A. INTRODUCTION

As defined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character is considered to be an amalgam of the various elements that give a neighborhood its distinct personality. These elements can include land use, urban design, visual resources, historic resources, socioeconomic conditions, traffic, and noise, as well as any other physical or social characteristics that help to distinguish the community in question from another.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Action consists of the acquisition of private property by the City of New York, site selection for a public facility, and an amendment to the City Map to establish a new public street. The Proposed Action would facilitate the construction of an emergency communications facility for the City of New York (the "City"), the Public Safety Answering Center II (PSAC II). The proposed PSAC II development would consist of an approximately 640,000 gsf office building and a 500-space above-grade accessory parking structure on an approximately 8.75-acre parcel in the northeast Bronx. As the proposed development site, comprising the northern portion of the Hutchinson Metro Center (HMC) office complex, is relatively isolated from the surrounding street network, the Proposed Action would also map an existing private roadway, Industrial Street, as a public street ("Marconi Street").

According to the *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, an assessment of neighborhood character is generally needed when the action would exceed preliminary thresholds in any one of the following areas of technical analysis: land use, urban design and visual resources, historic resources, socioeconomic conditions, transportation, or noise. An assessment is also appropriate when the action would have moderate effects on several of the aforementioned areas. Potential effects on neighborhood character may include:

- *Land Use.* Development resulting from a proposed action could alter neighborhood character if it introduces new land uses, conflicts with land use policy or other public plans for the area, changes land use character, or generates significant land use impacts. The Proposed Action would not conflict with land uses and policies. It would represent a change in land use and an increase in density on the proposed development site replacing largely unimproved land with an approximately 640,000 gsf public facility and accessory parking garage (see Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy"). The proposed PSAC II development would be consistent with the Waterfront Revitalization Program (see Chapter 8, "Waterfront Revitalization Program"). In addition, the proposed PSAC II development is listed in the *Citywide Statement of Needs* and is an essential public facility that would further enhance citywide emergency communications. Although the Proposed Action would be consistent with public land use policy and would not have an adverse impact on land use, the proposed development would bring about changes to urban design and visual resources, socioeconomic conditions, transportation, and noise. Therefore, land use is considered in the neighborhood character analysis.

- *Socioeconomic Conditions.* Changes in socioeconomic conditions have the potential to affect neighborhood character when they result in substantial direct or indirect displacement or the addition of population, employment, or businesses; or substantial differences in population or employment density. The Proposed Action would not result in the direct or indirect displacement of any residents, nor would it displace any businesses. The proposed PSAC II development would introduce a significant worker population to the area. Thus, socioeconomic conditions are considered in the neighborhood character assessment.

- *Historic Resources.* When an action would result in substantial direct changes to a historic resource or substantial changes to public views of a resource, or when a historic resource analysis identifies a significant impact in this category, there is a potential to affect neighborhood character. The Project Site does not contain any designated historic architectural resources, nor is it is in the immediate vicinity of any designated historic resources or resources which are eligible for New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (NYCLPC) designation and/or listing on the State and National Historic Registers. The site is also not located within a designated or potentially eligible historic district. Furthermore, the NYCLPC has determined that the Project Site is not sensitive for archaeological resources and therefore, construction on the Project Site would not result in any significant adverse impacts on archaeological resources. Therefore, historic resources are not considered in the neighborhood character assessment.

- *Urban Design and Visual Resources.* In developed areas, urban design changes have the potential to affect neighborhood character by introducing substantially different building bulk, form, size, scale, or arrangement. Urban design changes may also affect block forms, street patterns, or street hierarchies, as well as streetscape elements such as street walls, landscaping, curb cuts, and loading docks. Visual resource changes could affect neighborhood character if they directly alter key visual features such as unique and important public view corridors and vistas, or block public visual access to such features. The Proposed Action would alter neighborhood character by modifying urban design and visual resource characteristics on the Project Site. It would introduce a substantial development, consisting of an approximately 640,000 gsf building with a height of 350 feet (elevation of 374 feet) and a 500-space accessory garage to a largely unimproved site, as well as a new public street. All of these changes are noted in the *CEQR Technical Manual* as conditions suggesting that neighborhood character analysis would be appropriate. Therefore, urban design and visual resources are included in the neighborhood character assessment.

- *Transportation*. Changes in traffic and pedestrian conditions can affect neighborhood character in a number of ways. For traffic to have an effect on neighborhood character, it must be a contributing element to the character of the neighborhood (either by its absence or its presence), and it must change substantially as a result of the action. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual,* such substantial traffic changes can include: changes in level of service (LOS) to C or below; change in traffic patterns; change in roadway classifications; change in vehicle mixes, substantial increases in traffic volumes on residential streets; or significant traffic impacts, as identified in 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. As the Proposed Action would increase traffic throughout the study area, would result in several traffic impacts, and would introduce a new, large population of workers to the area—thus changing pedestrian activity and circulation—traffic and pedestrians are considered in the assessment of impacts on neighborhood character.

- *Noise.* According to the *CEQR Technical Manual,* for an action to affect neighborhood character with respect to noise, it would need to result in a significant adverse noise impact

and a change in acceptability categories. As the Proposed Action is expected to change traffic volumes in the study area, which would lead to changes in the ambient noise level, noise is considered in the assessment of impacts on neighborhood character.

