Community United to Protect Theodore Roosevelt Park, GHD has registered grave concerns about omitted information and inadequate findings in the DEIS submitted by the firm AKRF for the Museum. These omissions and inadequacies could result in acute health, environmental and transportation crises in the immediate area surrounding the project in Uptown Manhattan

Four key areas of concern to GHD:

- There is a high likelihood of contamination in this densely populated area from old Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) and from airborne cancer-causing asbestos and lead-based paint during and immediately after demolition, construction and excavation subsurface work. The tanks would likely contain traces of gasoline infused with organic lead, which is more dangerous than benzene. In a no-action scenario, the effects on human health would likely be non-existent, disturbing these substances risks public health and would be particularly dangerous for children.
- AMNH's DEIS fails to address 5 of the 19 sections in the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), and the test results of soil, water and air samples taken from the site were not provided to the public. While the Museum acknowledges materials released by demolition could be harmful; the DEIS does not indicate how public health will be protected, nor was a Remediation Action Plan provided for public review.
- Transportation and attendance estimates are questionable. AMNH studies were not executed during peak traffic hours. Any increase in attendance is "of critical importance in predicting the effect of the expansion on the *already stressed* transportation infrastructure."

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- The negative effects on socio-economic conditions due to permanent loss of green space, reduced access to park land, relocation of the Greenmarket and reduced economic activity at small, independent businesses in the Columbus Avenue Business District during construction will be significant.

In conclusion, GHD strongly recommended that the missing information be appended before the final EIS (FEIS) is released to allow the public to fully consider the ramifications of the project. What's more, GHD admonished the AMNH for its conclusion that relocating administrative activities offsite was inconvenient, though Museum officials are willing to inconvenience the community with the proposed construction, and failure to fully explore alternatives.

Community United to Protect Theodore Roosevelt Park is a non-profit, community organization devoted to saving public parkland from private incursions, and the environmental and transportation ramifications of urban overdevelopment.

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Editor's Note: For further information about GHD, their review of the AMNH DEIS, as well as a complete copy of the GHD report, contact Laura Messersmith, Co-President, Community United to Protect Theodore Roosevelt Park, Telephone: (617) 335-5210, Email: ljqmessersmith@gmail.com, website: www.saveourpark.nyc.

The Community United Executive Board would welcome a one-on-one press availability with interested members of the media.