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## CHAPTER 10: NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the neighborhood character effects of the Proposed Action for existing conditions, the future condition without the Proposed Action and the future condition with the Proposed Action. As suggested in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the secondary study area will extend one-quarter-mile around the perimeter of the Project Area.

The Project Area is comprised of nine blocks totaling approximately 18 acres and is generally bounded by Flushing Avenue to the south, Throop Avenue to the east, Lynch Street to the north, and Union Avenue, Walton Street, and Harrison Avenue to the west. The area is highly accessible by mass transit and is serviced by four subway lines (the J, M, Z, and G subway lines) and three bus lines (the B43, B46, and B48) (see Figure 1-2 of Chapter 1, “Project Description” for a map of the Project Area).

The Proposed Action would create new residential and commercial districts and establish Inclusionary Housing provisions for the area. The proposed zoning changes would result in a net loss of parking and auto-related uses, vacant land, vacant (unoccupied) buildings and light manufacturing uses and a net increase in residential, commercial and community facility space. As these actions may have the potential to affect existing neighborhood character, this chapter will ascertain if there would be any significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character as a result of the Proposed Action.

### B. OVERVIEW

The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.

This chapter examines the potential effects of the development that would result from the Proposed Action upon the neighborhood character of the study area. This evaluation follows analysis guidelines established in the *CEQR Technical Manual*. As defined in the manual, an assessment of neighborhood character is typically warranted when an action would exceed preliminary thresholds with respect to one of the following elements that contribute to neighborhood character: land use, urban design and visual resources, historic resources, socioeconomic conditions, traffic and noise. An assessment also may be required if an action would result in moderate effects on several elements that influence neighborhood character, which, when combined, may impact the overall character. As discussed in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, effects on neighborhood character could occur when an action would result in any of the following conditions:

- *Land Use* – The development resulting from a proposed action could alter the character of a neighborhood if it introduces new land uses, is completely inconsistent with land use policy or other public plans for the area, changes land use character, or generates significant land use changes.
- *Urban Design and Visual Resources* – In built environments, changes in urban design characteristics may affect neighborhood character if a proposed action results in a substantially different building bulk, size, form, scale or arrangement. Urban design changes may also affect larger overall patterns such as block forms, street patterns or hierarchies, pedestrian activity and circulation, or streetscape features such as landscaping or streetwalls. Changes in visual resources such as unique and important public view corridors and vistas could affect

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neighborhood character if they directly alter key visual features or block public visual access to/from such features.

- *Historic Resources* – If an action would result in substantial direct changes to a historic resource, or to public views or surrounding context of a resource, or when a historic resource analysis identifies a significant adverse impact on a resource, there is a potential to affect the neighborhood character.
- *Socioeconomic Conditions* – Substantial direct or indirect displacement or addition of population, employment, or businesses; or substantial differences in population or employment density would have the potential to affect neighborhood character.
- *Traffic and Pedestrians* – When traffic (or lack thereof) contributes to the character of a neighborhood, and a proposed action changes conditions substantially from the existing condition, a neighborhood character impact can occur. Substantial traffic changes can include: substantive changes in level of service (“LOS”); change in traffic patterns, roadway classifications or vehicle mixes; considerable increases in traffic volumes on residential streets; or when significant traffic impacts are identified by the technical traffic analysis. Regarding pedestrians, when a proposed action would result in substantially different pedestrian activity and circulation, it has the potential to affect neighborhood character.
- *Noise* – If an action results in a significant adverse noise impact and a change in a *CEQR* acceptability category (predefined threshold of change), it may affect neighborhood character with respect to noise.

## C. METHODOLOGY

The impact analysis in this chapter focuses on conditions that could result from changes in the defining elements of neighborhood character, as discussed above. The overarching focus of this chapter is a description of existing neighbourhood conditions relating to land use, historic resources, visual and urban design dimensions, socioeconomics, and traffic and noise levels, as they relate to the experience and character of the Project Area and surrounding neighborhood.

The land use study areas, both primary and secondary, delineate the area where the Proposed Action would occur and influence land use patterns, as well as various aspects of neighborhood character; this chapter therefore considers neighborhood character utilizing these same study areas. For the purpose of this assessment, the primary study area is identified as all land uses within the Project Area. The secondary study area extends a quarter mile from the boundary of the Project Area and encompasses areas that have the potential to experience indirect impacts as a result of the Proposed Action. Both the primary and secondary study areas have been established in accordance with *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines.

Information gathering focused on neighborhood characteristics that may change as a result of the Proposed Action. Since the Proposed Action would rezone a manufacturing and industrial area to include residential and mixed uses, consideration of land use, urban design, and socioeconomic conditions are especially important in determining any significant adverse impacts of the Proposed Action.

**D. EXISTING CONDITIONS****LAND USE**

The land use analysis employs primary and secondary study areas, where direct and indirect effects, respectively, of the Proposed Action could occur. Refer to Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy” for detailed descriptions of the study area boundaries.

*PRIMARY STUDY AREA*

For purposes of this EIS, the primary study area is the same as the Project Area. The primary study area is comprised of nine blocks located within the Broadway Triangle and is situated in eastern Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Community District 1 at the junction of three Brooklyn neighborhoods—Bushwick to the east, Bedford Stuyvesant to the south and Williamsburg to the immediate north. Currently the Project Area is largely underutilized. Industrial use in the Project Area has declined and many former industrial buildings are now vacant or have been demolished, resulting in vacant parcels currently used for parking and storage.

Although the Project Area is largely underutilized and vacant, residential and commercial uses are significant components of the land use patterns present in the Project Area. Land at the northern edge of the Project Area hosts residential, community facility, mixed use and transportation uses. Toward the center of the Project Area, land use is predominantly industrial; along the southern edge of the Project Area, mixed use, community facility and commercial buildings are interspersed among a significant amount of vacant buildings and lots.