This chapter of the EIS examines neighborhood character in the area surrounding the Project Site, defined as an approximate quarter-mile radius surrounding the Site (see Figure 6-1), and the Proposed Action's effects on that character. The chapter's impact analysis focuses on changes to neighborhood character resulting from changes in most of the technical areas discussed above, since changes to these technical areas are most relevant to potential changes in neighborhood character. The analysis concludes that changes to the Project Site's land use, urban design, and visual characteristics would occur, as well as increases in employees and increases in traffic, transit, and pedestrian activity, but the change would not be adverse, as discussed below.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Project Site

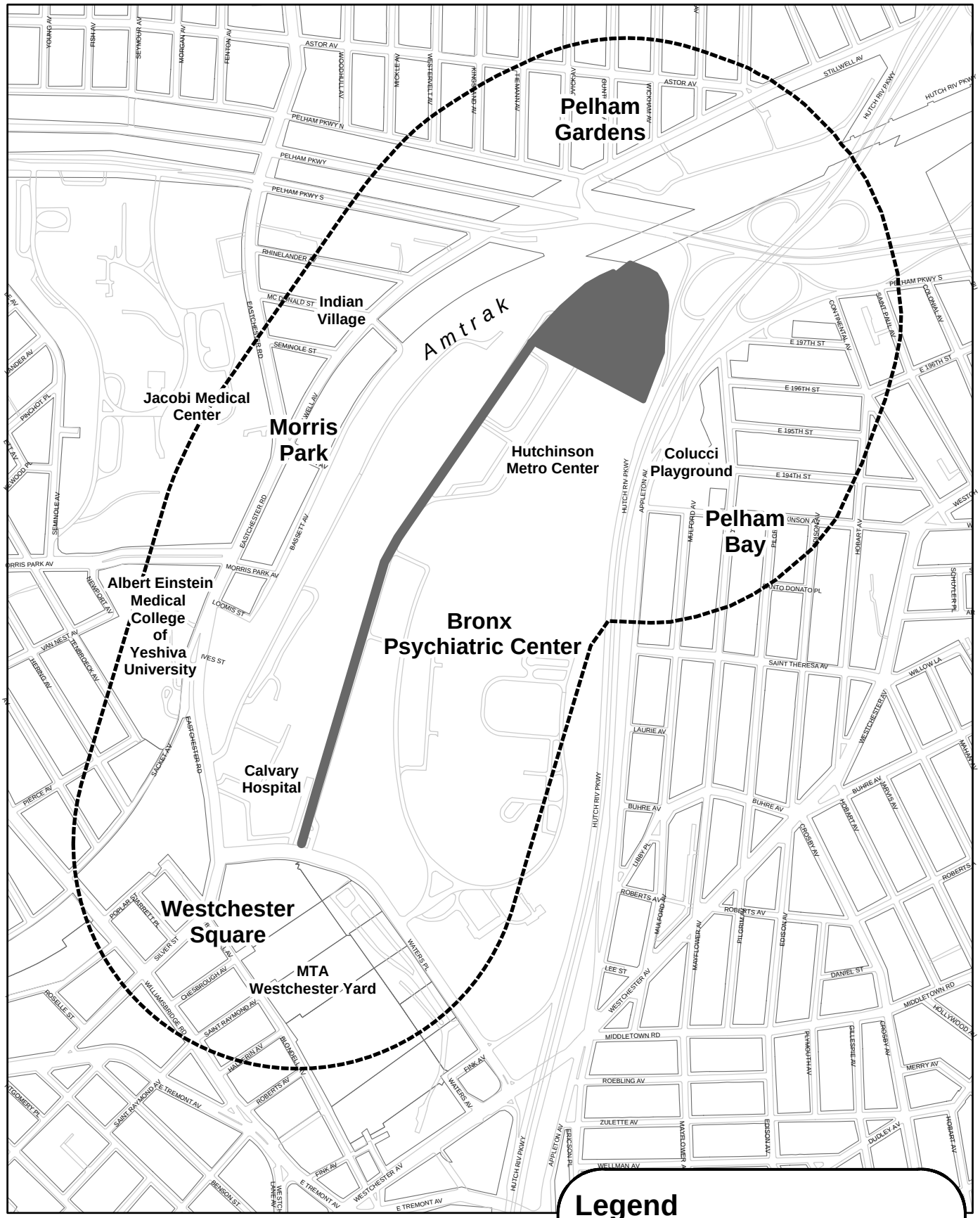
The Project Site encompasses a total of approximately 13.08 acres, and includes an approximately 8.75-acre proposed development site, which would be acquired by the City, and the approximately 4.33-acre area that would be mapped as a new public street, which would provide vehicular access and utility services to the proposed development site along a public right-of-way.

The proposed development site is located to the southwest of the interchange of the Pelham and the Hutchinson River Parkways. It is a bell-shaped parcel that is privately owned and comprises the northern portion of the approximately 32-acre HMC in the northeast Bronx. The proposed development site consists of approximately 8.75 acres (381,340 sf) of industrial property, and is largely unimproved.

There are no existing structures on the proposed development site. The northern portion of the proposed development site is occupied by vacant land that formerly accommodated two little league baseball fields. The two ball fields are unkempt, no longer functional, and largely overgrown with small trees, tall grasses, and shrubs. The northwestern portion of the site is also partially overlaid with several debris mounds. Fencing partially encloses each former ball field and a narrow asphalt pedestrian walkway also cuts through the center of the northern portion of the development site providing a pedestrian connection between the Pelham Parkway and the HMC. At-grade accessory parking for the HMC occupies the remainder of the proposed development site. The pedestrian pathway and accessory parking areas are in good condition.

