

# **Final Environmental Impact Statement**

## ***Albany Medical Center Hospital New Patient Wing***

43 New Scotland Avenue  
City of Albany  
Albany County, New York



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City of Albany Planning Board  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Introduction.....	1
B. Project Location, Description, and Environmental Setting .....	1
C. Purpose and Need for The Project .....	2
D. SEQRA Process .....	4
E. Summary of Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures.....	5
F. Significant Adverse Unavoidable Impacts.....	8
G. Alternatives Considered.....	9
H. List of Involved Agencies and Permits Required .....	9
<b>1.0 RESPONSES TO COMMENTS .....</b>	<b>10</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1: AMCH Project Site .....</b>	<b>2</b>
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## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1: Summary of Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Table 2: Involved Agencies and Permitting Authority.....</b>	<b>9</b>

## APPENDICES

**Appendix A:** New Patient Wing DEIS Public Hearing Meeting Summary

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **A. Introduction**

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been prepared in compliance with Article 8 of the NYS Environmental Conservation Law, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and its implementing regulations at 6 NYCRR Part 617. At the direction of the Planning Board of the City of Albany, acting as Lead Agency, this FEIS is prepared in order to address environmental impact issues that have arisen following the submission of a DEIS that was accepted as complete on July 16, 2009.

The Proposed Action is an expansion and renovation of Albany Medical Center Hospital's (AMCH) main tertiary care facility in the City of Albany, Albany County, New York. The Action, for the purpose of SEQRA review, is the demolition of approximately 65,000 square feet of existing hospital facilities and the construction of a 325,000 square foot six-story New Patient Wing addition, an elevator tower, renovations to existing facilities, and associated site improvements.

This FEIS responds to oral comments of Planning Board Members regarding the DEIS for the proposed project. All of the comments were provided during the August 13, 2009 public hearing. No comments from the public, involved or interested agencies were submitted during the public comment period or expressed during the public hearing.

This FEIS incorporates, by reference, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement previously accepted as complete by the City of Albany Planning Board on July 16, 2009, which together forms the basis for the Lead Agency Findings.

### **B. Project Location, Description, and Environmental Setting**

The "Action" that is the subject of this SEQRA process consists of the expansion and renovation of the Albany Medical Center Hospital main tertiary care facility in the City of Albany, Albany County, New York. The Action is the demolition of approximately 65,000 square feet of existing hospital facilities and the construction of a 325,000 square foot six-story Patient Wing addition, an elevator tower, renovations to existing facilities, and associated site improvements for the planned facilities.

AMCH was incorporated in 1849 and is now one of the largest teaching hospitals in the country and a fundamental element of the Albany Medical Center (AMC). The AMC is an academic health and sciences center that includes the Albany Medical Center Hospital (AMCH), the Albany Medical College & Practice, and the Albany Medical Center Foundation. The AMCH campus consists of nine structures that range from five to nine stories.

The project will consist of a new four-story addition together with basement and subbasement levels. The New Patient Wing will consist of 325,000 total square feet of new construction and 46,000 square feet of renovation. New construction will house the entry lobby and atrium,

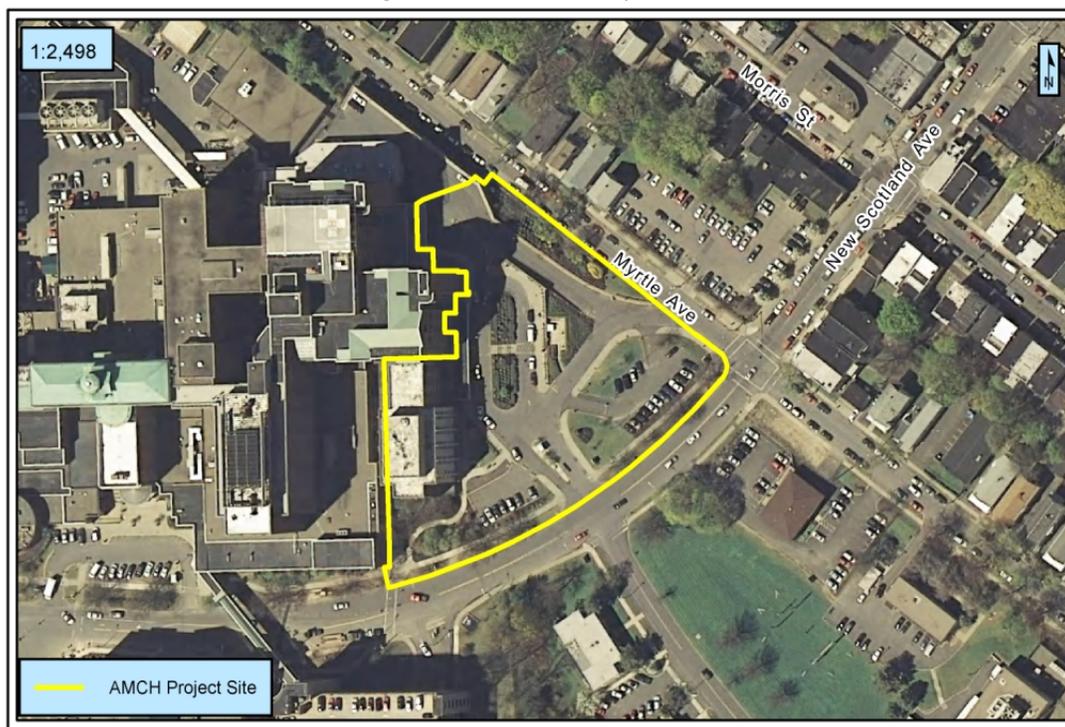
surgery unit, adult intensive care unit (ICU) beds, adult medical surgical beds, and neonatal beds. Renovations will include improvements to the existing surgical suite, surgical support spaces, and pediatric beds.