*SECONDARY STUDY AREA*

A secondary study area has been established to assess the potential indirect effects on neighborhood character that could result from the Proposed Action. This secondary study area extends approximately a quarter mile from the Project Area in all directions.

Unlike the primary study area, the secondary study area is largely composed of residential, commercial and community facility uses. The industrial uses that do exist are found in dense pockets primarily along and near Broadway and Flushing, Harrison and Union Avenues. Apart from pockets of manufacturing zoning districts the surrounding area is largely zoned for residential use. The secondary study area also features large public housing complexes that consist of large super blocks and atypical land masses (Lindsay Park Houses, Bushwick Houses, Highland Houses, Borinquen Plaza, Sumner Housing, Tompkins Houses, and Marcy Houses) and a large medical complex (Woodhull Medical and Mental Health Center).

**URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES**

As discussed in Chapter 9, “Urban Design and Visual Resources,” the assessment of this impact area employs the same study area boundaries as used for the land use analysis.

*PRIMARY STUDY AREA*

Historically, the nine-block Project Area featured manufacturing, light industrial and commercial land uses. At the time of the 1961 zoning, occupied residential buildings in the area were “grandfathered” in as legal nonconforming uses. Currently the Project Area is largely underutilized; many former industrial buildings are now vacant or have been demolished, resulting in vacant parcels used for parking and ad-

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hoc storage in the form of low-rise garage structures. Interspersed among vacant lots are residential buildings on narrow lots. Larger multi-unit residential structures are found in the eastern part of the Project Area along Throop Avenue. Row houses can also be found on certain streets, and mixed-use buildings are common in the southern portion of the Project Area. Because of these reasons, the Project Area lacks a uniform and consistent street wall.

Although the Project Area is largely underutilized, surrounding industrial, residential and transportation uses are significant components of the land use patterns and built environment in the Project Area. Urban design is therefore varied depending on the level of use in the area.

### *SECONDARY STUDY AREA*

The secondary study area extends a quarter mile from the boundary of the Project Area. The industrial uses and underutilized conditions predominant in the Project Area are less prevalent in the secondary study area.

Large super-block multi-family residential complexes of varying height exist in the northern, eastern and southern portions of the area that are surrounded by low to mid rise residential buildings. In the eastern extent of the secondary study area are dense, narrow lots featuring attached mixed-use buildings. The sidewalks are attractive and tree-lined. Housing along these blocks is in good condition with front yards and some off-street parking spaces.

To a certain extent, the elevated J,M, and Z subway line located along Broadway serves as a barrier, separating 4- to 6-story walkups from the super-block “tower-in-the-park” type NYCHA and Mitchell Lama developments east of Broadway.

The southern part of the secondary study area includes some mixed-use buildings in fair condition and the large Marcy Houses Complex, comprised of tower-in-the-park structures. Row houses are also common in this portion of the area. South of the Flushing Avenue and Broadway intersection is a residential neighborhood that is lower density than other portions of the secondary study area. The Woodhull Medical and Mental Health Center complex has a strong presence in the center of this neighborhood. In and around the facility, streetscape elements and street furniture are institutional in nature with large expanses of concrete fronting each building entrance.

To the west of the Marcy and Union Avenues intersection is a closed Pfizer plant, which consists of empty buildings and expansive lots with no pedestrian or vehicular activity.

### **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

As discussed in Chapter 8, “Historic Resources,” the Historic Resources analysis includes an assessment of the direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Action on Historic Architectural Resources. The area that could potentially be affected by the Proposed Action is referred to as the “Area of Potential Effect” (APE).

### *ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES*

A survey of historic architectural resources within the architectural APE identified one architectural resource previously listed or determined eligible for listing in the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR): the Forty-Seventh Regiment (Marcy Avenue) Armory was determined eligible by the NYSOPRHP for listing on the National Register. The survey also determined four properties – on or in close enough proximity to the Project Area that could be subject to direct and/or indirect significant

adverse historic resource impacts – to be eligible for listing on the S/NR. Two of these properties were also determined to be eligible as New York City Landmarks.

The four eligible structures are:

- Bartlett School/PS 168 (Block 2272, Lot 21);
- Lincoln Savings Bank at 541 Broadway (Block 3076, Lot 6);
- All Saints Church (Block 2275, Lots 1 and 21);
- Charles Pfizer & Co. Buildings (Block 2268, Lot 1; Block 1720, Lot 1).

## **SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

As discussed in Chapter 3, “Socioeconomic Conditions,” the analysis of socioeconomic conditions focuses on the potential for direct and indirect residential displacement. The direct displacement assessment is concerned with the Project Area and the indirect displacement assessment area considers a study area that is based on a quarter-mile radius from the Project Area but has been adjusted to reflect census tract boundaries.

According to the 2000 Census, the population of the Census-defined Project Area was 1,156 while the population of the study area was 45,155. Approximately 42.1 percent of the families living in the study area were living below the poverty line as of 1999. (Refer to Chapter 3 for an explanation regarding the Census-defined Project Area.) However, data from the 1990 and 2000 Census indicate that in the study area has been undergoing a trend indicating increases in household incomes, particularly compared to Brooklyn as a whole. While the study area had a lower median income and higher poverty rate than Brooklyn in 2000, the median household income in Brooklyn decreased in real terms by 6.9 percent between 1989 and 1999, while the study area experienced a 16.4 percent increase in median household income between 1989 and 1999.

The estimated 2008 population of the entire study area is 52,909, a 17.2 percent increase from 2000. The 2000 Census data show that the occupancy rate of the study area housing units in 2000 was 94.5 percent; renters occupied 92.3 percent of the 14,503 occupied units. Based on estimates, the total number of housing units rose 19 percent to 17,256 in 2008. The study area includes a variety of housing types, including single family homes, small walk-up multi-family apartment buildings, and elevator apartment buildings. The latter includes approximately 8,187 units in NYCHA public housing and Mitchell-Lama subsidized apartment buildings, which comprise approximately 47 percent of all study area housing units.

