

A. INTRODUCTION

The proposed Plan would significantly change land use on the Willets Point peninsula by transforming a largely underutilized site with substantial environmental degradation into a lively, mixed-use, sustainable community and regional destination. Willets Point is located at the nexus of the commercial, entertainment, cultural, and recreational regional destinations of Downtown Flushing, Shea Stadium, and Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. The Willets Point Development District (the District) is located between several major arterial highways, including the Van Wyck Expressway, the Grand Central Parkway, and Northern Boulevard, and is located in close proximity to the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) and the No. 7 subway line, as well as LaGuardia Airport. The proposed Plan would facilitate the development of a regional economic center containing up to 8.94 million gross square feet (gsf) of new buildings, which would include residential, retail, a hotel and convention center, office space, community facilities, and open space (see Chapter 2, “Procedural and Analytical Framework,” for a detailed description of the proposed Plan). A new connection between the Van Wyck Expressway and the northeastern portion of the District would facilitate the movement of traffic into and out of the District. Because this is a major land use plan situated in a key location in Queens, the potential for impacts on land use in the District and in the surrounding area and neighborhoods is an important consideration in this Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS).

The proposed Plan also involves issues relating to public policy. The City’s Plan for Willets Point represents a critical step in implementing the Downtown Flushing Development Framework, a land use and economic planning strategy for the growth of Downtown Flushing, the Flushing River waterfront, and the Willets Point peninsula. Implementation of the proposed Plan requires the creation of a Willets Point Urban Renewal Plan (URP), which will prescribe the maximum permitted floor area in the District and will allow for flexibility in the combination of uses to be developed in the District. The proposed Plan would also establish a zoning Special District (Special Willets Point District), which would govern all future development within the District, including site planning, land uses, and densities, and would establish design controls for the proposed Plan’s buildings, open spaces, and other features.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS*PROPOSED PLAN**Land Use*

The proposed Plan would dramatically change land uses in the District by replacing predominantly low-density auto-related and industrial uses with a new mixed-use neighborhood. As part of the proposed Plan, residential and retail uses would be the core activities in the District, and office, hotel, and convention center uses would complement these uses to create a regional

Willets Point Development Plan

economic center. Community facilities and open space would support the residential and commercial uses and improve the quality of life for area residents and visitors.

While specific development plans have not been formulated, the Special Willets Point District would create a dynamic, sustainable community by integrating regional attractions and residential, retail, and other uses within a network of pedestrian-scaled streetscapes throughout the District. The Special District regulations would determine elements such as the placement of uses within the District, building heights and setbacks, street controls (i.e., mandatory intersections and street types), streetscape design, and basic site planning and design provisions.

While the proposed Plan would result in a significant land use change, the effects of this change would not be adverse. The proposed convention center and commercial uses would enhance Flushing and Corona's roles as regional economic centers, and would attract visitors to the area. The proposed Plan would create a pedestrian-oriented regional entertainment and commercial center along 126th Street, which would complement the new retail uses planned along the west side of 126th Street as part of Citi Field, creating synergy between the new Citi Field and the proposed District. The proposed residential, commercial office, retail, hotel, community facility, open space, and parking uses are prevalent throughout the study area, particularly within the dense commercial center of Downtown Flushing. The residential and community facility uses proposed for the District would not be compatible with the industrial activities permitted on the adjacent Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) property. However, the placement of high-density mixed-use or residential districts next to heavy manufacturing districts is not uncommon in the City, and would not result in a significant adverse impact.

The proposed Plan would not be consistent with the industrial uses currently located along the waterfront to the north and east of the District. However, these uses are separated from the District by the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard, as well as the Flushing River, and therefore would not result in significant adverse land use impacts on the proposed uses. Furthermore, as a result of the rezoning of properties on the eastern side of the Flushing River waterfront, it is expected that some of these properties would be redeveloped over the long term in the future without the proposed Plan with new higher-density mixed residential and commercial uses, including waterfront access, which would be compatible with the uses proposed for the District under the proposed Plan.

As described in Chapter 2, if the proposed Plan is approved and the District is redeveloped into a new mixed-use community and regional destination, it is likely that this could generate increased demand for additional development on nearby Lot B. While any future development on Lot B would occur independent of the proposed Plan, together the proposed Plan and Lot B development would add substantial new development to the immediate area, and therefore, the cumulative impacts of both projects are assessed. Based on existing land use patterns and zoning regulations in the surrounding area, it is unlikely that the proposed Plan and development on Lot B would alter land use patterns in the primary study area. Given the recent trend to redevelop underutilized sites near the Flushing River waterfront, it is possible that the proposed Plan and new development on Lot B could encourage further redevelopment of some nearby underutilized sites along the Flushing River which do not rely on the waterfront for barging materials. Such a change would not constitute an adverse impact on land uses in the study area because the potential new uses (including primarily residential, retail, and other commercial uses) would reflect a continuation of an existing trend, would be compatible with other uses in the area, and would conform to existing zoning and public land use policies. Overall, the proposed Plan would not result in significant adverse land use impacts.

Zoning and Public Policy

The proposed Plan would result in a change to the underlying zoning of the District from an existing M3-1 district (and a small area zoned R3-2) to a C4-4 district. The proposed C4-4 zoning would allow for the range of residential, commercial, and community facility uses anticipated. The proposed Plan would include the creation of a zoning Special District, which would mandate a maximum District-wide floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.4, and would govern all future development within the District, including site planning, land uses, and densities, and would establish design controls for the proposed Plan's buildings, streets and streetscapes, open spaces, and other features.

The adjacent MTA property, which would be primarily unaffected by the proposed Plan and would remain zoned M3-1, would not be compatible with all of the uses permitted in the proposed C4-4 district, such as residential and community facility uses. However, as described above, it is not uncommon for new higher-density residential and commercial districts to be located next to older heavy manufacturing districts near the waterfront. The other M3-1 districts located on the Willets Point peninsula are separated from the District by the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard. The proposed C4-4 is similar to the zoning that exists throughout much of the Downtown Flushing area. The presence of a denser mixed-use development in the District could possibly generate further redevelopment of nearby underutilized sites along the eastern bank of the Flushing River, which were rezoned to C4-2 to allow denser mixed-use development. However, redevelopment in this area is already under way, and is expected to conform to existing zoning and public policies. No significant adverse impacts with respect to zoning would result from the proposed Plan.

As part of the proposed Plan, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) would create a URP to define District boundaries and the area to be redeveloped as per the City's redevelopment goals. The URP would establish maximum permitted floor areas for residential and commercial uses in the District and require the creation of a minimum of eight acres of open space.

The proposed Plan represents a critical step in implementing the Downtown Flushing Development Framework. The Plan would advance a number of the Framework's fundamental goals, including the creation of a regional destination that would enhance economic growth in Downtown Flushing, improvement of environmental conditions, and integration of new development in the District with surrounding amenities, including the Flushing Bay Promenade, the new Mets stadium (Citi Field), Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, and Downtown Flushing.

The proposed Plan would be consistent with and vital to the advancement of several of the goals of PlaNYC, which aims to create a more sustainable New York by the year 2030. The proposed Plan would also be consistent with the coastal policies set forth in the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program. Overall, no significant adverse zoning and public policy impacts are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed Plan.

NO CONVENTION CENTER SCENARIO

Since the URP would allow flexibility in the combination of uses to be developed in the District, the GEIS analyzes a development scenario in which the convention center is replaced with additional residential and retail development (the No Convention Center Scenario). As with the proposed Plan, the No Convention Center Scenario would change the development potential of the District in a manner consistent with the proposed URP and the Special Willets Point District.

The effects of the No Convention Center Scenario on land use conditions would be largely the same as with the proposed Plan. Both development scenarios would dramatically change land uses in the District, replacing predominantly low-density industrial uses with a new higher-density mixed-use neighborhood. Residential and retail uses would be the core activities, supported by office, hotel, community facility, and open space uses. The No Convention Center Scenario would not require any changes to the proposed zoning or Special District text and, as with the proposed Plan, no significant adverse impacts on zoning would occur.

