

5.0 ALTERNATIVES FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The purpose of the Stadium Project is to continue the redevelopment of the Meadowlands Sports Complex by providing on the West Site a new modern stadium and practice facility to replace existing facilities, and creating new stadium-related Ancillary Development to support the development and operation of the new Stadium (see Section 3.0). The concept of “redevelopment” by privately financed current users of existing Sports Complex facilities excludes off-site location alternatives from consideration as alternatives that would achieve this project purpose. To be competitive with other modern sports facilities, the proposed Ancillary Development has to be located on the same site as the new Stadium. In addition, the Stadium Project will not have any direct negative impacts to environmentally sensitive areas. Therefore, off-site alternative locations were not studied for this project.

The NJSEA conducted an alternative site selection process when locating the Meadowlands Sports Complex in the early 1970s (NJSEA, 2004). Through these prior location decisions, which were reviewed and approved by the NJDEP and NJMC, the location of the existing Giants Stadium and practice facilities were established. These decisions and the existing sport franchise lease requirements have pre-determined the general location for the redevelopment of the West Site of the Meadowlands Sports Complex. The NJSEA was directed by the Legislature to promote industry and development in the State, provide a forum for public events and stimulate the needed development of the Meadowlands. Sports centers today are expanding their programs beyond game day activities into permanent year-round destinations with associated entertainment, retail, dining, and community-oriented amenities. The NJSEA updated its Master Plan in 1998 to reflect this evolving trend. This revised Master Plan envisions a “new sports and entertainment based development,” that would create “a unique visitor experience at the site” (NJSEA, 1998). The stated purpose of the revised Master Plan is to “insure that the Meadowlands remains the premier facility of its kind in the world.”

5.1 No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative would consist of no redevelopment in the West Site of the Meadowlands Sports Complex, thereby maintaining the Project Site as it currently exists, including the Giants Stadium, practice facilities and parking areas. The No-Action Alternative would not realize the replacement of Giants Stadium or the practice facilities with modern facilities, upgrades to the existing internal roadway network and parking fields, and new Ancillary Development. Therefore, the No-Action Alternative would not satisfy the overall Project purpose and need. In addition, if the Stadium Project were not implemented the socioeconomic benefits from a modern sports and entertainment venue would be lost. These

benefits include: the lease payments paid to the NJSEA (a State agency), increased regional and State tax revenues; and increased employment opportunities.

5.2 Location Alternative to the Project Site

The alternatives analyzed for the FEIS were limited due to:

- the unique mission of this state agency, the NJSEA, to provide modern sports facilities;
- the restricted site location within the Meadowlands Sports Complex West Site; and
- the replacement nature of the Project within a developed site.

The Project setting precludes a level of impact that would warrant an in-depth consideration of alternatives, as alternatives are generally identified in response to potential unresolved or unmitigated impacts, and not for a replacement of existing facilities.

The NJSEA's enabling legislation restricts its development and redevelopment activities in the HMD to 750 acres comprising the Meadowlands Sports Complex and to certain contiguous properties. As discussed above, alternative locations for the Stadium Project were not considered because of the redevelopment nature of the Project and the lack of any impact to environmentally sensitive areas. Through the reuse of already impacted lands and available infrastructure on the Sports Complex, the redevelopment of the site avoids and minimizes potential environmental impacts.

The proposed location of the Stadium Project's major components (i.e., Stadium, Giants Training Facility and Ancillary Development) on the West Site of the Meadowlands Sports Complex were studied and considered several factors in locating the buildings as shown in the Master Plan (see Figures 2-8 and 2-9). These factors included:

- Locating the new Stadium in an area that would allow the existing Giants Stadium to remain operational while the new Stadium was constructed.

- Locating the new Stadium in an area with bedrock as close to the surface as possible to minimize pile lengths, thereby lowering overall foundation costs for the Stadium building.

- Integrating the Project's major components with pedestrian movements from the new rail station and the East Site, as well as internal roadway and parking areas.

Based on these factors a location to the north of the existing Giants Stadium was selected as the preferred location for the new Stadium. The location of the Giants Training Facility was selected based on a desire to have as much surface parking area near the new Stadium and, therefore, the Giants Training Facility is proposed in an area away from the new Stadium. The location of the Ancillary Development was selected to allow this component to complement and be adjacent to the new Stadium. To be competitive with other modern sports facilities, the Ancillary Development had to be located on the same site. Since its function is to support the development and operation of the new Stadium, all of these Project components will be located in existing paved surface parking areas and internal roadways, thereby eliminating any concerns for alternatives that might avoid or minimize environmental impacts.