In recent years, the study area has been experiencing a notable trend of construction of new market rate housing and rising home values and rents for unregulated rental units. Based on NYC Department of Finance data, it is estimated that 2,753 housing units have been added to the study area since the 2000 Census. Many of the new market rate housing has been developed on the blocks north of the Project Area. While almost 70 percent of the study area’s housing units are public, subsidized, or otherwise rent-regulated and as such rents are not determined by market trends, asking prices for market rate units are substantially higher than median contract rent reported for the study area in the 2000 Census.

The study area employs 14,705 based on the 2000 Census. Educational, health, and social services is the largest industry sector, comprising 38.5 percent of the local work force. Manufacturing is the second largest industry sector, accounting for 14.3 percent of employment in the area. All other industrial sectors each employ less than 10 percent of the study area workforce.

The study area has a critical mass of residential amenities (convenience stores, restaurants, laundromats, etc.) that is available to existing residents within walking distance of their homes. Additionally, there is an

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existing trend toward increased demand for convenience goods and neighborhood services from the growing residential population.

### **TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIANS**

#### *TRAFFIC*

As discussed in Chapter 18, “Traffic and Parking,” the study area street system consists of urban arterials connecting with an irregular grid network of local streets. The primary arterial serving the Broadway Triangle neighborhood is Broadway, which operates two-way in a northwest-southeast direction and forms the eastern boundary of the traffic study area. At its northern terminus, Broadway provides access to and from the Williamsburg Bridge to Manhattan.

Flushing Avenue is a two-way street that runs along the southern end of the study area. Traveling west on Flushing Avenue provides a connection to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (I-278) and Downtown Brooklyn, while to the east it continues into the Ridgewood neighborhood in Queens.

The traffic study area is bounded on the west by Union Avenue, a two-way street, which operates in a roughly north-south direction. Harrison Avenue and Throop Avenue form a pair of complimentary one-way streets operating in a northwest-southeast direction through the study area.

In addition to avenues running in a generally north-south orientation, the Project Area is traversed by a series of east-west streets running perpendicular to Broadway. Several of these operate one-way with Whipple Street, Gerry Street, and Lorimer Street being the exceptions.

In the weekday AM peak hour, three analyzed intersections operate at level of service (LOS) E, none at LOS F, and three at a marginally acceptable LOS D. “Overall” LOS E or F indicates that serious congestion exists. In the weekday midday peak hour, none of the analyzed intersections operate at overall LOS E or F, and two intersections operate at marginally acceptable LOS D. In the weekday PM peak hour, three analyzed intersections operate at LOS E, none at LOS F, and three at a marginally acceptable LOS D. Lastly, in the Saturday midday peak hour, no analyzed intersections operate at LOS E or F, and four operate at a marginally acceptable LOS D.

#### *PEDESTRIANS*

Walk-only trips from the 34 projected development sites (i.e., walk trips not associated with other modes) would be widely dispersed among pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, corner areas and crosswalks) throughout the Project Area. However, concentrations of new pedestrian trips are expected during peak periods along corridors connecting projected development sites to area subway stations. The analysis of pedestrian conditions therefore focuses on sidewalks, corner areas and crosswalks that provide the primary access between projected development sites and the entrances to the two subway stations that would be used by the majority of project-generated subway demand – the Lorimer Street (J, M) subway station on Broadway, and the Flushing Avenue (G) subway station at the intersection of Flushing, Union and Marcy Avenues. In general, existing pedestrian volumes in the vicinity of the Project Area are relatively light, with peak 15-minute volumes at analyzed sidewalks ranging from one to 67 in each peak period.

**NOISE**

Overall, the Project Area exhibits moderate-to-high noise levels associated with vehicular traffic and other localized activities, including pedestrians, kids playing in parks, and overhead aircrafts, which are the norm for urban areas. In addition, train noise generated from the elevated NYCT subway lines (J, M, and Z) is a major contributor to the ambient noise levels in the Project Area. As discussed in Chapter 21, “Noise,” noise monitoring for existing conditions in the Project Area was conducted at five sites. Recorded  $L_{10}$  noise levels in the Project Area range from 61.6 to 76.3 dBA. As such, noise levels range from “acceptable” to “marginally unacceptable” levels for residences per CEPC-CEQR Noise Exposure Guidelines. An  $L_{dn}$  of 72.1 dBA was estimated at monitoring Site 3 using the FTA equation that relates noise level data measured during the daytime and nighttime as described in Chapter 21.

In terms of the NYCDEP noise exposure guidelines, monitoring Sites 2 and 4 are in the “marginally acceptable” category; while monitoring Sites 1, 3, and 6 are in the “marginally unacceptable” category. The  $L_{10}$  noise levels at monitoring Site 5 are all below 65 dBA and are therefore in the “acceptable” category.

**E. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION****LAND USE***PRIMARY STUDY AREA*

In the future without the Proposed Action, it is anticipated that the primary study area would experience little growth or change across its various land uses including auto-related and industrial uses. Further, those block and lots that are underutilized and/or vacant would remain fallow without the allowance of residential development. As the primary study area is limited to M1-2, M3-1 and C8-2 zoning districts, which do not permit residential use, and the current non-conforming residential uses have been ‘grandfathered’ and allowed in the manufacturing districts, further mixed-use and residential uses are not permitted as-of-right under the future condition without the Proposed Action. However, over the past several years, the Project Area and the surrounding neighborhood has experienced significant levels of residential development, which was approved through variances granted by the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA). Because of the strong trend for residential development, especially in the northern blocks of the Project Area, some approvals are expected to continue absent the Proposed Action. However, in general, industrial facilities, vacant buildings and vacant land throughout the Project Area will remain underutilized and are not expected to undergo significant development pressure for uses allowed—without variances—under the current zoning districts such as industrial and commercial uses.