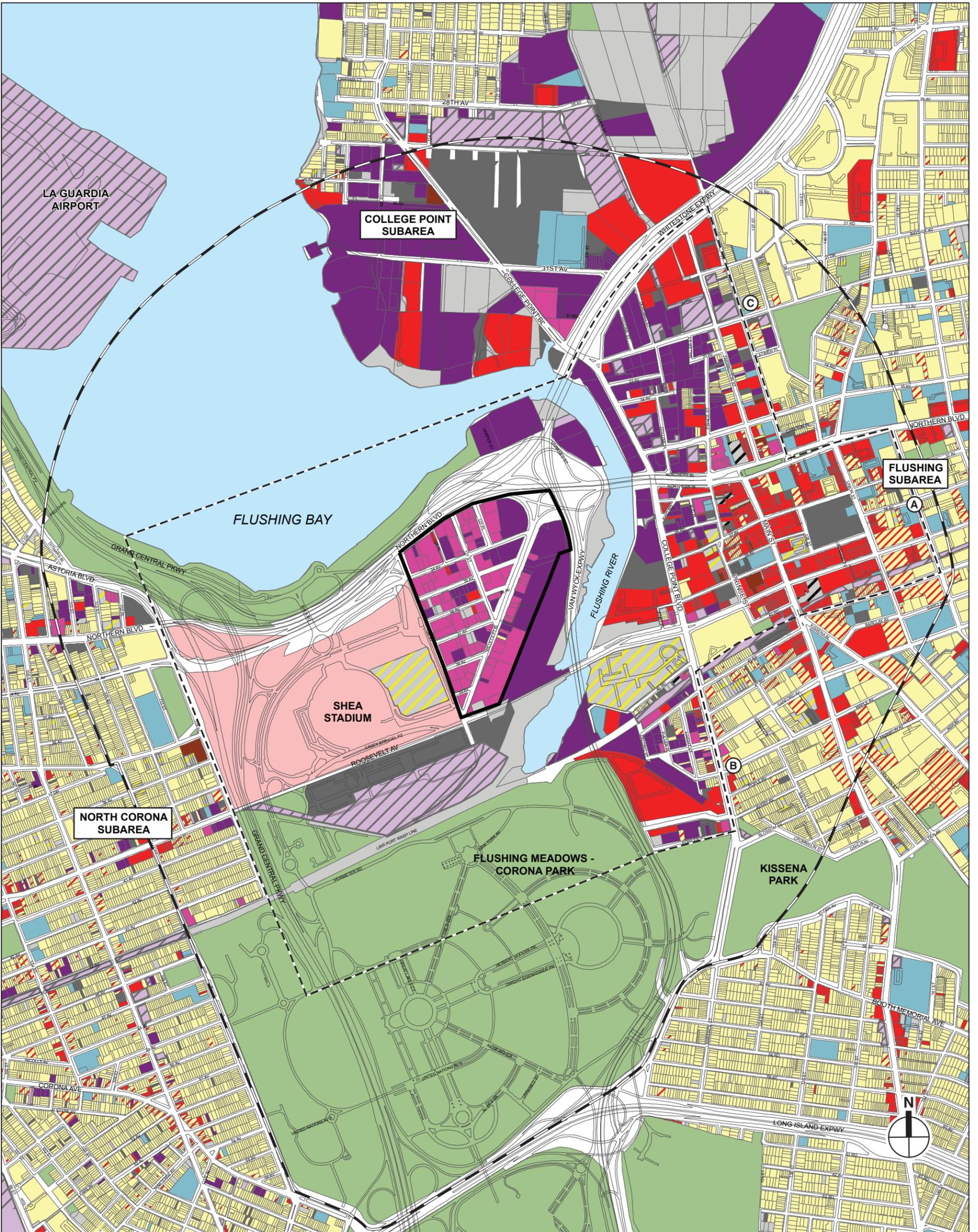
With respect to public policy, the No Convention Center Scenario, like the proposed Plan, would advance several of the Framework's fundamental goals, including improvement of environmental conditions, integration of new development in the District with surrounding entertainment and recreational amenities, and the provision of a substantial number of new housing units that would be affordable to a mix of incomes. Although this scenario does not include a convention center—one of the uses that would strengthen Flushing and Corona's roles as regional economic centers—the primary regional attraction in the No Convention Center Scenario would be the pedestrian-oriented entertainment and commercial center, which would create a synergy between the new Citi Field and the proposed District, and attract and retain visitors to the area. Overall, the No Convention Center Scenario would also not result in any significant adverse impacts on land use, zoning, or public policy.

B. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes existing land use conditions and future conditions without the proposed Plan, and analyzes the probable impacts that the proposed Plan, as well as the No Convention Center Scenario, may have on land use. In accordance with the approach outlined in Chapter 2, this chapter assesses the cumulative impact of both the Willets Point Development Plan and the anticipated development on Citi Field parking lot B (Lot B). Because of the scale of the proposed Plan, this analysis considers both a primary and secondary study area. The primary study area is the area generally located within ½ mile from the Willets Point Development District, and includes Shea Stadium, Downtown Flushing, and portions of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park (see Figure 3-1). The secondary study area is the area generally located between ½ and ¾ mile from the District, and includes portions of the North Corona, College Point, and greater Flushing neighborhoods. The overall study area generally stretches from Bowne Street in Flushing to the east, to 111th Street in North Corona to the west; and from 28th Avenue in College Point to the north, to the Long Island Expressway (LIE) in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park to the south.

The primary and secondary land use study area boundaries are not defined solely by the ½- and ¾-mile perimeters, but rather are defined to reflect natural and man-made barriers and current land use patterns. Portions of several neighborhoods are within the study areas; therefore, the impact analysis addresses each neighborhood as follows:

- **Flushing Subarea:** This area extends east of the Flushing River from Kissena Park to the Whitestone Expressway. The land use and zoning discussion separates the Flushing Subarea into three sections, which generally reflect the different land use patterns within the overall area, including: the area between the LIRR and Northern Boulevard (Downtown Flushing—Subarea A); the area between the LIRR and Kissena Park (Flushing Subarea B); and the area between Northern Boulevard and the Whitestone Expressway (Flushing Subarea C).



- | | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Willets Point Development District Boundary | | Entertainment |
| | Primary Study Area Boundary | | Auto-Related Use |
| | Secondary Study Area Boundary | | Industrial and Manufacturing |
| | Flushing Subareas | | Transportation and Utility |
| | Residential | | Open Space and Outdoor Recreation |
| | Residential with Commercial Below | | Parking Facilities |
| | Hotels | | Vacant Land |
| | Commercial and Office Buildings | | Under Construction |
| | Institutional | | |

0 2000 FEET
SCALE



Figure 3-1
Land Use Study Area

Although a portion of Downtown Flushing (Flushing Subarea A) is located outside of the ½-mile perimeter, the entire Downtown Flushing area is considered within the primary study area, as a cohesive district. In Flushing Subarea B, College Point Boulevard is approximately ½ mile from the District, and generally divides distinct land use patterns; therefore, the area to the west of College Point Boulevard is considered within the primary study area, and the area to the east is considered within the secondary study area. Similarly, in Flushing Subarea C, Linden Place is approximately ½ mile from the District and generally divides distinct land use patterns; therefore, the area to the west of Linden Place is considered within the primary study area, and the area to the east is considered within the secondary study area.