The proposed New Patient Wing is located in the eastern section of the AMC campus. Building 'U' will be demolished to allow the addition of the new wing. The addition will be constructed adjacent to hospital Building 'C and D' on a 2.4 acre site bounded by Myrtle Avenue to the north and New Scotland Avenue to the south and southeast. Figure 1 depicts the project site. The area is highly urbanized and no significant natural resources or features are located on the project site or surrounding environs

The new addition will be served by municipal water and sewer facilities and stormwater will be directed to the City's stormwater collection system. Minor improvements to utilities are required. The cost of the utility improvements will be assumed by the project sponsor and subject to the approval of the City. Parking demands will be addressed with the construction of the recently approved Community Parking Garage (proposed by Columbia Development).

It is anticipated that construction of the New Patient Wing will begin in spring of 2010 and take approximately 30 to 36 months to complete. The project will be built in one phase, including demolition and site preparation, new construction, and renovations of existing facilities. It is expected that construction will occur five days a week, Monday through Friday, during regular day light hours. It is anticipated that a portion of Myrtle Avenue will be closed to traffic during construction and that permanent closure of the roadway will be necessitated by the construction of the Community Parking Garage.

Figure 1: AMCH Project Site



### **C. Purpose and Need for the Project**

Albany Medical Center is the only academic health sciences center in the 25 counties of eastern New York and western New England. AMCH has determined that its service to the region's most acutely ill patient population has created a steady demand for additional acute care beds. In addition, the hospital's aging facilities and demand for surgical services necessitate the expansion of operating rooms and related support spaces for patient processing, anesthesia, and supply processing. Moreover, existing neonatal facilities are extremely overcrowded and unable to meet growing demand for capacity, new technology, and family participation in care. The proposed New Patient Wing will provide adequate space to meet current standards of care and adequate support space for medical staff, equipment, supplies, and families.

This project will consist of 325,000 total SF of new construction and 46,000 SF of renovation. New construction will house the Entry Lobby & Atrium, Surgery Unit, Adult ICU beds, Adult Medical Surgical beds and Neonatal beds. Renovations will include improvements to the existing Surgical Suite, surgical support spaces, and Pediatric beds.

The project is being designed to meet the requirements outlined by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) 2006 Guidelines for Design and Construction of Health Care Buildings. The health care environment that is envisioned for the New Patient Wing accommodates the technological requirements of contemporary medicine and patient privacy and allows the hospital to best practice patient and family centered care.

The AMCH project will result in increased economic activity in the City of Albany, and will provide jobs and services for area residents. Development of the AMCH New Patient Wing will create an average of 240 construction jobs per month. It is anticipated that this number will peak during mid-construction at approximately 700 full time jobs per month. Construction costs are currently estimated at \$220 million dollars. An additional \$45 million dollars in equipment and furnishing will be required. Additionally, the AMCH project is expected to create approximately 4,000 off-site construction related jobs for subcontracting, engineering, delivery, and fabrication.

Upon close of construction, a variety of permanent jobs within the health field will be created. By 2015 the New Patient Wing will employ approximately 768 full time employees. Approximately 63% of the staffing additions will be for Nursing Operations and 12% will be for Ancillary Services. Additional jobs created by the New Patient Wing will consist of various management and support positions. Payroll associated with the new jobs is estimated at \$59 million dollars on an annual basis.