The two exceptions to this future development scenario without the Proposed Action are 254 Lynch Street, located on Block 2238, Lot 27 and a residential project at 287 Wallabout Street on Block 2250, Lot 7501. The development at 254 Lynch Street includes six residential units, and is possible through a variance granted by the BSA. The residential development at Wallabout Street is situated immediately east of recent residential buildings, and the site is currently occupied by a dilapidated and vacant residential structure.

*SECONDARY STUDY AREA*

Compared to the primary study area, the secondary study area is expected to experience some growth across residential, commercial, industrial and mixed uses allowable under respective zoning districts. In addition, the pending South Williamsburg and Rose Castle Rezoning projects would rezone areas

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currently mapped with manufacturing districts to districts permitting residential development. Each of these would result in large mixed residential-retail developments. These rezonings together with other anticipated developments would generate a net increase in the secondary study area of approximately ~~1,020~~ 1,068 residential units, 253 parking units, 233,873 square feet of residential space, 18,232 square feet of community facility space and ~~124,252~~ 134,252 square feet of retail space.

### **URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES**

#### *PRIMARY STUDY AREA*

In the future without the Proposed Action, it is anticipated that the primary study area would experience limited growth or change in the built environment. As noted in the discussion of land use above, in general, those blocks and lots that are currently underutilized and/or vacant would remain fallow without the allowance of residential development. As little new development is expected in the primary study area, limited alterations to the urban design of the Project Area would be expected in the future without the Proposed Action.

#### *SECONDARY STUDY AREA*

Compared to the primary study area, the secondary study area is expected to experience moderate growth across residential, commercial, industrial and mixed uses allowable with new development at a similar scale and type to existing building under respective zoning districts. Of particular note, the Greenpoint-Williamsburg Contextual Rezoning proposal, a small portion which falls within the secondary study area at the northeast of the Project Area, would preserve existing neighborhood character and scale by limiting the height of new development while creating opportunities and incentives for affordable housing through inclusionary zoning. The small portion of the rezoning that falls within the secondary study area does not include proposed developments.

### **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

In the future without the Proposed Action, it is expected that five projected development sites would have new and/or expanded as-of-right development absent the Proposed Action (Development Sites 5, 18, 24, 33, and 36; see Table 1-1 of Chapter 1 “Project Description”).

In the future without the Proposed Action, changes to architectural resources or to their settings could occur. For instance, indirect impacts from future projects could include blocking public views of a resource, isolating a resource from its setting or relationship to the streetscape, altering the setting of a resource, introducing incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements to a resource’s settings or introducing shadows over an architectural resource with sun-sensitive features. It is also possible that some architectural resources in the Project Area could deteriorate or experience direct impacts through alteration or demolition, while others could be restored. In addition, the status of architectural resources could change. S/NR-eligible resources could be listed on the Registers, NYCL-eligible properties could be calendared for a designation hearing, and properties qualified to be Landmarks could be designated. It is also possible, given the project’s completion year of 2018, that additional sites could be identified as architectural resources and/or potential architectural resources in this time frame.

None of the eligible historic architectural properties are located on projected or potential development sites, as identified in the RWCDS. Furthermore, none of the eligible historic architectural properties are located on Known Development Sites nor are expected to be developed in the future without the Proposed Action.

No direct physical impacts to these eligible historic architectural properties are anticipated as a result of development in the future condition without the Proposed Action. Furthermore, future development without the Proposed Action in proximity of these sites would not result in significant indirect and visual impacts. In conclusion, no significant adverse impacts on historic architectural resources are anticipated in the future condition without the Proposed Action.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

Where allowable under existing zoning or pursuant to BSA variances, the socioeconomic conditions study area is experiencing an influx of new residential development. Based on the 2000 census, which determined an average household size of 2.98 and occupancy rate of 94.5 within the study area, the study area will gain an estimated additional ~~1,901~~ 3,008 residents through 2018 without the Proposed Action. Absent the Proposed Action, the study area is expected to gain ~~1,020~~ 1,068 residential units by 2018 for a total of ~~18,276~~ 18,324 housing units. Overall, this is a ~~5.9~~ 6.2 percent increase from the number of units in 2008. This is based on known developments identified in the study area and is indicative of ongoing trends reflecting strong demand for rental and for-sale housing at various price levels.

It is anticipated that the majority of new units will be rented or sold at the current market-rate value. As indicated by various residential real estate sources, existing market rate condominiums in Williamsburg and Bushwick are expected to cost between \$385,000 to over a million dollars. Current rents for available housing units in the area are significantly higher than median contract rents in 2000, as reported in the Census. Current apartment listings in the study area range from \$1,600 to \$3,700, approximately 64.3 percent higher than the median contract rent in 2000<sup>1</sup>. Thus, new units scheduled to be constructed by 2018 independent of the Proposed Action, would likely rent or sell at these prices or higher.

These new units also would include approximately ~~322~~ 370 affordable housing units for low- and low-moderate income households. These units would help to address the demand for this type of housing. Rents and income restrictions for occupants would be set by the guidelines of the programs under which such units are being developed. These would include both projects developed under programs administered by HPD and pursuant to Inclusionary Housing zoning.

It is likely that by 2018 without the Proposed Action, the vulnerable population identified in the study area could experience rent increases that, in turn, could result in secondary displacement.

Further discussion of this at-risk population is discussed in Chapter 3, “Socioeconomic Conditions”.

## **TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIANS**

### *TRAFFIC*

Between 2008 and 2018, it is expected that traffic and parking demands in the study area will increase due to long-term background growth as well as development independent of the Proposed Action. Development on projected development sites is expected to add a net total of approximately five dwelling

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<sup>1</sup> According to US Census Bureau, median contract rent is the middle value of the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings, utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included. In addition, this figure is based on all area rents, including rent-controlled and rent-stabilized housing units, those of which are less frequently advertised. Although median contract rent is not directly comparable to current rental listings, the disparity between the median contract rent in 2000 and current listings indicate that there has been a notable increase in rents.

