Abstract
The New York City Council has recently decided to re-open the 91st street garbage transfer station. The transfer station on 91st street was originally opened in the 1930s, when the neighborhood was primarily commercial area. Therefore, the presence of the transfer station had little effect on the quality of life of NYC residents. The transfer station operated until the late 1990s, when the community became a residential one. The New York City Council recently set aside $182 million to build a new ten-story waste processing facility on 91st Street, right near the Asphalt Green Athletic Complex. The new facility, which is larger than any existing or planned facility in the City, will operate 24 hours a day, six days a week. The garbage trucks will enter through a ramp that runs through the Asphalt Green athletic complex. The garbage will then be processed at the facility, and then loaded onto barges in the East River. The facility will be capable of processing 5,280 tons of garbage daily and will bring hundreds of fueled trucks into the area every single day. In addition the presence of such a facility in a densely populated residential area poses many health risks towards its inhabitants. Consequently, the city’s plan to reopen the transfer station has faced much opposition, and has become a leading “Nimby” controversy.

Environmental Impacts

**Threat to Public Health**
- Noise Pollution
- Odors
- Pesticides use
- Diesel Emissions
- Air Pollution
- Increase in rats, rodents, and flies
- Harm of organisms that inhabit the East River
- Increase in CO2 emissions
  - Global warming of atmosphere and ocean
  - Melting of glaciers
  - Rise of sea level
  - Ocean acidification

**Safety Risk to Pedestrian**

**Traffic**

**Interference with Park Activities (Asphalt Green)**

*These concerns are addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) conducted by the Department of Sanitation of New York (DSNY). The DSNY finds that several of these concerns are insignificant, because the facility would not cause significant impact levels or harm to the public.*

Background Info
In 1947, the Fresh Kills Landfill was opened in Staten Island. Garbage from all over New York was sent there. Despite the original twenty-year plan, the landfill was only closed in 1996 after public pressure. The waste needed a place to be transferred, and a new system of waste disposal needed to be set up. Bloomberg proposed the Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP).

Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP)

**SWMP:**
- Marine transfer stations (MTS) would be set up to dispose of the waste
- Each borough would now be responsible for its own waste, instead of one borough (Staten Island) piling it all up

**Advantages of the MTS system:**
- Waste transfer will be more equally divided among the boroughs and not just in low-income neighborhoods
- It reduces the volume of transfer truck traffic and air pollution in the city
- More cost-effective

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Maps of Previous MTS

Geographic Information:
- The Opposition of the Residents:
The new facility, which is larger than any existing or planned facility in the City, will operate 24 hours a day, six days a week. Garbage, delivered by garbage trucks entering through the ramp that runs through the Asphalt Green athletic complex, will be processed at the facility, and then loaded onto barges in the East River. The facility will be capable of processing 5,280 tons of garbage daily and will bring hundreds of fueled trucks into the area every single day. Therefore, those living in this area demand that this facility not be built in the designated location, yet they acknowledge the fact that garbage must be disposed of.

Asphalt Green
The residents specifically oppose the placement of the facility in its designated location, for it will exist right near the Asphalt Green athletic complex. Residents have argued that next door to an athletic complex is the wrong place to open a garbage transfer station. Programs of Asphalt Green include swimming, gymnastics, sports, and fitness programs. With an ample amount of garbage near this facility, the quality of activities provided will be compromised. Furthermore, neighbors point out that garbage trucks will enter the station on a ramp that actually goes through the Asphalt Green athletic complex, which could pose risks to the security of the people who are using the outdoor playground and field for activities.

The Opinion of the City Council
The government’s plans to place the garbage transfer station there is part of an effort to redress the disproportionate number of garbage transfer stations in poor, low-income communities. The neighborhood near this proposed East River transfer station, Yorkville in the Upper East Side, has about 47,000 residents with a median household income of $91,000. As of now, there are no garbage transfer stations in Manhattan. The government feels the need to make the system fair, and attempt to distribute the trash equally amongst New York residents, in wealthy and poor neighborhoods.

References