The proposed development site is generally severed from much of the surrounding area by the broad thoroughfares of the Pelham and the Hutchinson River Parkways and their associated mapped open space to the north and east and the railroad right-of-way of Amtrak to the west. The proposed development site does not have any linear frontage adjacent to a public street. Vehicular access to the proposed development site is provided from the south via a private road known as Industrial Street. This roadway extends north from Waters Place to the proposed development site along the western edge of the grounds of the New York State owned and operated Bronx Psychiatric Center and the private commercial development of HMC. Industrial Street operates as a two-way roadway with one traffic lane in each direction. The southern portion of the road is in excellent condition and has recently been paved. The northern portion of the street is currently closed due to ongoing construction efforts at the southwest corner of the HMC.

Figure 6-1
Neighborhood Character Study Area



There is little to no pedestrian activity in the vicinity of the Project Site due to the low density of development and lack of nearby transit. Ambient noise levels in the study area are dominated by traffic and the Amtrak right-of-way.

Study Area

As described above, the neighborhood character study area is defined by an approximate quarter-mile radius from the Project Site, and is roughly bounded by Astor Avenue to the north, Hobart Avenue and the Hutchinson River Parkway to the east, Williamsbridge Road to the south, and Eastchester Road and Tenbroeck and Sacket Avenues to the west. Within the study area, there are several subareas that represent distinct neighborhoods or land use concentrations that reflect different patterns of development. These areas, which are analyzed separately below, include Pelham Gardens, Pelham Bay, the Bronx Psychiatric Center Area, Westchester Square, and Morris Park (see Figure 6-2).

General Characteristics

The study area can broadly be characterized as a low-density urban environment that supports a diverse range of land uses, including the predominantly residential communities of Pelham Gardens and Pelham Bay, several major health care-related institutions and associated office uses, the HMC, the MTA Westchester Subway Yard, and a number of light industrial uses. Low-rise commercial office buildings and local retail establishments are primarily concentrated along Stillwell and Bassett Avenues, and on the east side of Eastchester Road, as well as on the north side of Waters Place to the west of Industrial Street. The majority of buildings in the study area consist of older low-and mid-rise buildings, as well as a few taller commercial and institutional buildings that are primarily clustered on campus settings.

The street pattern of the study area is very irregular and consists of a network of arterials, local streets and private roadways, as well as the Pelham and the Hutchinson River Parkways. The broad thoroughfares and associated linear open spaces of the Pelham and the Hutchinson River Parkways, as well as the railroad right-of-way of Amtrak's New York-New Haven and Hartford line, physically divide the study area, and help to create distinct subareas. Most of the area's traffic is concentrated on the Pelham and the Hutchinson River Parkways, Eastchester Road, and Waters Place.

Large superblocks created by major institutional uses also help to define and shape the study area's dominant characteristics. Further, most of the properties in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site comprise one large superblock, roughly bounded by the Pelham Parkway, Hutchinson River Parkway, Waters Place, and Eastchester Road/Amtrak, and do not have frontages along public streets. Private roadways that extend north of Waters Place or Eastchester Road provide the only vehicular access to these properties, including Industrial Street, which is to be mapped as a public street as part of the Proposed Action, and Bassett Road.

Many of the more prominent institutional and commercial uses, including Jacobi Medical Center, Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein School of Medicine ("Albert Einstein College of Medicine"), and the east campus of the Montefiore Medical Center, as well as the HMC, occupy expansive properties that feature campus-like settings that contain clusters of buildings surrounded by landscaped open areas, at-grade accessory parking, interior roadways, and/or pedestrian pathways. Some of the light industrial uses in the study area also occupy large properties that contain bulky low-rise warehouses or lofts that have open vehicular storage areas and accessory parking lots.

Figure 6-2
Aerial View of Subareas

Pelham Gardens

The southeastern edge of the Pelham Gardens neighborhood is located within the northern portion of the study area and comprises several blocks generally bounded by Astor Avenue to the north, the Hutchinson River Parkway to the east, the Pelham Parkway North to the south, and Westervelt Avenue to the west. Directly north of the proposed development site is the approximately 8-acre campus of the Bronx Rehabilitation Center for the United Cerebral Palsy of New York City, which abuts the Amtrak right-of-way to the northwest and extends along the southeast side of Stillwell Avenue between the Pelham Parkway North and Vance Street/Hutchinson River Parkway. This institutional campus contains several one-to 2-story buildings mostly concentrated at its southwestern end and large expanses of open space and recreational amenities at its northern end.

Pelham Gardens is a low-density residential community that consists of a mixture of one-and two-family houses built during the mid-20th century. It is a well-maintained community characterized by relatively uniform residential development with few institutional and retail uses. The buildings in the area are mostly brick and wood-framed detached and semidetached houses that are between one-and three-stories tall, which are generally setback from the street with private driveways and shallow front yards. Most of the buildings occupy narrow lots on rectangular shaped blocks. It is a quiet residential area with tree-lined local streets that form a modified grid pattern, made somewhat irregular by Stillwell Avenue transvering diagonally through the grid.

Pelham Bay

The northwestern portion of the Pelham Bay neighborhood comprises the eastern portion of the study area, located east of the Hutchinson River Parkway. Across the Hutchinson River Parkway to the southeast of the proposed development site is the approximately 4.0-acre Colucci Playground, a New York City park, which occupies a superblock generally bounded by Wilkinson and Mayflower Avenues and the Hutchinson River Parkway.