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units, 19,600 square feet of office space, 69,600 square feet of local retail space, and 114,660 square feet of hotel space (143 hotel rooms) compared to existing conditions. Approximately 32,500 square feet of existing light industrial space and 108,648 square feet of auto repair space would be displaced by this new development.

With continued growth in travel demand, intersections that were congested under existing conditions would worsen in the No-Action condition, and there would be additional locations that would become congested in one or more peak hours by 2018. Of the 20 intersections analyzed, ~~eight~~ nine would have one or more congested movements in the weekday AM peak hour (versus five under existing conditions), three in the midday (unchanged from existing), seven in the PM peak hour (six existing) and four in the Saturday midday peak hour (four existing).

Along the Broadway corridor, the northbound Broadway approach to Lorimer Street would become newly congested in the AM peak hour, while the westbound Moore Street approach to Broadway (at Wallabout Street) would become newly congested in the weekday PM peak hour. Along the Flushing Avenue corridor, the eastbound left-through movement on Flushing Avenue approaching Broadway would become newly congested in the weekday AM and Saturday midday peak hours, while the westbound Flushing Avenue approach would become newly congested in the weekday AM and PM peak hours. The northbound Throop Avenue approach to Flushing Avenue would become congested in the AM peak hour, while eastbound Flushing Avenue would become congested approaching Harrison Avenue in the weekday AM and Saturday midday peak hours. Southbound Harrison Avenue would become newly congested approaching Flushing Avenue in the weekday PM peak hour and approaching Gerry Street in the weekday AM peak hour.

### *PEDESTRIANS*

Between 2008 and 2018, it is expected that pedestrian demand in the study area will increase due to long-term background growth as well as demand from new development. However, all analyzed sidewalks, corner areas and crosswalks will continue to operate at an acceptable level of service B or better in the weekday AM, midday and PM peak hours.

### **NOISE**

In the future without the Proposed Action, the Project Area is not expected to experience substantial changes other than traffic growth associated with No-Build development projects in the vicinity of the Project Area and a nominal traffic growth adjustment over a ten-year period. To account for the anticipated changes in vehicular traffic, a PCE noise screening analysis was conducted using methodologies described in Section C of Chapter 21. Train activities for the NYCT subway lines (J, M, and Z) are not expected to change in the year 2018; therefore, the noise contributions from trains operating on the elevated tracks would remain the same.

The incremental change in noise levels would be no more than 0.6 dBA at all of the analysis sites. Such an increase in the ambient noise levels would not be noticeable and therefore would be insignificant based on *CEQR* criteria. The  $L_{dn}$  for roadway and railway noise was computed using HUD's web-based noise assessment tool. A comparison of the  $L_{dn}$  noise levels associated with the existing and No-Build conditions show that the 2018 No-Build noise level would remain the same at Sites 2, 3, and 4; and would increase by 1 dBA at Sites 1, 5, and 6.

## **F. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION**

### **LAND USE**

#### *PRIMARY STUDY AREA*

The Proposed Action would allow new development consistent with land uses in the surrounding neighborhoods. The Proposed Action would result in a net increase of approximately 1,851 dwelling units, (of which ~~905~~ 844 would be affordable), 103,286 square feet of retail space and 35,456 square feet of community facility space. The affordable units would be provided through both the Inclusionary Housing Program and redevelopment of city-owned land.

By 2018, the Proposed Action would substantially change land use in the primary study area by allowing new residential uses and generating new neighborhood retail space and community facility development in an area which is projected to remain largely unchanged from current conditions absent the Proposed Action.

Implementation of the Proposed Action would change the type and density of land uses on most blocks in the Project Area. The change would be from underutilized light industrial, heavy industrial and some commercial uses and vacant properties to moderate-density residential and mixed-use development, especially on those blocks that are currently underutilized and/or vacant. These changes are expected to have a positive impact on the Project Area and the surrounding area. For these reasons, no significant adverse impacts on land use or zoning would result from the Proposed Action.

#### *SECONDARY STUDY AREA*

The Proposed Action is not expected to generate significant changes in and around the secondary study area. Unlike the bulk of the primary study area, the secondary study area is largely composed of residential, commercial and community facility uses; the industrial uses that do exist are found in dense pockets along or near Broadway and Flushing Avenue. These industrial clusters are not significantly underutilized as is the case with the Project Area, and they are not expected to undergo significant redevelopment as a result of the Proposed Action.

### **URBAN DESIGN**

#### *PRIMARY STUDY AREA*

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to create significant adverse impacts to the urban design and visual resources of the primary study area. Under the Proposed Action, new residential and commercial development would be encouraged, and underutilized land and vacant buildings would likely see redevelopment at projected sites. Streetwalls and setbacks within the study area would generally undergo some unification, which would benefit the general appearance of the Project Area.

#### *SECONDARY STUDY AREA*

Under the Proposed Action, the existing built environment patterns in the secondary study area are expected to remain relatively the same. The pace of development in the secondary study area is expected to be moderate and not substantially different from the Future without the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not result in significant urban design changes in the secondary study area as it would not alter zoning controls outside the primary study area and is designed to be compatible with the range of

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building types that exist and are permitted within the secondary study area. Therefore, no significant adverse urban design impacts within the secondary study area are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action.

### **VISUAL RESOURCES**

Two visual resources are located within the primary and secondary study areas—the All Saint’s Church Complex located at the southeastern edge of the Project Area and the United Talmudical Academy (formerly P.S. 168) located between Bartlett and Whipple Street. Under the Proposed Action views of these resources along Whipple, Bartlett, Gerry, Wallabout and Walton Streets would be framed by new development on vacant lots. Existing views through vacant lots may be blocked; however the development of the vacant lots would improve the overall visual character of the area and views of these resources will remain from numerous vantage points in the secondary study area. The Proposed Action would not result in significantly adverse impacts to visual resources.

### **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

The Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts to archaeological resources but would result in construction related impacts for two historic resources.