- North Corona Subarea: This area is roughly bounded by the Grand Central Parkway to the north, 44th Avenue to the south, 111th Street to the west, and 114th Street to the east. The North Corona Subarea is located between the ½- and ¾-mile perimeters, and is therefore considered in the secondary area.
- College Point Subarea: This area extends south of 28th Avenue and west of the Whitestone Expressway to Flushing Bay. While a portion of College Point is located within ½ mile of the District, the entire College Point Subarea is considered within the secondary study area, as it is separated from the District by Flushing Bay and the Whitestone Expressway.
- Flushing Meadows-Corona Park: The park area considered within the primary study area is roughly within the ½-mile perimeter. However, the park area considered within the secondary study area includes the remainder of the park to the north of the LIE (which is beyond the ¾-mile perimeter), to reflect the intrinsic cohesiveness of the amenities and uses in that section of the park.

As described in Chapter 2, this analysis assesses future conditions in 2017, when full development of the proposed Plan is anticipated.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

LAND USE

DISTRICT

The Willets Point Development District covers approximately 61.4 acres on the Willets Point peninsula, generally bounded to the east by the Van Wyck Expressway and an undeveloped parcel owned by MTA, to the south by Roosevelt Avenue, to the west by 126th Street, and to the north by Northern Boulevard. The District is mostly isolated from the surrounding neighborhoods by several natural and man-made barriers. Immediately to the west of the District is Shea Stadium—the existing home of the New York Mets baseball team—and the development site for the future new Mets stadium, Citi Field, located in a former stadium parking lot. To the east of the Van Wyck Expressway lies the Flushing River, and beyond that, the vibrant urban core of Downtown Flushing. To the north of Northern Boulevard lies Flushing Bay, with the industrial area of College Point on its northern shore. To the south of Roosevelt Avenue are the LIRR tracks for the Port Washington Line, a rail yard for LIRR trains, and several parking lots that are available for parking for Mets games.

Of the approximately 61.4 acres in the District, approximately 15.8 acres are within public street rights-of-way, approximately 45.0 acres are privately-owned land, and approximately 0.6 acres

Willets Point Development Plan

are owned by MTA. Land uses in the District primarily consist of auto-related services and industrial uses. Auto-related services are the most prevalent use in the District, occupying approximately 80 percent of all lots in the District. These services consist of auto-body repair, auto glass, car washes and auto detailing, used and new auto part sales, tire sales, and vehicle towing. For the most part, these auto-related businesses occupy one-story garage buildings and Quonset-type structures, many of which contain multiple auto-related businesses. There are also a number of car junkyards in the District, which support auto salvage businesses. Due to the concentration of auto-related services in the District, the area has come to be known as the “Iron Triangle.”

The District also contains several industrial uses, including warehousing and distribution, construction-related services and materials, and waste transfer and recycling. Lot areas in the District vary greatly in size and range from approximately 2,000 to 173,000 square feet (sf); the industrial uses generally occupy the larger lots. Two waste transfer businesses (Tully Environmental and Crown Container) are currently operating in the District. Tully Environmental and Crown Container process putrescible waste, and construction and demolition debris. Two large food production and distribution uses—Fodera Enterprises and House of Spices—are located in the northern portion of the District, east of Willets Point Boulevard. Ten undeveloped lots in the District all contain either open-air storage of construction materials or used auto parts.

In addition to the auto-related and industrial uses, several commercial uses throughout the District cater to the existing businesses and employees in the area. These include delis, check-cashing establishments, a health club, and a clothing and supply store. The District contains one institutional use—a private, members-only motorcycle club. Although residential uses are not permitted under the existing zoning, there is one residential unit in the District, located on Willets Point Boulevard.

Existing uses and structures in the District are similar to the primarily industrial uses along the Flushing River and Flushing Bay waterfronts, but contrast sharply with most of the uses and types of development in the nearby communities, such as the higher-density commercial and residential development in Downtown Flushing, and the primarily low- to mid-density residential neighborhood of Corona to the west of Shea Stadium. Deteriorated sidewalks, large potholes and mud puddles, corrugated metal building façades, and the widespread use of streets and sidewalks for vehicle parking and storage for adjacent automotive uses contribute to an unappealing streetscape and create uninviting and unsafe pedestrians conditions. Despite its transit-oriented location and proximity to Downtown Flushing and several thriving neighborhoods, Willets Point contains virtually none of the land use characteristics or patterns of its neighbors.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

The primary study area includes portions of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Downtown Flushing, and the greater Flushing area. Also included in the primary study area are the other uses on the Willets Point peninsula that lie outside the Willets Point Development District. Directly east of the District is a large undeveloped MTA property located along the Flushing River waterfront, a majority of which is leased to Tully Environmental, Inc., which operates a construction and demolition debris recycling operation on the site. To the north of the District, across Northern Boulevard, is a New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) Maintenance and Repair facility, and between Northern Boulevard and the Van Wyck

Expressway is an asphalt plant. To the northwest of the District, across Northern Boulevard, is the Flushing Bay Promenade, which is within the boundary of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, and which is described below. To the south of the District—south of Roosevelt Avenue, near the LIRR tracks—are the New York City Transit (NYCT) Corona Yards. The Yards, which are not part of the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, contain a storage area for subway cars as well as repair shops. The NYCT Casey Stengel Bus Depot is adjacent to the Corona Yards.

Flushing Meadows-Corona Park

Flushing Meadows-Corona Park is a major recreational and cultural destination for Queens residents and visitors from throughout the New York metropolitan area. The park covers approximately 1,255 acres and is under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The park is bounded by several major thoroughfares: the Grand Central Parkway to the west, the Van Wyck Expressway to the east, and the beginning of the Whitestone Expressway to the north. The primary and secondary study areas cover the northern section of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, which is separated from the southern section of the park by the LIE.

The primary study area includes the portion of the park that extends from Flushing Bay to the USTA National Tennis Center. To the immediate west of the Willets Point Development District across 126th Street is the construction site for Citi Field, a new stadium for the New York Mets, which is described below in Section D, “Future without the Proposed Plan.” Immediately west of the Citi Field construction site is Shea Stadium, the current home of the Mets, which opened on April 17, 1964 and seats 56,000 fans. The No. 7 subway line services the stadium by elevated subway above Roosevelt Avenue. The LIRR also has a stop in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park that services the stadium on game days. Both stations are connected to the stadium and to the park by the Passerelle Ramp, which is for pedestrian use.

To the north of Northern Boulevard is the Flushing Bay Promenade, which winds along Flushing Bay for approximately 1.4 miles from LaGuardia Airport to the Willets Point peninsula and provides access to the World’s Fair Marina and a restaurant located north of Shea Stadium, as well as many sitting areas located throughout the promenade. There are more than 1,000 parking spaces located to the east and west of the marina, which are also available for parking for Mets games.

The primary study area also covers a portion of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park to the south of Roosevelt Avenue, which contains the USTA National Tennis Center and other recreational activities, described below. The Tennis Center contains three stadiums and is host to year-round tennis events, including the U.S. Open, played each year for two weeks at the end of August and the beginning of September. The Tennis Center contains the Louis Armstrong Stadium, which was originally constructed in the park as the “Singer Bowl” for the 1964 World’s Fair and seats 10,000 people. Arthur Ashe Stadium was constructed in 1996; it seats 23,000 people. The remainder of the complex consists of a smaller 3,500-seat stadium and 30 additional tennis courts. The courts are open during the year for tennis clinics and camps, as well as for general public use. There is a small parking lot located near the Tennis Center, however, during the U.S. Open, Shea Stadium lots are also used for parking. East of the Tennis Center, the park contains a pitch and putt golf center, and a large area available for passive and active recreation, with trees, pathways, and sitting areas.

This section of the park also contains three DPR facilities. The Olmsted Center, located near the LIRR rights-of-way and the Tennis Center, contains offices for the design and construction

Willets Point Development Plan

supervision divisions of DPR. The Passerelle Building, located under the Passerelle Ramp, contains offices and support facilities for the park. The Allied Building, located near the Van Wyck Expressway, contains DPR offices and storehouses.