This area is characterized by low-to mid-density residential development comprised of large one-and two-family detached homes and semi-attached houses in a broad range of styles. The mix of development also includes some mid-rise multiunit apartment buildings and a handful of cooperative units and condominiums. In addition, two-and three-family homes are prevalent and increasing in number as older houses, particularly single-family detached homes, are demolished or renovated to permit the construction of attached and semi-attached rental apartment units. Similar to Pelham Gardens, there are few institutional and retail uses within this area of Pelham Bay.

Most of the buildings in this subarea occupy narrow lots that line local streets shaded with mature trees. They are generally two-to three-stories tall, somewhat larger than the houses within the Pelham Gardens neighborhood and form a relatively uniform street wall. Similar to Pelham Gardens, most of the streets are quiet residential streets in a modified grid pattern. A number of the streets are one-way. The block shapes are typically larger than in Pelham Gardens, and have long rectangular form.

The Bronx Psychiatric Center Area

The Bronx Psychiatric Center Area anchors the study area, and is defined as the area roughly bounded by the Pelham Parkway to the north, the Hutchinson River Parkway to the east, Waters Place/Eastchester Road to the south, and the Amtrak right-of-way to the west. This area comprises one large superblock that supports a patchwork of uses, including commercial, institutional, and light industrial land uses, which do not create a cohesive identity for the neighborhood.

The area is primarily zoned for high performance industrial use, except for the southeast portion, which is zoned for moderate-density residential and comprises the Bronx Psychiatric Center campus. The Bronx Psychiatric Center Area also includes the HMC, Calvary Hospital, and a number of light industrial and commercial uses. There is also one small two-story detached residential building located at the northeast corner of Waters Place and Eastchester Road.

As there are no public streets within this subarea, a number of the properties within this subarea are only accessible from private roadways that extend north of Waters Place and Eastchester Road. Industrial Street, which would be mapped as a public street (Marconi Street) as part of the Proposed Action, somewhat divides this subarea into two sections, separating the Bronx Psychiatric Center and the HMC from the light industrial and commercial uses that extend along the east side of Amtrak. Except for the small two-story residential building and a few small single-story retail buildings on Eastchester Road, all of the buildings within this study area are generally setback from the public streets.

The Bronx Psychiatric Center, which also includes the Bronx Development Center, the Bronx Children's Psychiatric Center, and the Beacon's Bronx Houses, comprises the southeastern portion of the subarea. Encompassing more than 53 acres, the Bronx Psychiatric Center consists of a number of mid-to low-rise, brick and masonry buildings, as well as two large hospitals set in a campus like setting. Most of the buildings were built in the 1960s and are clustered in smaller groupings near the center of the campus surrounded by landscaped open areas, several ball fields, walking paths, interior roadways, and at-grade accessory parking areas. Access to the campus is provided from a private gated entrance located on the north side of Waters Place to the east of the intersection of Industrial Street and Waters Place.

Directly north of the Bronx Psychiatric Center is the HMC, which comprises an irregular-shaped parcel consisting of approximately 32 acres (10 of which are encompassed by the Project Site), located to the southwest of the interchange of the Pelham and the Hutchinson River Parkways. The office complex contains two large commercial buildings including a single-story warehouse and a 4-story recently retrofitted office building on an office park-like setting. The warehouse contains approximately 52,000 gsf, and is not well maintained. It is primarily used for storage purposes. The 4-story office building contains approximately 460,000 gsf of floor area. It accommodates a range of commercial and government offices, a day care center, as well as the Bronx campus of Mercy College. Approximately 1,467 at-grade accessory parking spaces encircle the two buildings. Slightly more than a third of these accessory spaces (513 spaces) are located in parking lots within the boundaries of the proposed development site. The southwest corner of the office complex is currently undergoing construction, and is anticipated to be redeveloped with two new commercial buildings containing a total of 602,000 gsf of office, hotel and enclosed accessory parking (the "Towers at Hutchinson Metro Center") by the Project Build year of 2012 (refer to Section C, "Future Without the Proposed Action"). Construction on the first of the two buildings was recently completed. Industrial Street provides the only vehicular access to the site.

The area to the west of Industrial Street and east of the Amtrak right-of-way consists of a range of low-density commercial and light industrial uses, as well as Calvary Hospital and a small 2-story detached house on the northeast corner of Waters Place and Eastchester Road. Two large industrial properties extend along the northeast side of the Amtrak corridor, including a 12-acre parcel containing an approximately 285,600 gsf warehouse with 2-stories that is used as a distribution center/trailer storage area for a sports goods company, and a 5-acre parcel supporting a slightly smaller factory with 2-stories that accommodates a food manufacturer. Both of these buildings were erected in the 1950s/1960s, and are accessible from a private roadway (Bassett Road) that extends north of Eastchester Road directly east of the elevated rail for Amtrak. Calvary Hospital and its associated at-grade accessory parking area are located directly south of the industrial uses. Built in the late 1970s,

the hospital is a modern, mid-rise 6-story building composed of red brick and glass. A small single-story shopping center anchored by a Pathmark supermarket and a renovated 2-story office building are located to the south and east of the hospital, as well as a 2-story residential building and a few single-story attached retail structures.

Westchester Square

The southernmost portion of the study area comprises the northern edge of the Westchester Square area of the Bronx, and is largely occupied by a New York City Transit rail yard. The Westchester Yard of the no. 6 subway line occupies approximately 20 acres and extends along the south side of Waters Place from roughly Westchester Avenue on the east to Eastchester Road on the west, across from the Bronx Psychiatric Center.