The assessment of potential impacts to historic resources was conducted in consultation with LPC and the NYSOPRHP. Based upon the historic review of the Proposed Action’s archaeological APE, defined as the tax parcels encompassing the projected and potential development sites, an analysis of historic maps and accounts, and on the modern development of the Project Area, the archaeological APE is considered to have no potential for intact significant prehistoric deposits. Given the lack of evident historic development of the Project Area prior to the installation of municipal utilities and the lack of a significant industrial or commercial occupation within the projected and potential development parcels, the archaeological APE is not considered sensitive for historic period archaeological resources. LPC and NYSOPRHP concur that there are no further archaeological concerns with respect to the potential and projected development sites which are comprised of 114 tax lots.

A survey of historic architectural resources within the architectural APE identified one architectural resource previously listed or determined eligible for listing in the S/N register of Historic Places: the Forty-Seventh Regiment (Marcy Avenue) Armory was determined eligible by the NYSOPRHP for listing on the National Register. The survey also identified 11 properties that appeared to be 50 years in age or greater for consideration for listing on the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places or 30 years in age or greater for consideration as New York City Landmarks. Of those 11 properties identified and evaluated as part of this study, five were determined to be eligible for listing in the State and National Registers (S/NR), two of which were also determined to be eligible as New York City Landmarks.

Of the five listed or eligible historic architectural resources, four individual structures are located on or in close enough proximity of the Proposed Action’s development sites that they could be subject to direct and/or indirect significant adverse historic resources impacts. The four eligible structures are:

- Bartlett School/PS 168 (Talmudical Academy) (Block 2272, Lot 21);
- Lincoln Savings Bank at 541 Broadway (Block 3076, Lot 6);
- All Saints Church (Block 2275, Lots 1 and 21);
- Charles Pfizer & Co. Buildings (Block 2268, Lot 1; Block 1720, Lot 1).

Inadvertent direct construction-related impacts could potentially occur to two (the Lincoln Savings Bank and the All Saints Church) of the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places S/NR eligible

resources as a result of development in the Project Area. Construction activity associated with projected development sites 1 and 34 would result in potential construction-related impacts. The resource within 90 feet of projected development site 1 is the All Saints Church building, located on Throop Avenue. The resource within 90 feet of projected development site 34 is Lincoln Savings Bank which is located on Broadway.

The impacted resources would be afforded some protection from construction-related impacts under DOB regulations applicable to all buildings located adjacent to construction sites; however, since the resources are not S/NR-listed or New York City Landmarks (NYCL-designated), the resources are not afforded special protections under the New York City Department of Buildings' *Technical Policy and Procedure Notice #10/88*, (TPPN 10/88). However, the resources would be provided a measure of protection from construction as Building Code section 27-166 (C26-112.4), which requires that all lots, buildings, and service facilities adjacent to foundation and earthwork areas be protected and supported in accordance with the requirements of Building Construction Subchapter 7 and Building Code Subchapters 11 and 19. Additional protective measures afforded under TPPN 10/88, which apply to designated historic resources, would not be applicable in this case, unless the eligible resources are designated in the future prior to the initiation of construction. If these resources are not designated, however, they would not be subject to the above construction protection procedures and adjacent or nearby development resulting from the Proposed Action could potentially result in significant adverse construction-related impacts to these resources.

As discussed in Chapter 26, "Unavoidable Adverse Impacts", these impacts would be unmitigated for privately owned development sites as no mechanism to require a Construction Protection Plan (CPP) is currently in place for private sites, aside from the standard Building Code measures identified above.

LPC found that there are no historic architectural concerns with respect to the Proposed Action (see Appendix A). In their preliminary evaluation of the historic architectural APE, NYSOPRHP determined that additional information was required in order to determine the historic architectural sensitivity of the Proposed Action (see Appendix A). After review of the photographs, NYSOPRHP completed their evaluation of the historic architectural APE and agreed with LPC and determined that there are no historic architectural concerns with respect to the Proposed Action.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

### *DIRECT RESIDENTIAL DISPLACEMENT*

Under the RWCDs, the Proposed Action could potentially directly displace approximately 39 residents of 13 existing residential units located on the projected development sites. If residents are displaced due to the redevelopment of these properties by their owners or by purchase of such properties by the city or through eminent domain, based on the guidelines in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the potential displacement of these residents would not result in a significant adverse impact because they do not represent a significant proportion of the study area population, they do not likely have socioeconomic characteristics that differ markedly from the study area population as a whole, and the Proposed Action would not result in the loss of any population group within the neighborhood or alter neighborhood character. In addition, the Proposed Action would result in net increase in housing units on these and other projected development sites, including the creation of a substantial number of affordable housing units well in excess of the number of the potentially directly displaced units.

As noted, it is possible that the 39 residents living in the 13 housing units that were identified in the RWCDs may be directly displaced through city-acquisition or through the use of eminent domain. If this were to occur the City Relocation Rule would take effect. The city rule, like the federal Uniform

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Relocation Act, was written to compensate residential and commercial tenants who are forced to relocate because of governmental acquisition of real property for a public purpose. The City Relocation Rule, 28 RCNY §18-04 governs “relocation practices and benefit payments for those eligible site occupants who are displaced from public improvements and quasi-public sites or from urban renewal sites which are not federally assisted”. The rule mandates that HPD provide monetary and other benefits to eligible “displaced persons”. A “displaced person” includes any residential or commercial occupant that is “displaced or moves from real property after the date of acquisition of the real property for the site or project. The eligibility requirements for relocation benefits are: 1) the real property in which the person resides or does business must have been acquired by the city and the person must have moved because of the acquisition, 2) the person must have been an occupant on the date title vested, and 3) displacement was made necessary by the city's acquisition of the real property.