The secondary study area contains a number of cultural institutions, as well as recreational and sporting facilities. There are several baseball and soccer fields, and a number of playgrounds for children of all ages and abilities. The Playground For All Children, a special playground for both able-bodied and disabled children—one of a few of its kind in the country—is located in this area.

A number of cultural institutions are housed in buildings dating from the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs. The 1939 New York City Pavilion currently contains the World's Fair Ice Rink and the Queens Museum of Art (QMA). The museum opened in 1972 and attracts approximately 200,000 visitors a year. The QMA primarily exhibits contemporary art, but also contains the New York Panorama, a scale model of New York City that was constructed for the 1964 World's Fair and is updated every few years to reflect the development of New York City. Many other sculptures and structures remain from the World's Fairs. The most famous of these is the Unisphere, which has become a symbol for the park and is a New York City Landmark (NYCL). The Unisphere is located at the Fountain of the Continents, which was the center of the 1964 World's Fair and stands outside the QMA.

The New York Hall of Science is located in the 1964 Space Park structures. The Hall of Science is New York City's largest hands-on science and technology museum, attracting approximately 275,000 visitors each year. There is a large parking lot with more than 500 spaces adjacent to the museum. The Queens Wildlife Center is located in the park near the Hall of Science. The aviary for the Wildlife Center is located in a geodesic dome designed by Buckminster Fuller for the 1964 Fair. The Port Authority Heliport for the 1964 Fair has been renamed Terrace on the Park and is now a catering/restaurant facility, with its own parking lot. The New York State Pavilion, designed by Philip Johnson for the 1964 Fair, is now used as theater space. The Queens Botanical Garden is located in the far eastern portion of the park. The Queens Botanical Garden began as a "Gardens On Parade" exhibit at the 1939 Fair. Today, the Garden covers 39 acres, with a 21-acre arboretum, and hosts educational programming and other events.

The southern portion of the park, which is located south of the LIE and is outside of the land use study area, primarily contains two man-made lakes—Willow Lake and Meadow Lake. This section of the park also includes recreational uses such as a cricket pitch, boat rental, baseball fields, and playgrounds.

In addition to the various cultural institutions, sporting events, and recreational activities in the park, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park is host to numerous festivals and gatherings throughout the year, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. Many ethnic groups hold daylong events, such as the Peruvian, Colombian, and Dominican festivals. Other well known festivals held in the park are the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival, the Korean Harvest and Folklore Festival, and DPR's Spring Festival.

Flushing Subarea

Flushing is a thriving business and residential area, as well as a center for ethnic goods and culture. Downtown Flushing and the greater Flushing area contain a substantial Asian population, with large Chinese and Korean communities, and there are many specialty food and retail stores, restaurants, and other services that are utilized not only by the local population, but also serve as a destination for people living outside of the community. The primary study area in

Flushing contains Downtown Flushing, a regional transportation and commercial hub for Queens. While most of the commercial and cultural activity is centered along Northern Boulevard, Roosevelt Avenue, and Main Street, the Downtown Flushing study area (Flushing Subarea A) generally extends between the Flushing River to the west, Northern Boulevard to the north, Bowne Street to the east, and the LIRR tracks located south of Roosevelt Avenue to the south. Also located within the primary study area are the predominantly industrial areas in Flushing which are generally located along the Flushing River, within approximately ½ mile of the District. To the south of the LIRR Port Washington Line (Flushing Subarea B), industrial uses are concentrated west of College Point Boulevard. To the north of Northern Boulevard (Flushing Subarea C), a large industrial district extends east of the Flushing River to Linden Place.

Downtown Flushing—Flushing Subarea A

Downtown Flushing is a center of commercial and cultural activity in Queens, and contains many Asian specialty food stores, restaurants, and retail stores that cater to the local population and also serve as a regional destination. Commercial uses predominate and are concentrated along Roosevelt Avenue, Northern Boulevard, Main Street, Union Street, and Prince Street. Industrial uses are mostly located west of College Point Boulevard, along the Flushing River. Some residential and community facility uses are scattered throughout Downtown Flushing. East of Union Street, the neighborhood begins to transition to a more predominantly residential area.

The Downtown Flushing area has been changing in character in recent years as more high-density residential and large-scale mixed-use developments are either under construction or planned throughout the area. Two large mixed-use development projects, Queens Crossing and Flushing Commons, will be located between Main and Union Streets, north of 39th Avenue. Another large mixed-use development—Sky View Parc—is under construction on a large site located south of Roosevelt Avenue that extends between the Flushing River and College Point Boulevard. These and other planned development projects are described below in Section D, “Future without the Proposed Plan.”

Residential Uses

Residential uses in Downtown Flushing are primarily located east of Union Street, where the neighborhood becomes more residential in character. In this area, residential uses primarily consist of mid-rise apartment buildings between six and 10 stories with retail uses on the ground floor, as well as three-story rowhouses, some of which contain ground-floor retail uses. Some residential uses are interspersed between the commercial uses in Downtown Flushing to the west of Union Street. The 400-unit New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Bland Houses are located at the southeast corner of Roosevelt Avenue and College Point Boulevard, and a 60-unit residential building is located at the corner of 39th Avenue and College Point Boulevard. In addition, a row of low-rise apartment buildings are located on Janet Place, and several older detached residences are located east of Prince Street between 37th and 38th Avenues.

Commercial Uses

Ethnic retail uses are prevalent on most streets in the area, which are lined with numerous retail shops, food establishments, convenience goods stores, and neighborhood services. As mentioned previously, Roosevelt Avenue, Northern Boulevard, Main Street, and Prince Street are the primary commercial corridors in the District. Two major commercial centers, Assi Plaza and the Flushing Mall, are located near the intersection of College Point Boulevard and 39th Avenue and

Willets Point Development Plan

contain a collection of businesses catering to the area's Asian population. In addition, a 173-room Sheraton hotel is located on 39th Avenue between Prince and Main Streets.

Manufacturing and Industrial Uses

Most industrial uses are located west of College Point Boulevard, along the eastern bank of the Flushing River. These include a 110,000-sf U-Haul facility and an asphalt plant that utilizes barges for transporting materials to and from its facility.

Transportation and Utility Uses

The No. 7 subway line has a terminal station at Roosevelt Avenue and Main Street. The rights-of-way for the LIRR Port Washington Line forms the southern boundary of this subarea, with a station located at Main Street and 41st Avenue.

There are several municipal parking lots in Downtown Flushing. Municipal Lot No. 1, located between Union Street, 138th Street, and 37th and 39th Avenues, contains approximately 1,100 public parking spaces, and is the site of a proposed mixed-use development known as Flushing Commons, described below in Section D, "Future without the Proposed Plan." Flushing Municipal Lot No. 2 is located on the east side of Prince Street between 38th and 39th Avenues and contains 89 parking spaces. Flushing Municipal Lot No. 4 is located underneath the Northern Boulevard viaduct and contains 93 parking spaces.

Community Facilities and Open Space

Notable community facilities in Downtown Flushing include several structures listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR), such as: Flushing Town Hall, which is located on Northern Boulevard and is used as a concert hall and cultural center; the Flushing Armory, located on Northern Boulevard, which houses the New York City Police Department (NYPD) Queens North task force unit; the Friends Meeting House, also on Northern Boulevard; and St. George's Church on Main Street between 38th and 39th Avenues. Other community facilities in this area include a YMCA building on Northern Boulevard, the Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church located adjacent to Municipal Lot No. 1, and Flushing House Community Residence, a 319-unit nursing home located on Bowne Street and 38th Avenue.

The only open space in this area is within the grounds of the NYCHA Bland Houses and is located at the corner of Prince Street and 40th Road. The Bland Houses contain approximately 1.7 acres of publicly accessible open space, with amenities such as basketball courts, walkways, and benches.