South of the Westchester Yard, the area supports a range of uses with low-to mid-density residential development comprised of large one- and two-family detached homes and a few multiunit apartment buildings typically concentrated on the inner blocks and low-rise commercial office, retail, warehousing, automotive and light industrial uses along Blondell Avenue and Williamsbridge Road. Most of the buildings are built to the lot line and are one-to two-stories tall. The majority of residential buildings are wood framed houses and the commercial structures are mostly masonry buildings with little to no articulation. There are also a number of vacant properties, vehicle storage areas, and parking lots and garages.

Morris Park

The western portion of the study area encompasses the eastern edge of the Morris Park section of the Bronx. This subarea is generally more densely developed and supports a range of land uses including institutional, commercial, residential, light industrial and transportation-related uses. It is roughly bounded by the Pelham Parkway South to the north, the Amtrak right-of-way to the east, Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the east campus of the Montefiore Medical Center to the south, and Jacobi Medical Center to the west.

The Morris Park subarea is largely defined by the major health care-related institutional uses of Jacobi Medical Center, the east campus of the Montefiore Medical Center, and Albert Einstein College of Medicine, as well as ancillary medical offices, community health centers, and research facilities which occupy expansive superblocks to the west of Eastchester Road. These superblocks create a highly irregular street pattern in the subarea, and largely buffer the predominantly low-rise residential area to the west from the primarily commercial area to the east.

Jacobi Medical Center, originally erected in the 1950s and 1960s, comprises more than 55 acres and occupies the majority of the block generally bounded by the Pelham Parkway South to the north, Morris Park Avenue to the south, Seminole, Neill, and Wilson Avenues to the west, and Eastchester Road to the east. The facility consists of several mid-to high-rise buildings and a few low-rise buildings scattered across a campus-like setting, which contains landscaped open areas, interior roadways and at-grade accessory parking areas. Albert Einstein College of Medicine is located adjacent to and south of Jacobi Medical Center. Its campus consists of more than 11 acres and is located on either side of Morris Park Avenue between Newport Avenue and Eastchester Road. Also established in the 1950s, Albert Einstein College of Medicine features several mid-to high-rise buildings, as well as a few open green spaces. Both Jacobi Medical Center and Albert Einstein College of Medicine have recently undergone, or are currently undergoing significant expansions to add new buildings to their campuses.

The east campus of the Montefiore Medical Center is located adjacent to and south of Albert Einstein College of Medicine and consists primarily of two main facilities, including Weiler Hospital and the

Montefiore Medical Park, which is located at the intersection of Poplar Street and Blondell Avenue and consists of several low-to mid-rise buildings.

The area to the east of Stillwell Avenue and Eastchester Road is primarily commercial and contains low-rise attached and semi-attached buildings built largely in the 1950s and 1960s that accommodate a range of commercial office, retail and warehousing, as well as light industrial uses. The majority of these buildings are single-story, built to the lot line, and occupy small narrow lots. There are also a number of parking lots, vehicular storage areas and vacant undeveloped land.

A small residential enclave is located within the northern portion of the Morris Park subarea to the west of Stillwell Avenue and encompasses portions of three blocks that are generally bounded by the Pelham Parkway South on the north and Seminole Street on the south. This area is characterized of a mixture of low-density, single-and two-family homes, built primarily in the early to mid-20th century, as well as 5-to 6-story multifamily housing along the Pelham Parkway South. A number of low-rise retail and office buildings line the east side of Eastchester Avenue and Stillwell Avenue.

C. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION (NO-BUILD CONDITION)

Project Site

In the future without the Proposed Action, it is assumed that no major changes would occur to the Project Site. The proposed development site would continue to remain partially occupied by at-grade accessory parking for the HMC at its southern end and vacant land at its northern end. The narrow asphalt pathway would continue to provide pedestrian connection between the HMC and the Pelham Parkway. Additionally, Industrial Street would continue to operate as a private access two-way roadway that would provide vehicular access to the HMC. The northern portion of the roadway, which is currently closed, would be opened and repaved.

Study Area

The development projects assumed for the future without the Proposed Action, as discussed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," will add new commercial office, a 150-room hotel, community facility space and improve existing infrastructure in the quarter-mile study area. In addition, immediately beyond the study area's western boundary, expansions and improvements to existing community facilities in the Morris Park subarea have either been recently completed or are currently undergoing construction. Most of these development projects are expansions within the campuses of substantial existing commercial or institutional developments, including the HMC, Bronx Psychiatric Center, Jacobi Medical Center, and Albert Einstein College of Medicine that involve the construction of new buildings and/or the renovation of existing buildings. These projects are anticipated to improve and enhance existing facilities and would also introduce new employment and/or businesses to the area.

The projects that are planned for construction in the study area by the year 2012 would not be expected to create substantial changes to the character of the area. They would not significantly alter any natural features, street patterns, or block forms. As discussed in Chapter 2, these No-Build developments would result in the addition of approximately 602,000 gsf of commercial and approximately 831,100 gsf of institutional space, as well as the renovation of an additional approximately 36,590 sf of institutional space.

As also discussed in Chapter 2, the Towers at the HMC project would introduce two new commercial buildings that are anticipated to contain approximately 13- and 20-stories, respectively , and will including enclosed parking on their lower levels. These commercial buildings will be located south of the proposed development site at the southwest corner of the HMC and will abut the east side of Industrial Street. They would be comparable in bulk to the existing four-story, retrofitted office building. At approximately 180-and 268-feet tall, the buildings would be taller than most buildings in the immediately surrounding area, which contains typically one-to four-story structures.