It is anticipated that the increase in the workforce will result in increased demand for services around the AMCH campus, indirectly creating additional revenue and jobs. Additionally, the AMCH project will provide residents with access to a state-of-the-art healthcare facility that provides a unique balance of technologically advanced modern medicine and patient and family centered care. The AMCH project will expand available inpatient, surgical, and anesthesia services, increasing the convenience and quality of health care in the area.

## **D. SEQRA Process**

In accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (6 NYCRR Part 617), the following elements of the SEQRA process have been undertaken:

- The initial application for the project was submitted to the City of Albany on October 2, 2008. The submittal included an application for Zoning & Building Permit, application for Site Plan Approval, architectural plans and details consisting of a Schematic Design Plan Set, site plan drawings, and Part 1 of the Full Environmental Assessment Form (EAF). The City of Albany Division of Buildings and Codes formally issued a Denial Letter on October 8, 2008, commencing the City of Albany's review process.
- On November 20, 2008, the City of Albany Planning Board (Planning Board) issued a resolution which determined that the project was a Type 1 Action and that a coordinated review was required in accordance with SEQRA regulations. As part of the coordinated review process, the Planning Board issued a letter to the Involved and Interested agencies indicating its intent to act as Lead Agency.
- On January 8, 2009, the Planning Board issued a Resolution to declare itself Lead Agency for the review of the project. The Planning Board resolved that the proposed project could have a significant impact on the environment and issued a Positive Declaration under SEQRA requiring that an EIS be prepared. The Planning Board opted not to conduct formal (public) scoping but did adopt an outline or scoping document of the contents of the Draft EIS on January 8, 2009.
- On May 15, 2009, the Applicant submitted the DEIS for completeness review. The Planning Board accepted the DEIS as complete on July 16, 2009. The DEIS and notice of completion were circulated to all involved and interested agencies.
- A public hearing allowing for public comment was held by the Planning Board on August 13, 2009. The public comment period remained open until August 24, 2009. A copy of the meeting summary including comments received on the DEIS is provided in Appendix A.

## E. Summary of Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following table summarizes the potential impacts and mitigation measures for the proposed project.

**Table 1: Summary of Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

DEIS Chapter	Potential Impacts	Mitigation Measures
<p><b>3.1 Soils, Geology, and Topography</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Construction of the project will require grading and earth-moving activities, which have potential to cause erosion and off-site sedimentation if not properly handled.</li> <li>▪ Construction of the New Patient Wing will involve excavation of the project area to approximately 20-30 ft below existing grade, which has the potential to generate dust, noise, and ground vibration and could result in damage to structures.</li> <li>▪ Post-construction settlement rates estimated for the New Patient Wing project determined that the settlements will be closely related to the sub-grade rebound of the clayey soils following excavation and the amount of disturbance that occurs during construction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Erosion of on-site soils will be mitigated during and after construction in accordance with recommendations of the Stormwater Drainage Report.</li> <li>▪ The New Patient Wing project will be in compliance with OSHA standards regarding compressive strength of soils for excavation and construction activities. A construction phase plan has been developed to minimize disturbance areas during construction.</li> <li>▪ To ensure equal settlement, the proposed New Patient Wing will be supported by a mat foundation resting on virgin, inorganic soils or on controlled fill resting on virgin materials.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2 Stormwater Management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Construction of the New Patient Wing will include site grading, roadway grading and paving, and installation of storm drainage systems. The proposed New Patient Wing will result in an increase in impervious surfaces from approximately 70% of the project area to approximately 85%, thus contributing additional stormwater flow to the existing onsite stormwater management system and to the City's stormwater management facility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stormwater quality and quantity measurements have been designed in conformance with the City of Albany's moratorium on building permits in the Beaver Creek Sewer District. The proposed stormwater management system will mitigate the increase in stormwater quantity and reduce the existing peak flow that enters the City of Albany's sewer system from the AMC campus.</li> </ul>