Flushing Subarea B

The portion of the primary study area located south of the LIRR tracks and west of College Point Boulevard is characterized by a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential uses. Since this area is adjacent to Flushing Meadows-Corona Park and there is no outlet for streets running west of College Point Boulevard, traffic is light on these streets.

Residential Uses

Residential uses in this area are generally located within one to two blocks of College Point Boulevard and are interspersed with active industrial and commercial uses. The residential uses here are generally low-density, consisting of two-story attached residences, as well as a cluster of single family homes located on Haight Street.

Commercial Uses

The most prominent commercial use in this area is a 150,000-sf Home Depot, located on Avery Avenue just west of College Point Boulevard. Neighborhood retail establishments are also prevalent along College Point Boulevard, and include small retail service establishments, convenience stores, and fast-food restaurants.

Manufacturing and Industrial Uses

A variety of light manufacturing, warehousing, and automotive uses are found in this area, including sign stores, a furniture warehouse, and an auto body repair shop. On the corner of College Point Boulevard and Fowler Avenue, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has recently constructed a 28 million gallon sewage retention tank.

Transportation and Utility Uses

The rights-of-way for the LIRR Port Washington Line form the northern boundary of this subarea, and the Van Wyck Expressway forms the western boundary.

Community Facilities and Open Space

There are no community facility uses in this subarea. Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, described above, is located west of the Van Wyck Expressway and south of Fowler Avenue. There are no other publicly accessible open spaces in this area.

Flushing Subarea C

The portion of the primary study area located west of Linden Place between Northern Boulevard and the Whitestone Expressway primarily consists of industrial and manufacturing uses, with some commercial, office, neighborhood retail, and residential uses generally located east of Prince Street.

Residential Uses

Residential uses are limited in this area, and are interspersed with surrounding commercial, industrial, and warehouse uses. Residential buildings are primarily located east of Prince Street between 32nd and 35th Avenues. The residential buildings in this area are a mix of single-family attached and detached homes and mid-rise buildings, some of which contain commercial uses on the ground floor.

Commercial Uses

There is a mix of large commercial uses and dense neighborhood retail and office uses along the two main thoroughfares in this area—the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard. Commercial uses concentrated along the Whitestone Expressway include fast-food restaurants, a bowling alley, commercial office space, a bank, and a car wash. Large commercial buildings, including auto-related uses and commercial distributing uses, are located west of Prince Street and north of 35th Avenue. Neighborhood commercial and office uses, such as gas stations, restaurants, realtors, and nail salons, are mostly located along Northern Boulevard, and in the area east of Prince Street and south of 35th Avenue.

Manufacturing and Industrial Uses

Manufacturing and industrial uses are the predominant uses in this area, and include building material companies, such as cement, concrete, lumber and tile, warehousing uses, and some auto-related uses. Some of the heavy industrial uses on the Flushing River waterfront, such as the cement and asphalt operations, use barges to transport materials to and from their sites. The

Willets Point Development Plan

area north of 35th Avenue and west of Prince Street primarily contains warehousing, distribution, and wholesale for ethnic goods.

Transportation and Utility Uses

The Whitestone Expressway forms the northern boundary of this subarea. Utility uses include a DEP sewer maintenance facility, located on Downing Street at 32nd Avenue, and Con Edison maintenance and vehicle storage facilities, located on 32nd Avenue near Farrington Street, as well as on College Point Boulevard near 35th Avenue.

Community Facilities and Open Space

Community facilities in this area are limited, but include religious facilities such as the Queens Alliance Church, Calvary World Mission, and the Disciples Church of New York. There are no open space areas in this area.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

The secondary study area, described more generally below, is the area generally located between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the District, and which includes portions of the North Corona, College Point, and Flushing neighborhoods. In Flushing, the secondary study area subareas are extensions of the neighborhoods in the primary study area. The secondary study area also includes portions of the North Corona and College Point neighborhoods, which are separated from the District either by a substantial distance or by significant natural or man-made barriers.

North Corona Subarea

The predominantly residential neighborhood of North Corona is located west of Shea Stadium. The portion of the North Corona neighborhood within this subarea is generally located between the Grand Central Parkway to the north, 44th Avenue and Flushing Meadows-Corona Park to the south, 111th Street to the west, and 114th Street to the east. Its main thoroughfares are Roosevelt Avenue and Northern Boulevard, which are lined with commercial and retail establishments such as delis, grocery stores, retail services, and restaurants. North Corona contains a variety of housing types, including detached one- and two-family residences on narrow lots, attached row-houses and multi-family dwelling units, and apartment buildings. Other prominent residential uses include the 301-unit Dorie Miller Cooperative housing development located on 114th Street between Northern Boulevard and 34th Avenue, and the 132-unit Meadow Manor housing development located at 113th Street and 34th Avenue. To the south of these high-density residential buildings, on 114th Street and 37th Avenue, is a 214-room Holiday Inn hotel. The blocks between Astoria Boulevard and Northern Boulevard are more mixed, with several parking facilities and light industrial uses as well as residential uses. However, recent and anticipated development is replacing these low-density uses with higher-density mixed residential and commercial uses.

The 3.7-acre Hinton Park stretches from 34th to 37th Avenues between 113th and 114th Streets and features game tables, benches, baseball diamonds, and play areas. Directly opposite Hinton Park is the Louis Armstrong School (P.S. 143), with 1,244 students. The No. 7 subway line, which is elevated above Roosevelt Avenue, has stations in Corona at 103rd Street/Corona Plaza, and 111th Street.

College Point Subarea

The College Point Subarea is a predominantly industrial area located on the Flushing Bay waterfront, and extends to 28th Avenue to the north and the Whitestone Expressway to the east. This subarea contains heavy industrial and commercial uses located on large lots, and is partially located within the College Point Corporate Park, which covers the area north and east of College Point Boulevard and the Whitestone Expressway. Several heavy industrial uses located along the waterfront are water-dependent, and use barges to transport materials to and from their facilities.

Large industrial and manufacturing uses in this subarea include Ferraro Brothers Cement, St. Lawrence Cement, and Crystal Windows and Doors, as well as large municipal facilities, such as the DSNY North Shore marine transfer station (MTS) and the NYPD tow pound. The DSNY North Shore MTS, located on Flushing Bay at 31st Avenue, has not operated since 2001 and is proposed for conversion to an intermodal facility as part of DSNY's long-term waste export program. In addition, the City has proposed a plan to develop a new NYPD police academy on the site of the current NYPD tow pound. These projects are described in greater detail below in Section D, "Future without the Proposed Plan."

This subarea also includes several large-scale commercial uses. A Home Depot is located on 31st Avenue, west of College Point Boulevard. Several commercial uses are located along the Whitestone Expressway, including a shopping center with a multiplex cinema, Toys 'R' Us, and Office Depot, and the Whitestone Executive Plaza, which contains office space and several commercial establishments. Other commercial uses are located along College Point Boulevard and include a Marriott Fairfield Inn hotel, as well as auto-related uses such as towing, car wash, and a truck dealer and repair. In addition, Williamsburgh Yacht Club is located on Flushing Bay at 28th Avenue.

One large institutional use is located in this area—the Korea World Mission Center, which also houses the Full Gospel Christian School. There are no residential or open spaces in this area.

Flushing

The portions of Flushing located in the secondary study area consist of the predominantly residential areas located to the north and south of Downtown Flushing. There are a number of community facility and institutional uses here, supporting the greater Flushing area. Commercial uses are generally located along main thoroughfares such as Main and Union Streets.

Flushing Subarea B

This subarea is generally located south of the LIRR Port Washington Line and east of College Point Boulevard. Main Street, which divides the area, is the main commercial corridor with retail uses common to Downtown Flushing. The area east of Main Street is characterized by mid-rise residential structures with ground-floor retail interspersed with several large low-rise commercial buildings. The area west of Main Street is primarily residential, with tree-lined streets and low-rise row houses, though recent and ongoing construction activities are replacing some of the low-density residential buildings in this area with new, higher-density development.