### *INDIRECT RESIDENTIAL DISPLACEMENT*

Within the study area there are an estimated 3,543 residents living in 1,189 unprotected units that are currently vulnerable to indirect displacement due to increased rents. The Proposed Action could add to an existing trend toward increased rents in the study area. Although there are ongoing trends of increased rent pressures in the study area and adjacent Williamsburg and Bushwick neighborhoods, the Proposed Action could contribute to rent pressures in the study area. As discussed in Chapter 24, “Mitigation,” the provision of new housing, particularly ~~905~~ 844 new affordable housing units that would be rent protected would provide partial mitigation for the impact. Combined with the ~~322~~ 370 affordable housing units that would be provided by known future developments under the 2018 no-action condition, a total of ~~1,227~~ 1,214 affordable units would be added to the study area by 2018. While the Proposed Action could potentially result in significant adverse impacts associated with indirect residential displacement, the impact is not expected to significantly affect neighborhood character because the Proposed Action would provide a substantial number of new, affordable units. In addition, the ~~322~~ 370 units included under No-Action conditions by 2018 would bring the total of affordable units to ~~1,227~~ 1,214. This number of affordable housing units would serve to ameliorate trends for potential indirect residential displacement, and would not, in and of itself, result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### *DIRECT BUSINESS AND INSTITUTIONAL DISPLACEMENT*

Projected development sites in the Project Area currently contain 19 businesses with an estimated 138 employees. If these sites are redeveloped as assumed under the RWCDs, it is possible that these existing firms could be displaced, subject to lease terms and agreements between private firms and property owners existing at the time of redevelopment. The businesses that could be displaced conduct a variety of business activities. Although the potentially displaced firms each contribute to the city's economy and therefore have economic value, the products and services they provide are widely available in the area and the city and would still be available to consumers as many other existing businesses would remain and firms providing similar products and services would still be available in the surrounding area. Based on the guidelines in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the direct displacement of these businesses would not result in a significant adverse impact.

### *INDIRECT BUSINESS AND INSTITUTIONAL DISPLACEMENT*

The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts due to indirect business and institutional displacement. The Proposed Action would increase business opportunities related to residential uses as new housing is developed in the study area. New housing would also increase demand for resident-oriented services. There is already a trend toward increased demand for such services within the study area, and the Proposed Action would not significantly alter or accelerate this ongoing trend. Businesses currently vulnerable to indirect displacement due to the ongoing trends in the study area—

primarily industrial businesses that do not capture residential consumer spending—would continue to face displacement pressures. And while all businesses contribute to neighborhood character and provide value to the city’s economy, the loss of potentially vulnerable businesses would not rise to a level of significance in terms of its impact on either the city’s or the area’s overall economy.

#### *ADVERSE EFFECTS ON SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES*

The potentially displaced businesses within the Project Area vary and are not concentrated within a significant business sector. Neither are the businesses subject to displacement essential to the survival of other industries outside of the study area, as they do not serve as the sole provider of goods and services to an entire industry or category of business in the city. Therefore, the potential displacement of these businesses would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts.

### **TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIANS**

#### *VEHICULAR TRAFFIC*

No physical or operational changes to the study area street network are planned as part of the Proposed Action. In the weekday AM peak hour, the number of intersections that are projected to operate at overall LOS E or F would increase from four in the No-Action condition to seven in the With-Action condition. Overall, nine of the 20 analyzed intersections would have significant adverse impacts in the AM peak hour. The number of traffic movements projected to operate at LOS E or F in the AM would increase from eight in the No-Action condition to 11 in the With-Action condition.

In the weekday midday peak hour, two intersections are projected to operate at overall LOS E or F in the With-Action condition, unchanged from the No-Action condition. Overall, two of the 20 analyzed intersections would have significant adverse impacts in the weekday midday. The number of traffic movements projected to operate at LOS E or F would total four in the With-Action condition, also unchanged from the No-Action condition.

In the weekday PM peak hour, the number of intersections that are projected to operate at overall LOS E or F would increase from four in the No-Action condition to five in the With-Action condition. Overall, six of the 20 analyzed intersections would have significant adverse impacts in the weekday PM. The number of traffic movements projected to operate at LOS E or F would increase from nine in the No-Action condition to 11 in the With-Action condition.

Lastly, in the Saturday midday peak hour, the number of intersections that are projected to operate at overall LOS E or F would remain unchanged at three. Overall, two of the 20 analyzed intersections would have significant adverse impacts in the Saturday midday. The number of traffic movements projected to operate at LOS E or F would total six in the With-Action condition, unchanged from the No-Action condition.

The changes in intersection delay and levels of service ~~traffic conditions~~ as a result of the Proposed Action would not materially change traffic conditions as they relate to neighborhood character. The magnitude of traffic congestion in the area would only change marginally and as such, the study area, which experiences some traffic congestion under existing conditions, would continue to experience ~~with~~ similar conditions with or without the Proposed Action.

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### *ACCIDENTS*

Overall, the Proposed Action would generate fewer than 50 new vehicle trips (an average of less than one additional vehicle trip per minute) at each of the three high accident intersections located in the vicinity of the Project Area: Broadway and Flushing Avenue, Broadway and Graham Avenue, and Broadway and Whipple Street. Given the locations of projected development sites, subway station entrances and local bus routes, the Proposed Action is also not expected to generate substantial numbers of new pedestrian trips on crosswalks at any of these three intersections. Therefore, vehicle and pedestrian demand generated by the Proposed Action is not expected to substantially increase the potential for vehicle/pedestrian conflicts at high accident locations in the vicinity of the Project Area. In addition, it should be noted that the accident rates at each of these three intersections peaked in 2005, and that the number of pedestrian/cyclist injuries and fatalities declined significantly in subsequent years at all three locations.

### *PEDESTRIANS*

The Proposed Action would generate new pedestrian demand on analyzed sidewalks, corner areas and crosswalks by 2018. The Proposed Action is expected to generate a net total of 729 walk-only trips in the weekday AM peak hour, 2,704 in the midday and 1,660 in the weekday PM peak hour. Trips en route to and from area subway stations and bus stops would account for an additional 863, 730 and 1,087 new pedestrian trips during the weekday AM, midday and PM peak hours, respectively.