DEIS Chapter	Potential Impacts	Mitigation Measures
<p><b>3.3 Groundwater Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The excavation for the New Patient Wing will be about 12 to 14 ft below the groundwater level. In order to prevent seepage from occurring it will be necessary to temporarily lower the groundwater table during construction to a depth below the bottom of the excavation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are no facilities in the area utilizing groundwater as a potable water supply. Based on the results of the geotechnical report and hydraulic conductivity testing, a dewatering system will be designed during the construction planning phase of the project</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sustained lowering of the groundwater table has the potential to cause settlement of existing structures or impact buried utilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Groundwater levels will be lowered in a localized manner and will return to pre-construction conditions upon project completion. Lowering the groundwater table outside sheeted enclosures will be avoided or limited to small areas and limited periods of time to avoid affecting adjacent structures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.4 Historic and Cultural Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The NYS OPRHP provided a “Letter of No Effect” indicating that the proposed New Patient Wing will have no effect upon any districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, or archeological resources included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No mitigation required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.5 Transportation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The potential traffic impacts of the proposed New Patient Wing were evaluated within the Traffic Impact Study (TIS) prepared for the New Scotland Avenue Community Parking Garage, which is proposed directly across New Scotland Avenue from the project site.</li> <li>▪ The TIS concluded that a traffic signal is warranted at the Holland Avenue/AMC Parking Garage &amp; Hilton Garden Hotel Driveway/Notre Dame Drive intersection.</li> <li>▪ The TIS also concluded that improvements are required at several intersections in the study area to maintain acceptable levels of service.</li> <li>▪ Implementation of the recommended improvements will result in the loss of some on-street parking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All measures recommended in the TIS to mitigate traffic impacts from the New Patient Wing and the New Scotland Avenue Community Parking Garage will be implemented as part of the development of the parking garage and will be complete prior to the completion of the New Patient Wing.</li> </ul>

DEIS Chapter	Potential Impacts	Mitigation Measures
<b>3.6 Land Use and Zoning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proposed AMC expansion will have little or no permanent impact to the adjacent properties. In addition, the proposed project is compatible with planning initiatives for the surrounding neighborhoods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No mitigation required.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some aspects of the proposed project do not comply with the City of Albany's current zoning regulations of the Commercial Office (C-O) District including the minimum front yard setback, parking, &amp; building height. However, an area variance requesting relief from these regulations is pending from the City's Board of Zoning Appeals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No mitigation required.</li> </ul>
<b>3.7 Utilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The New Patient Wing will have anticipated average daily demand of 165,000 gpd. The existing City of Albany water supply is considered adequate to service this new building addition.</li> <li>▪ The anticipated sanitary sewer load for the New Patient Wing will be 165,000 gpd. The existing sanitary collection system is considered adequate to service this new building addition.</li> <li>▪ Gas, electric, and telecommunication service providers have existing capacity to provide services to the New Patient Wing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No mitigation required.</li> <li>▪ No mitigation required.</li> <li>▪ No mitigation required.</li> </ul>
<b>3.8 Community Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The New Patient Wing will be similar in size and function to other institutional facilities within the University Heights area in the City of Albany, and is unlikely to generate unique or unusual public safety concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No mitigation required.</li> </ul>

## **F. Significant Adverse Unavoidable Impacts**

Section 4.0 of the DEIS provided a list of unavoidable adverse impacts of the proposed development. The proposed project, like any land development project, will have some adverse impacts on the environment that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented. Some of these are short-term impacts that will occur primarily during construction, most of which arise from the alteration of existing site conditions. There are, however, others that would have permanent or long-term environmental impacts. Most of these are an unavoidable consequence of the development process and are not significant, or have been mitigated as described in the DEIS and this FEIS to a level not considered significant.

The following are adverse impacts that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented:

- Disturbance of most of the 2.4-acre project site for grading, excavation, construction activities, paving, and landscaping;
- Increase in the amount of impervious surface;
- Generation of traffic. During the construction phase, trucks, machine transport vehicles, supply vehicles, and work crew vehicles would add to the present traffic volumes. Once the development is complete there will be additional trips generated by employees, patients, and visitors to the New Patient Wing.
- Increase in dust particles generated at the site during construction;
- Increase in water usage and wastewater generation;
- Increase in solid waste and recyclable material generation;
- Increase in lighting generated at the site; and
- Increase in energy usage, specifically electricity and heating fuels.

## G. Alternatives Considered

In accordance with the Final Scoping Document, the following alternatives were considered in the DEIS:

1. No-Build Alternative
2. Alternative Development Plans
  - Option 1 – South Clinical Campus Located on Hackett Boulevard
  - Option 2 – Park South Adjacent to the Main Campus
  - Option 3 – The Main Campus of the existing hospital (Proposed Action)

## H. List of Involved Agencies and Permits Required

The following are the Involved Agencies for the project and the permit or approval authority they possess. A list of Interested Agencies follows.