Institutional uses are primarily concentrated east of Main Street and include the Flushing branch of the Queens Public Library at the intersection of Main Street and Kissena Boulevard, Saint Michael's Church on Union Street between Barclay Avenue and 41st Avenue, the Free Synagogue of Flushing at the corner of Kissena Boulevard and Sanford Avenue, P.S. 20 at Sanford Avenue and Union Street, and the Flushing Post Office on Main Street between Sanford

Willets Point Development Plan

and Maple Avenues. The Boy's Club of New York is located west of Main Street, at the intersection of Frame Place and 41st Road.

As stated previously, the LIRR Port Washington Line forms the northern boundary of this subarea, with a station located at Main Street and 41st Avenue. Flushing Municipal Lot No. 3 is adjacent to the LIRR station on 41st Avenue, with 157 parking spaces.

This subarea is bounded on the south by Kissena Corridor West, a 100-acre park that links Flushing Meadows-Corona Park to Kissena Park. Kissena Corridor West contains the Queens Botanical Gardens, as well as natural areas and other recreational amenities.

Flushing Subarea C

This subarea is generally located east of Linden Place, between the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard, and contains the residential neighborhood surrounding Leavitt Field, a large park.

Residential buildings in this area are a mix of single- and multi-family homes and mid- to high-rise apartment buildings. High-rise apartment buildings are located north of 32nd Avenue. Single- and multi-family homes and some mid-rise apartment buildings are generally located south of 32nd Avenue. A 424-unit NYCHA apartment complex is located south of 32nd Avenue, adjacent to Leavitt Field. In recent years the character of this residential area has been transforming, as several older lower-density and single-family residences are being replaced with new higher-density residential construction in close proximity to Leavitt Field. Leavitt Field, an approximately 7.5-acre park bounded by 32nd Avenue, Leavitt Street, and 137th Street, primarily contains active recreational uses, including tennis courts and ballfields.

Neighborhood commercial and office uses are primarily located along Northern Boulevard and Union Street. Commercial uses on Union Street are located on the ground floor with residential units above.

There are numerous community facilities in this area. Educational institutions include Queens Academy High School, P.S. 242, and H.S. 460 (Flushing High School). Several churches are located along Union Street and 35th Avenue. Other community facilities include the Union Plaza Health Care Facility, and Flushing Town Hall, an NYCL, located on Northern Boulevard.

ZONING

Zoning is a tool for implementing the City's planning and development objectives by regulating land use, density, and building bulk. Existing zoning and its relationship to land use character are described below. The existing zoning in the Willets Point Development District and surrounding study areas are shown in Table 3-1 and Figure 3-2.

DISTRICT

The entire Willets Point peninsula is located in a manufacturing M3-1 district, with the exception of an area along Northern Boulevard that is zoned residential R3-2, and portions of the Flushing Bay waterfront area that are mapped as parkland. M3 districts allow heavy industrial uses that generate noise, traffic, or pollutants. They are typically located on waterfronts or in industrial sectors, where they can be buffered from residential areas. M3-1 districts allow a maximum FAR of 2.0, and parking is required. The R3-2 district that is mapped on the Willets Point Peninsula contains only transportation infrastructure related to Northern Boulevard, the Whitestone Expressway,

and the Van Wyck Expressway. A small area within the Willets Point Development District is included within the R3-2 district; it contains roadway connections to Northern Boulevard.

**Table 3-1
Zoning Districts Located in Primary and Secondary Study Areas**

Zoning District	Maximum FAR ^{1,2}	Uses/Zone Type
Residential Districts		
R3-2	0.5 R plus 0.20 attic allowance ³	General residence district; low-density housing
R4	0.75 R plus 0.20 attic allowance ³	General residence district; low-density housing
R5	1.25 R, 2.0 CF	General residence district; low-density housing
R6	0.78 to 2.43 R, 3.0 QH, 4.8 CF	General residential district, medium-density housing
R6B	2.0 R, 2.0 CF	Contextual residence district, allowing medium-density housing, low-rise buildings with greater lot coverage
R7-1	3.44 R, 4.0 QH, 4.8 CF	General residence district; medium-density housing
Commercial Districts		
C1-2 ⁴	2.0 C (in R6 to R10), follows bulk residential and community facility regulations of mapped residential district	Local shopping and services
C2-2 ⁴	2.0 C (in R6 to R10), follows bulk residential and community facility regulations of mapped residential district	Local shopping and services
C2-3 ⁴	2.0 C (in R6 to R10), follows bulk residential and community facility regulations of mapped residential district	Local shopping and services
C2-4 ⁴	2.0 C (in R6 to R10), follows bulk residential and community facility regulations of mapped residential district	Local shopping and services
C4-2	3.4 C, 2.43 R, 4.8 CF	Major commercial centers outside of central business district
C4-3	3.4 C, 2.43 R, 4.8 CF	Major commercial centers outside of central business district
Manufacturing Districts		
M1-1	1.0 M, 1.0 C, 2.4 CF	Light manufacturing and most commercial uses, located adjacent to low-density residential areas
M1-2	2.0 M, 2.0 C, 4.8 CF	Light manufacturing and most commercial uses, older industrial areas, strict manufacturing performance standards
M2-1	2.0 M, 2.0 C	Medium manufacturing and most commercial uses, moderate manufacturing performance standards
M3-1	2.0 M, 2.0 C	Heavy manufacturing and most commercial uses, minimum manufacturing performance standards
Notes:		
¹ Floor area ratio (FAR) is a measure of density establishing the amount of development allowed in proportion to the base lot area. For example, a lot of 10,000 square feet (sf) with a FAR of 1 has an allowable building area of 10,000 square feet. The same lot with an FAR of 10 has an allowable building area of 100,000 sf. ² CF=Community Facility, R=Residential, QH=Quality Housing, C=Commercial, M=Manufacturing. ³ The maximum FAR is increased by the attic allowance which provides up to 20 percent additional FAR for space beneath a pitched roof that has structural headroom of between five and eight feet. ⁴ Commercial overlay districts are often mapped with residential districts (R5 and above) along the study area's heavily traveled roadways.		
Source: New York City Zoning Resolution.		

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

While much of the area to the west and south of the District is mapped as parkland (part of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park), the area south of Roosevelt Avenue containing the LIRR tracks and railyard is zoned M1-1. The M1-1 district allows light industrial uses that comply with more stringent performance standards, such as warehousing, storage facilities, and auto repair shops. A maximum FAR of 1.0 is permitted in M1-1 districts.

Flushing Subarea

The Flushing Subarea contains a mix of zoning districts, with manufacturing (M3-1, M2-1, M1-2, and M1-1) and commercial (C4-2) districts located near the Flushing River waterfront, and commercial C4-3 and residential R6 districts located farther east.

Willels Point Development Plan

Downtown Flushing—Subarea A

The Downtown Flushing Subarea contains commercial C4-2 and C4-3 districts and a residential R6 district. The C4-2 district generally extends west of Main Street to the Flushing River waterfront. The Flushing River waterfront area that extends roughly between the LIRR and 36th Avenue was rezoned by the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) in 1998 from manufacturing zoning to a C4-2 district, to encourage residential and commercial development along the waterfront. The zoning also requires new development to provide public access to the waterfront in accordance with a Waterfront Access Plan (WAP). The WAP includes provisions for a shore public walkway with upland connections, new water-view park locations, and visual corridors to the waterfront.

The blocks between Main and Union Streets are generally mapped C4-3, and a R6 district extends east of Union Street. C4 districts are mapped in regional commercial districts and allow medium density commercial development and uses such as specialty and department stores, which serve the needs of a larger area. Both the C4-2 and C4-3 districts allow residential uses at a maximum FAR of 2.43 and commercial uses at a maximum FAR of 3.4.