The Pelham Parkway, including its service roads, will be reconstructed between the Bronx River Parkway and the Hutchinson River Parkway by the Build year of 2012. This work involves improvements to the sewer and water main lines, street lighting and traffic work and will likely enhance the roadway condition in the vicinity of the Project Site.

Further to the south of the HMC, the Bronx Psychiatric Center will undergo a major renovation that will involve the construction of five new buildings, including a new 78-bed Children's Hospital, and a 156-bed Adult Hospital (adult beds will be expandable up to 300 beds). The three other new buildings, 96-bed Transitional Living Residence (TLR) building, the 48-bed studio apartment building, and the 44-bed Crisis Residence/Crisis Stabilization building, in addition to the existing Ginsberg Outpatient Clinic will comprise the "Adult Village." Collectively, the Adult Village is envisioned to provide assistance to consumers transitioning from an inpatient to an outpatient environment. An existing building, Building 4, will also be renovated and will share support services with both the new Adult Hospital and Children's Hospital. Three existing buildings (Building 1 and 2 and the Children's Hospital) on the Bronx Psychiatric Center campus would remain intact but would be completely vacant. To facilitate the construction of the Adult Village, three existing little league ball fields will be relocated from the southeast corner of the Bronx Psychiatric Center to the northern edge of the campus directly south of the HMC.

The Division of Substance Abuse at Albert Einstein College of Medicine is also constructing a new medical facility, the Wellness Center, at 1510 Waters Place on the north side of Waters Place, adjacent to and west of the entrance to the Bronx Psychiatric Center and to the south of the Bronx Psychiatric Center's Alcohol Treatment Center. The planned facility is anticipated to improve existing substance abuse services and will consolidate three methadone clinics (Trailer I Clinic, Trailer II Clinic, and the Van Etten Clinic) currently located at 1500 Waters Place within a single building. The new building will contain approximately 42,000 sf and will house treatment facilities for 1,000 patients, as well as office space.

Immediately beyond the study area's western boundary, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine recently completed the construction of an approximately 201,000 sf research facility, the Michael F. Price Center for Genetic and Translational Medicine (MPCGTM) and Harold and Muriel Block Research Pavilion. The research center is a modern, 5-story building located near the corner of Morris Park Avenue and Eastchester Road, on the north side of Morris Park Avenue. The building is the largest medical research facility to be constructed in the Bronx since the medical college opened in 1955. The Albert Einstein College of Medicine is also planning a 310-space enlargement to its Staff Housing garage to meet the need for additional off-street parking generated by the continued expansion and modernization of it educational and medical facilities.

Further to the north of the MPCGTM, a new approximately 125,000 sf ambulatory care pavilion (the "Jacobi Medical Center Ambulatory Care Pavilion") is being added to the Jacobi Medical Center campus. The four-story ambulatory care pavilion will be located within the courtyard of the main hospital building, the West Jacobi Hospital Building, and will be connected to the main hospital by a galleria and courtyard. This project also involves the renovation of approximately 36,590 gsf of adjacent space within the north and west wings of the existing main hospital building.

Traffic in the study area would increase in the future without the Proposed Action, primarily as a result of other projects planned or proposed for completion by 2012. Pedestrian activity in the study area would continue to generally remain low.

D. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION (BUILD CONDITION)

The Proposed Action would facilitate the construction of a new public facility that would accommodate the City's second 911 emergency center, as well as command control center operations for the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Fire Department of New York City (FDNY). The proposed facility would occupy an approximately 8.75-acre site and would consist of an approximately 640,000 gsf building and a 500-space accessory parking garage ("proposed PSAC II development"). As the proposed development site occupies the northern portion of the HMC and does not have any linear frontage along a public street, the Proposed Action would also map an existing private roadway (Industrial Street) as a public street (Marconi Street). The proposed street would extend north of Waters Place from a point located approximately 420 feet east of Eastchester Road and terminate in a hammerhead cul de sac at the southern boundary of the proposed development site.

This section discusses potential changes in the character of the Project Site and surrounding study area by 2012, as a result of the Proposed Action. This section focuses on the potential changes to neighborhood character resulting from the technical areas of Land Use, Socioeconomic Conditions, Urban Design and Visual Resources, Transportation (Traffic and Pedestrians), and Noise. Excluding Socioeconomic Conditions, detailed technical analyses for each of these areas are presented in Chapters 2, 5, 12, 13 and 15 of the EIS.

Land Use Impacts on Neighborhood Character

Land use is an important factor in determining neighborhood character because changes in the way land is used can alter both the "look and feel" of an area, and the levels of activity in that area. Changes to land use can precipitate changes to neighborhood character in the areas of visual resources, urban design, socioeconomic conditions, vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and noise. The Proposed Action would not result in changes to land use that would cause significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

The Proposed Action would retain manufacturing zoning on the proposed development site and would not introduce a new development that is markedly different from existing and planned uses, development and activities within the surrounding area. As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the proposed PSAC II development, an office type development, would not introduce a new use to the study area. It also would be compatible with existing land use patterns and commercial development trends in the immediate study area. Beyond the Project Site's immediate surroundings, the Proposed Action is not expected to have a pronounced effect on the character of adjacent neighborhoods, which are largely isolated from the site by broad thoroughfares and an Amtrak right-of-way. The Proposed Action is also not likely to foster any additional development in the surrounding area, as the neighborhoods of Pelham Gardens, Pelham Bay, and Morris Park are firmly established neighborhoods and distant from the project area.