**Table 2: Involved Agencies and Permitting Authority**

Agency	Type of Approval
City of Albany Board of Zoning Appeals	Area Variances (Height, setback, and parking per City of Albany Division of Building and Codes per October 8, 2008 Denial letter) Special Use Permit- Pedestrian Skywalk
City of Albany Planning Board	Siet Plan Approval
City of Albany Building Department	Building Permit
City of Albany Common Council	Street Closure
City of Albany Water Board	Water and Sewer Permits
New York State Department of Health	Certificate of Need

## 1.0 RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

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This section addresses all comments received during the public comment period on the DEIS, which extended from July 16, 2009 to August 24, 2009. All comments on the project were expressed orally by Planning Board members at the DEIS public hearing held on August 13, 2009. A copy of the Public Hearing Meeting Summary is included in Appendix A. No interested or involved agencies or members of the public attended the public hearing or chose to provide written comments.

Oral comments of the Planning Board members have been paraphrased and organized according to the order they appear on the Public Hearing Meeting Summary.

**Comment 1:** Will there be use designations for the parking garages?

**Response 1:** It is currently the intent of AMCH to have specific designations for each parking garage. Upon completion of the new parking garage, the existing parking garage will be designated for AMCH employees. It is anticipated that the new 1,550-space parking garage will be open to the public including AMCH visitors, professionals and students within University Heights, and patrons to the existing businesses.

**Comment 2:** Are the plans for construction/relocation of the smoking area at the new main entrance?

**Response 2:** Construction of the new main entrance will relocate the lawn area currently utilized by smokers. An outdoor gathering space designed to create a park-like setting will be located in front of the main entrance; however, the hospital may be implementing a campus wide no smoking policy in the future.

**Comment 3:** How will the project be financed? Has project financing been secured? Will public money be used to finance the project?

**Response 3:** Financing for the project has not yet been secured. It is anticipated that funding for the project will come from a combination of sources including a capital campaign and public and private financing.

**Comment 4:** Is the closure of Myrtle Avenue necessary to accommodate the New Patient Wing? Is this road closure temporary or permanent?

**Response 4:** A traffic impact study (TIS) was completed for the New Scotland Avenue Community Parking Garage proposed by Columbia Development Companies. The TIS analyzed the permanent closure of Myrtle Avenue from Robin Street to New Scotland Avenue. Closure of this roadway is, in part, required to provide construction staging for the New Patient Wing and is proposed as a permanent measure to mitigate traffic impacts of the Community Parking Garage. Closure also allows for the reconfiguration of the access to the Hospital's emergency room entrance and the new atrium entrance.

**Appendix A: New Patient Wing DEIS  
Public Hearing Meeting Summary**

**City of Albany Planning Board  
Albany Medical Center- New Patient Wing DEIS Public Hearing  
August 13, 2009 530 PM  
City Hall –Albany, NY**

**Attendees:** City of Albany Planning Board Raymond F. Joyce, Jr.- Chairman, Ed Trant, Marcus Pryor, and Ryan Hancox. John Szczesny, City of Albany Planner

**Meeting Summary**

Chairman read the public hearing announcement and requested the applicant provide a brief description of the project. Chris Round of the Chazen Companies introduced the project representatives:

- Emilio Genzano, AMC
- Steve Evers, TRO Jung Brannen Architects
- Chris Round, AICP The Chazen Companies

Project architect Steve Evers provided an overview of the project describing the building features, site layout, and access, connectivity/relationship to the parking garage, site landscaping, lighting plan and green roof elements.

The Chairman Opened the Public Hearing. No members of the public attended or chose to speak on the project.

Planning Board members raised several questions as follows:

1. Parking & designation of old vs. new garage.
2. New Main Entrance: Are there plans for construction/relocation of the ‘smoking area’?
3. Project Financing: Has project financing been secured? Will public dollars be utilized?
4. Traffic: Is the closure of Myrtle Avenue necessary to accommodate the new wing and is the closure temporary or permanent.

Steve Evers indicated that it is the current intent of AMC to designate the old parking garage for use by employees of AMC; the new garage would be available to the public. The new main entrance will displace the lawn area currently utilized by smokers. The Hospital may be implementing a no smoking on campus policy. Financing for the project has not yet been secured. Closure of Myrtle Avenue will be permanent and during construction this area will be utilized for construction staging. Closure is required to maintain an acceptable level of service when the parking garage is constructed.

There being no further discussion the Chairman closed the hearing and the Board moved to adjourn.