Residential R6 districts are medium-density residential districts which allow a maximum FAR of 2.43. The character of R6 districts typically range from row houses to larger tower developments. Much of the R6 district in this subarea contains either a commercial C1-2 or C2-2 overlay. Commercial overlays within residential districts generally serve the local retail needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. Within the R6 district, both commercial overlays permit commercial uses at an FAR of 2.0.

Just south of Northern Boulevard, close to the Flushing River, are manufacturing M2-1 and M1-1 districts. As stated above, M1 districts contain strict performance standards and are for lighter industrial uses, while M2 districts are typically mapped in the City's older industrial areas along the waterfront, and allow industrial uses that comply with medium performance standards. For example, smoke is permitted, and industrial activities need not be entirely enclosed. M1-1 districts permit a maximum FAR of 1.0, while M2-1 districts permit a maximum FAR of 2.0.

Flushing Subarea B

This subarea, which generally extends south of the LIRR tracks and west of College Point Boulevard, is generally zoned for manufacturing uses. Zoning districts to the west of College Point Boulevard are predominantly M1-1 and M1-2 with a small enclave zoned M3-1. As stated above, M1 districts are for lighter industrial uses, while M2 districts allow industrial uses that comply with medium performance standards, and M3 districts are for heavy industrial uses and contain minimum performance standards. M1-1 districts permit a maximum FAR of 1.0, while M1-2 and M3-1 districts permit a maximum FAR of 2.0. Both zoning districts have parking requirements, which vary depending on the type of use and size of the establishment.

A small portion of this area is within a residential R6 district, with a commercial C2-3 overlay extending along a stretch of College Point Boulevard. The R6 district allows medium-density residential development with a maximum FAR of 2.43. The commercial C2-3 overlay mapped in this R6 district allows commercial use at 2.0 FAR.

Flushing Subarea C

This subarea, which is generally located west of Linden Place between the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard, is predominantly zoned M1-1 and M2-1, which are described above. A small area to the north of Northern Boulevard is within a residential R6

district with a C2-2 commercial overlay. The R6 district allows medium-density residential development with a maximum FAR of 2.43. The commercial C2-2 overlay mapped in this R6 district allows commercial use at 2.0 FAR.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

Zoning within the secondary study area is described below. In Flushing, the subareas are extensions of the neighborhoods in the primary study area. The secondary study area also includes portions of the North Corona and College Point neighborhoods.

North Corona Subarea

The North Corona Subarea is zoned primarily for medium-density residential districts, including R6 and R6B. Smaller portions of this subarea—generally located south of Roosevelt Avenue and north of Northern Boulevard—are within R4 or R5 districts, which are lower-density residential districts. An R6 district is mapped in the eastern portion of the area along 114th Street, and along Northern Boulevard with a C2-4 commercial overlay. Commercial businesses along this corridor are permitted at 2.0 FAR.

To the west of the R6 district, an R6B contextual residential district generally stretches from 34th Avenue to Roosevelt Avenue. The R6B zoning district allows a maximum FAR of 2.0 and restricts density, limits building heights, and requires minimum setbacks in relation to the building's height, thereby maintaining a contextual residential neighborhood with single and multiple-dwelling homes rising four or five stories in height. Within the R6B district along Roosevelt Avenue, a C2-4 commercial overlay is mapped along the north side of the street, and a C2-2 overlay is mapped along the south side.

The southern portion of the study area, south of Roosevelt Avenue, contains lower-density R4 and R5 zoning districts. R5 districts permit a variety of housing stock, including three-story attached houses and small apartment buildings, but limit development to 1.25 FAR with a maximum building height of 40 feet. R4 zoning districts are similar to the R5 district with respect to multi-family development and front, side, and rear-yard requirements; however, they have a lower maximum FAR of 0.75 (up to 0.9 FAR with a 20 percent increase for an attic allowance), which is generally accommodated in the pitched roof design of homes common to this district. Another R4 district is mapped in the northern portion of the study area, generally located between Northern and Astoria Boulevards.

In 2003, much of the North Corona Subarea was rezoned by DCP. The North Corona rezoning, which encompassed 120 blocks, was meant to maintain neighborhood character and prevent out-of-scale residential development, while promoting commercial development along the existing commercial corridors of Northern Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue. Specifically within the secondary study area, the area north of Northern Boulevard from 110th Street to 112th Place was rezoned from R5 to R4; various commercial overlays previously located along Northern Boulevard were changed to a single C2-4 commercial overlay; the area west of 114th Street was rezoned from R5 and R6 zoning districts to a single R6 zoning district; and the area west of that was changed from an R6 district to an R6B district.

Flushing Subarea B

This subarea, which is generally located south of the LIRR tracks and east of College Point Boulevard, is primarily zoned R6, although small areas north of Kissena Boulevard are within C4-2 and R7-1 districts. Within the R6 district, a commercial C1-2 overlay is mapped along

Willets Point Development Plan

Main Street, which allows commercial uses at 2.0 FAR. The C4-2 district, as described above, allows major retail businesses and larger local establishments to exist in a high-density area. The R7-1 district allows residential development similar to R6 districts, although a higher FAR (up to 3.44 FAR) is permitted with less lot coverage.

Flushing Subarea C

This subarea, generally located east of Linden Place between the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard, is primarily within a residential R6 district. As described above, R6 districts allow a range of residential development, from row houses to larger tower developments. A commercial C2-2 overlay is mapped within this R6 district along Northern Boulevard to the west of Union Street, which allows commercial use at 2.0 FAR.

College Point Subarea

The College Point Subarea is predominantly zoned M3-1, with the exception of the area north of 30th Avenue and west of College Point Boulevard, which is zoned M1-1. M3 districts typically contain heavy industries, such as fuel supply depots or solid waste transfer facilities, which generate noise, traffic, or pollutants, while M1-1 districts are for light industries. M3-1 districts allow a maximum FAR of 2.0, while M1-1 allows a maximum FAR of 1.0.

PUBLIC POLICY

The Willets Point and Downtown Flushing areas have been the focus of numerous planning studies and policy initiatives for decades. During the 1960s and 1980s, Willets Point was subject to high-profile proposals for uses such as a football stadium and parkland. In the early 1990s, and then later in 2004, the City undertook studies which focused on the long-range vision for Downtown Flushing and its surrounding areas, including Willets Point. In 1993, the Queens Borough President's office released a study entitled "Willets Point—A New Direction," which proposed the redevelopment of Willets Point into a major commercial center or as an international trade center that would be used to host import/export shows and to provide exhibition and office space for wholesalers and retailers. In 2001, HPD held a design workshop that explored potential redevelopment ideas for Willets Point. The workshop recommended land uses that would reconnect Willets Point with its neighboring communities and attract visitors from nearby attractions and facilities such as Downtown Flushing, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Shea Stadium, and hotels servicing nearby LaGuardia and Kennedy Airports.

Around the same time, in 2002, the City created the Downtown Flushing Task Force to undertake a community planning process involving City and State agencies, local and State elected officials, community members, advocacy groups, and local business leaders. The resulting development framework, the Downtown Flushing Development Framework (Framework), was completed in May 2004. The Framework, which is described in detail below, identified a set of land use and economic goals to revitalize Downtown Flushing, the Flushing River waterfront, and Willets Point, and to strengthen the area as a regional center, with enhanced connections to neighboring amenities and communities.

Additional public policies that apply to either the District or the study areas are also described below.

DOWNTOWN FLUSHING DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Downtown Flushing Development Framework, initiated by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and DCP, is a land use planning strategy for the future growth and sustainability of Downtown Flushing, the Flushing River waterfront, and the Willets Point peninsula. The Framework considered opportunities for mixed-use development, improved connections with adjacent regional destinations, enhancements to public open spaces and streetscapes, and transportation and parking strategies.