The proposed site is well suited to accommodate the proposed development in terms of its location, size, configuration, and compatibility with neighboring land uses. In addition, the necessary security measures can be readily implemented for PSAC II without significantly affecting adjacent uses. The

proposed development site is a large parcel that comprises more than 8-acres, and is relatively isolated from the surrounding area by the Pelham Parkway to the north, the Hutchinson River Parkway to the east, and the railroad right-of-way of Amtrak to the west. There are no existing or proposed buildings or structures within approximately 150 feet of the development site (closest building is the existing 4-story, 460,000 gsf office building of HMC which is approximately 156 feet away). This area of the City is less densely developed, supporting commercial office and institutional uses on expansive campus-like settings, as well as large light industrial properties. The scale of the proposed PSAC II development would be similar to that of the HMC to the south. The closest residential uses are located further to the north and east of the proposed development site across the Pelham Parkway and the Hutchinson River Parkway, respectively.

The Proposed Action is also consistent with the Waterfront Revitalization Program and would redevelop an underutilized site in an M1-1 zoning district with an essential public facility that would enhance citywide emergency communications by creating a unified structure using two load-balanced facilities (PSAC I and PSAC II). The proposed development is expected to improve voice and data communications infrastructures in the City, and therefore, public safety by heightening emergency response ability and disaster recovery capacity in the City.

Socioeconomic Impacts on Neighborhood Character

The Proposed Action would not result, directly or indirectly, in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts due to existing residential or business displacement, nor would it cause significant adverse impacts to a specific industry. The Proposed Action would result in the direct displacement (or elimination) of accessory parking spaces for the HMC, which are located within the boundaries of the proposed development site. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2 "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy," these accessory spaces are required pursuant to the site's M1-1 zoning, and the elimination of the accessory spaces would cause the HMC to become non-compliant with M1-1 zoning parking requirements. However, as discussed in Chapter 12, "Traffic and Parking," the HMC would contain a sufficient number of parking spaces to accommodate the future demand of all uses in the complex, and therefore, from the operational viewpoint, no significant parking impacts would occur in the future with the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action would introduce a sizeable worker population to the study area. The proposed PSAC II development would be staffed 24-hours a day, seven days per week with three main employee shifts. The typical day-to-day operations of the proposed development are expected to introduce up to approximately 850 new employees to the site; most of these employees would be permanently relocated from the existing PSAC I facility in Downtown Brooklyn. These workers would likely work in eight-to 12-hour overlapping shifts throughout a 24-hour period with a maximum of approximately 315 employees per shift at the site during typical operations. There are expected to be a number of instances when the proposed development would handle emergency communications for the entire City and therefore, would accommodate consolidated operations of PSAC I and PSAC II. When operating in backup mode or during heightened security days, PSAC I operations and staff would be temporarily relocated to the proposed development and the proposed development would have a maximum staff size of up to approximately 1,700 employees (includes the staffs of both PSAC I and PSAC II) that would work over a 24-hour period in overlapping shifts. Approximately 630 employees are expected to work at the proposed development site at any given time for combined facilities at proposed development. As these additional workers are expected to work primarily in three separate shifts, they not expected to have any adverse effects on neighborhood character.

Urban Design And Visual Resources Impacts on Neighborhood Character

The proposed development program would substantially change the urban design and visual character of the Project Site, which would in turn affect the neighborhood character of the immediately surrounding area. However, these changes would not constitute significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

The Proposed Action would augment the existing street pattern by expanding the road network with the establishment of Marconi Street as a mapped public street. The proposed street would generally be mapped along an existing private road, Industrial Street, and would slightly modify the project block. Marconi Street would extend north of Waters Place from a signalized intersection located approximately 420 feet east of the intersection of Eastchester Road and Waters Place to the southern boundary of the proposed development site and would terminate in a hammerhead cul de sac. This change would be undertaken to provide adequate access and utility services to the proposed PSAC II development, and is not considered to be a significant impact, as the change would not significantly alter the basic street pattern or block shapes of the surrounding area. Marconi Street would also serve the adjacent HMC. It is expected that the proposed street would greatly enhance the visual streetscape by adding sidewalks along either side of the street, street trees and lighting.

As described in Chapter 5, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," two interconnected structures would be constructed on the approximately 8.75-acre development site that would result in substantial changes to the area's building bulk, size, and scale. An approximately 640,000 gsf building with a height of 350 feet (elevation of 374 feet) and a 3-story accessory garage containing 500-spaces would replace vacant land and at-grade accessory parking. The proposed building would be a modern structure containing 14 levels (350 feet) above grade plus a single cellar level. It will be substantially taller than most existing buildings within the surrounding area and approximately 170 feet taller than the Tower One and about 100 feet taller than Tower Two at HMC. The program requirements and spatial needs for PSAC II require that the massing and form of the building be similar to an inverted pyramid structure that contains larger floor plates on its upper floors than on its lower floors.

The necessary security measures for PSAC II would require that the building be situated within the center of the site, setback from the proposed street and property lines. This would provide for a substantial amount of landscaping and accessory open space around the perimeter of most of the site that would be available to the employees of the facility, and would act as a buffer to existing and planned uses in the vicinity of the site. Although the proposed building would be 350 feet tall (elevation of 374 feet) and likely visible from the Pelham and the Hutchinson River Parkways, it would be setback approximately 150 feet from the linear green space of the Pelham Parkway and 200 feet from the Hutchinson River Greenway and therefore, is expected to be less prominent along the visual view corridors of these parkways.