New pedestrian trips generated by the Proposed Action are expected to be widely distributed due to the dispersed locations of the projected development sites within the Project Area, with the highest concentrations typically occurring along corridors connecting projected development sites to area subway stations.

As shown in Chapter 19, "Transit and Pedestrians," with implementation of the Proposed Action all analyzed sidewalks, corner areas and crosswalks would continue to operate at an acceptable LOS A or B in the weekday AM, midday and PM peak hours, and no significant adverse pedestrian impacts are anticipated.

### **NOISE**

Based on CEQR and HUD criteria, noise effects attributable to mobile or stationary sources associated with the Proposed Action would be minimal. However, due to existing relatively high ambient noise levels in the community, certain developments in the Project Area would be required to include in the building designs appropriate measures to achieve the desired window-wall noise attenuation. The provision for providing sufficient building attenuation to achieve acceptable interior noise levels would be mandated by placing an (E) Designation on City Zoning Map for the privately owned tax lots needing attenuation based on the *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines. For publicly-owned properties, (E) designations are not recommended. Since development of publicly owned sites would occur through disposition by HPD to a private entity, similar window-wall attenuation measures would be required through the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) between HPD and a private entity. The provisions would be similar to an (E) designation and would ensure that adequate window-wall attenuation is provided with any future construction Sites whose development would be funded by HUD would need to incorporate measures to attenuate interior noise levels in accordance with HUD criteria. Noise from HVAC units, or other stationary sources, would be mostly shielded by the building's roof and other structures. Therefore, with these measures, the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse noise impacts.

## G. CONCLUSION

The Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character. On the contrary, it would result in substantial improvement to neighborhood character by replacing vacant lots and otherwise underutilized sites with new residential and mixed-use development with ground floor retail and community facility space. The Project Area is currently devoid of street trees. Under the proposed contextual zoning, street trees and landscaping would add needed greenery to the Project Area, enhancing the visual appearance of the streetscape. The new residential development would increase housing opportunities for a range of New Yorkers by providing a net increase of 1,851 units of new housing. The commercial overlays mapped along Throop and Harrison Avenues would enliven these corridors with neighborhood retail space and pedestrian activity. The projected community facility space would provide a range of services for the new (and existing) populations in the area.

The Project Area is located at the nexus of Williamsburg, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Bushwick. However, given its currently largely vacant and underutilized character, it serves to divide these three neighborhoods. Under the Proposed Action, new development would bridge these existing neighborhoods by establishing a new, predominately residential neighborhood in the Project Area. Projected development would be consistent in density, height, bulk, and scale with buildings found in the surrounding older, more established neighborhoods.

The proposed contextual zoning districts would limit building heights to 70 and 80 feet, and the streetwalls would range between 40 and 65 feet, in order to preserve the traditional streetscape found in the surrounding area. For the same reason, the Proposed Action would not result in contextual effects to the S/NR eligible historic resources located within the study area.

As discussed in Chapter 3, “Socioeconomic Conditions”, projected development could potentially result in significant adverse indirect residential displacement impacts on up to 3,543 residents in 1,189 units in the Project Area and adjacent neighborhoods. However, many of the study area residential populations most susceptible to increased rents presently occupy rent-protected units. As discussed elsewhere, these impacts would be partially mitigated by the Proposed Action’s provision of ~~905~~ 844 affordable housing units. Combined with the ~~322~~ 370 affordable housing units that would be provided by known future developments under the 2018 no-action condition a total of ~~1,227~~ 1,214 affordable units would be added to the study area by 2018. These would be rent protected units that would shield vulnerable populations from indirect displacement pressures unlike the existing unprotected units in the study area. ~~While the Proposed Action could potentially result in significant adverse impacts associated with indirect residential displacement, the impact is not expected to significantly affect neighborhood character because the Proposed Action would provide a substantial number of new, affordable units. In addition, the 322 units included under No Action conditions by 2018 would bring the total of affordable units to 1,227.~~ This number of affordable housing units would serve to ameliorate trends for potential indirect residential displacement, and would not, in and of itself, result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

Although the Proposed Action would introduce a residential population to an area with relatively high ambient noise, measures included under the Proposed Action would require noise attenuation. Projected noise levels in the future with the Proposed Action would be comparable to noise levels found in urban areas and found throughout New York City. Measures associated with noise attenuation would be incorporated into new developments, ensuring that residents are not exposed to noise from traffic and/or business operations. Analogous to urban noise is somewhat increased levels of traffic which would occur as a result of new projected development; however, although impacts would occur at a maximum of 9 intersections (during the AM ~~and~~ PM peak hours), these impacts would be mitigated by standard

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measures such as changes to signal timing and curbside parking regulations, ~~daylighting~~, and other measures commonly employed in New York City.

As discussed elsewhere in the EIS, new residential development is not expected to result in significant land use conflicts with existing commercial businesses which may continue to operate in the future. Although these businesses may generate traffic and noise, the Proposed Action will include measures to mitigate these effects. It is anticipated that routine activities required by these businesses to operate would not significantly conflict with new residential development. Solid waste disposal would occur in accordance with all applicable regulations and deliveries would be handled in accordance with local traffic regulations.

Overall, the Proposed Action would result in a new residential neighborhood populated by a range of mixed-income households, including substantial amounts of needed affordable housing. With this substantial amount of new affordable housing, the potential for indirect residential displacement would not constitute a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character. Furthermore, urban design conditions would be dramatically improved, and the transformed Project Area would bridge three Brooklyn neighborhoods. For all these reasons, the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.

## **H. NEPA CONSIDERATION**

HUD NEPA guidance does not include neighborhood character as a specific analysis category. Created specifically to examine the potential effects of development projects in New York City, the methodology of the *CEQR Technical Manual* was used as a guideline in analyzing the Proposed Action. The results of the CEQR analysis concluded that the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse neighborhood character impacts. Therefore, further consideration with regards to NEPA was not necessary.