While the proposed building would be visible from some adjacent neighborhoods, the proposed PSAC II development is not likely to affect the urban design or visual character of the area, beyond the immediate surroundings of the development site, due to its relative isolation from much of the surrounding area. The urban design and visual character of the neighborhoods beyond the immediate surroundings of the proposed development site—the Pelham Gardens, Pelham Bay, Westchester Square, Bronx Psychiatric Center Area, and Morris Park—are thus not likely to change as a result of the proposed development.

Transportation Impacts on Neighborhood Character

As described above, the Proposed Action would expand the public street network by mapping an existing private roadway, Industrial Street, as a public street ("Marconi Street"). The proposed street would extend north of Waters Place, and would be mapped at a width of 60 feet at its southern end for approximately 1,790 feet, and 50 feet at its northern end for approximately 1,550 feet.

As discussed in Chapter 12, "Traffic and Parking," additional traffic over No-Build levels would be generated by the proposed PSAC II development. As the majority of PSAC II employees would work in three separate shifts throughout a 24-hour period, transportation demand is expected to be concentrated during theses shift changes that would occur around 7:00 AM, 3:00 PM and 11:00 PM. Employees traveling to and from the proposed PSAC II development would likely do so outside of the 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM peak commuting periods typically analyzed in traffic studies. Of the 24 intersections studied, these traffic increases would result in significant traffic impacts throughout the study area, particularly along Waters Place, Eastchester Road, and East Tremont Avenue. Under Typical Operations, the proposed PSAC II development is expected to impact six signalized intersections during the weekday midday (2:30 PM to 3:30 PM), and three signalized intersections during the weekday AM (6:30 AM to 7:30 AM) peak hours, respectively. When the proposed PSAC II development would be under Consolidated Operations, it is expected to impact nine signalized intersections during the weekday midday, and six signalized intersections during the weekday AM peak hours, respectively. As discussed in Chapter 18, "Mitigation," all of the traffic impacts would be fully mitigated under either operating condition of the proposed PSAC II development, no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character are expected in relation to traffic.

It is expected that the proposed 500-space accessory parking garage would be sufficient to accommodate all of the demand generated by the proposed PSAC II development under both Typical and temporary Consolidated Operations. Although the proposed PSAC II development would directly displace some required accessory parking (approximately 513 existing spaces) for the HMC, the HMC would retain a sufficient number of parking spaces to accommodate all of its projected parking demand. As a result, the Proposed Action is not expected to adversely affect on-street or off-street parking demand and capacity in the study area, and no significant adverse impacts to study area parking conditions would result from the Proposed Action. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character in relation to parking.

The Proposed Action would also increase public transportation demand and pedestrian flows in the area (see Chapter 13, "Transit and Pedestrians"). The area's subways and local bus routes are expected to have sufficient capacity to accommodate the increases in demand generated by the proposed PSAC II development under either operating condition. New pedestrian demand would also not result in any significant adverse impacts to analyzed pedestrian elements in any peak hour.

For security purposes, the Proposed Action would improve and reconfigure an existing pedestrian pathway within the associated public open space of the Pelham Parkway, which currently extends directly north of the proposed development site. As currently planned, this public pedestrian pathway would be realigned further to the west and would extend approximately parallel to the Amtrak right-of-way. It would also be widened from approximately 12 feet to 25 feet in width to enable the pathway to potentially serve as an emergency access/egress route for vehicles to and from the proposed development. In order to maintain this pedestrian connection between the Pelham Parkway and the HMC, this public pathway would narrow to approximately 8 feet wide and would continue along the western perimeter of the proposed development site and connect with Marconi Street. This entire pedestrian pathway would be publicly accessible and would maintain an existing public pedestrian connection between the Pelham Parkway on the north and the HMC on the south.

Noise Impacts On Neighborhood Character

As discussed in Chapter 15, "Noise," noise from increased traffic due to the Proposed Action would fall below the CEQR threshold for a significant adverse impact. As such, the Proposed Action would not result in any noise-related significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

E. CONCLUSION

The Proposed Action is not expected to result in a change in the character of the study area in general. It would result in an overall change in the character of the area with respect to land use, urban design, and improvements or modifications to public pedestrian and vehicular access to the proposed development site and the immediately surrounding area. This change would not result in a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character. The Proposed Action would facilitate the siting and construction of a necessary public facility, PSAC II, on a large, relatively isolated parcel of industrial property in the northeast Bronx, which would improve and heighten emergency response capabilities within the City.

The proposed PSAC II development would introduce a new use to the study area, which would be compatible with existing land use patterns and commercial development trends in the immediate study area. Beyond the Project Site's immediate surroundings, the Proposed Action is not expected to have a pronounced effect on the character of adjacent neighborhoods, as it is largely isolated from the surrounding area by broad thoroughfares and an Amtrak right-of-way. The addition of a substantial number of employees to the site would result in additional traffic, transit, and pedestrian trips in the study area. However, any adverse impacts to traffic resulting from the proposed development would be mitigated.

The establishment of Marconi Street is expected to improve public access to the proposed development site and the HMC, as well as enhance the visual streetscape. Although the proposed PSAC II building would be substantially taller than all other surrounding buildings, it would not block or impinge upon the view corridors of the Pelham or the Hutchinson River Parkways. Therefore, the Proposed Action is not expected to have a significant adverse effect on neighborhood character.