The Framework looked at the development potential of the Willets Point peninsula, examining the opportunity to create a large-scale economic impact and transform the Flushing area into a regional destination. It also discussed the need to improve the environmental quality of the area. The Framework identified the creation of a long-term redevelopment plan for the Willets Point area as one of the principal implementation goals. Based on an analysis of the area's assets and development constraints, the Framework identified the following land use and economic goals to be achieved through development within Willets Point:

- Create a regional destination that would enhance economic growth in Downtown Flushing and Corona;
- Improve environmental conditions in the District and reflect the sensitive nature of its waterfront setting;
- Create a larger, expanded Flushing core by integrating the two sides of the Flushing River through land use and design;
- Complement the adjacent recreational and sporting facilities;
- Optimize use of the existing highway, public transit, and parking infrastructure to minimize local traffic impacts; and
- Create substantial positive economic value for the City and provide a source of quality jobs for area residents.

The Framework identified ways to renew the central business, residential, and shopping core in Downtown Flushing by enhancing the pedestrian experience and retail options. Specific recommendations included a series of streetscape improvements, façade upgrades, a coordinated marketing program, and improvements to the design of critical gateway intersections connecting Downtown Flushing to the surrounding areas. Other recommendations focused on leveraging Downtown Flushing's significant transportation assets to enhance mobility, improve the pedestrian environment, and enhance mass transit proximity to the waterfront.

The Framework identified the Flushing River waterfront as the greatest unifying element, with the potential to connect activity at Willets Point to the Downtown Flushing area, and envisioned the waterfront area as containing a combination of open space and mixed-use development that would attract residents and visitors to the waterfront. The Framework set forth a number of recommendations for the waterfront area, including: improving the environmental quality of the river and surrounding wetlands; facilitating the creation of an esplanade along the eastern shore of the Flushing River; introducing a new community open space at the northern anchor of the esplanade; and improving access to the waterfront and creating a continuous open space system around the Flushing River.

Willets Point Development Plan

PLANYC 2030 (2007)

Released by the City in April 2007, this 128-point plan was prepared to create an environmentally sustainable city over the next two decades. PlaNYC focuses on the many facets of New York’s environment—its transportation network, housing stock, land and park system, energy network, water supply, and air quality—and sets a course to achieve 10 goals to create a more sustainable New York by the year 2030. Specific goals of the plan include:

- Create enough housing for almost a million more people, and find ways to make housing more affordable;
- Ensure that every New Yorker lives within a 10-minute walk of a park;
- Add to the capacity of New York City’s regional mass transit system;
- Develop critical back-up systems for New York City’s water network, ensuring a dependable source of water;
- Reach a full “state of good repair” for New York City’s roads, subways, and rails;
- Provide cleaner, more reliable power by upgrading New York City’s energy infrastructure;
- Reduce New York City’s global-warming emissions by more than 30 percent by 2030;
- Achieve the cleanest air quality of any big city in America;
- Clean up all contaminated land in New York City; and
- Open 90 percent of New York City’s rivers, harbors, and bays for recreation by reducing water pollution and preserving natural areas.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLAN

The District is located within the New York City coastal zone boundary. The federal Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Act of 1972 was established to support and protect the distinctive character of the waterfront, and to assist coastal states in establishing policies for managing their coastal zone areas. In 1982, New York adopted a state Coastal Management Program, designed to balance economic development and preservation in the coastal zone by promoting waterfront revitalization and water-dependent uses while protecting fish and wildlife, open space and scenic areas, public access to the shoreline and farmland, and minimizing adverse changes to ecological systems and erosion and flood hazards. The State program provides for local implementation when a municipality adopts a local waterfront revitalization program that is consistent with the federal CZM Act.

In accordance with the State program, New York City adopted a local waterfront revitalization program, the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP), in 1982. The WRP, as amended, incorporates the State’s 44 coastal policies, and contains an additional 10 policies. The program is administered by DCP. It establishes the City’s policies for development and use of the waterfront and provides a framework for evaluating activities proposed in the coastal zone. The proposed Plan is located within the coastal zone designated by New York City and, therefore, is subject to New York City’s coastal zone management policies, contained within the WRP. Chapter 13, “Waterfront Revitalization Program,” reviews the New York City coastal zone policies and assesses the consistency of the proposed Plan with these policies.

COLLEGE POINT CORPORATE PARK

A portion of the College Point Subarea lies within the College Point Corporate Park, a 550-acre corporate park formed in 1969 on land acquired through eminent domain under the College Point II Urban Renewal Plan. The corporate park is currently managed by NYCEDC, which sells the land to various developers. All property disposition in the park includes covenants that restrict land use, guide future design, and require contribution to an improvement fund. The park contains approximately 175 businesses and employs around 5,500 people. Large industrial businesses include *The New York Times* printing and distribution plant and the North American headquarters for Skanska (a Swedish construction company). There are also several big box retailers in the park, including a Target Greatland, BJ's Warehouse, TJ Maxx, and Circuit City. Additional retailers in the park include Old Navy, Staples, Toys 'R' Us, Babies 'R' Us, a Walbaums supermarket (including a Walbaums corporate training center), Boulder Creek Steakhouse, and a multiplex cinema. The former Flushing Airport site, which is within the corporate park, comprises 16 percent of developable land within the park.

D. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PLAN

Development of new residential, commercial, and entertainment uses is expected to continue between now and 2017 in the primary and secondary study areas. The most prominent development project is the new Citi Field that is currently under construction adjacent to the Willets Point Development District. The District itself is not expected to experience substantial change in the future without the proposed Plan. The projects identified as likely to be completed by 2017 are listed in Table 2-1 in Chapter 2.

Zoning in the District is expected to be the same without the proposed Plan. Zoning and public policy are anticipated to continue to support commercial and residential growth and development in the study area. Specifically, recent rezonings in North Corona and along the Flushing River waterfront are expected to result in new higher-density mixed-use development over the long term in the future without the proposed Plan.

LAND USE

The Downtown Flushing and North Corona neighborhoods have experienced significant growth in recent years, which may be attributed to recent efforts to direct growth and development in appropriate areas, through City-sponsored rezonings and public policy initiatives such as the Downtown Flushing Development Framework, as well as to the strong Citywide trend for new residential and commercial development. A substantial amount of new development is either under construction or planned within the study areas, including several large-scale mixed-use redevelopment projects, primarily located in Downtown Flushing, and numerous residential developments in the North Corona and greater Flushing areas.

DISTRICT

As discussed above in Section C, "Existing Conditions," the properties in the District have remained relatively unchanged, even while development has occurred in the nearby neighborhoods of Downtown Flushing and North Corona. While some redevelopment or improvements may occur, overall, the Willets Point Development District is not anticipated to experience substantial change in the future without the proposed Plan by 2017 due to the low-density industrial zoning regulations, contamination concerns, and other unappealing conditions.

Willets Point Development Plan

Without the proposed Plan, it is expected that the District would continue to be relatively isolated from surrounding neighborhoods.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

In the future without the proposed Plan, the existing uses on the remainder of the Willets Point peninsula, including the undeveloped MTA property to the east of the District, are expected to remain unchanged.

Approximately 20 development projects are either under construction or proposed for the primary study area by 2017. Immediately west of the District, the new home of the New York Mets, Citi Field, is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed in 2009. This 44,000-seat stadium will replace the existing 56,000-seat Shea Stadium, located immediately to its west. Along 126th Street, the stadium will provide ground-floor retail space and Mets executive offices within a four-story, 100,000-sf building. The retail uses are likely to primarily include team apparel and other Mets-related items, as well as food service for stadium visitors. The existing traffic circle north of the stadium that connects Meridian Road with Boat Basin Road and provides access to the northern parking area will be converted to a standard four-legged, signalized intersection. The reconfiguration of the existing traffic circle is intended to provide improved access to the new main gateway into the stadium parking area. In addition, a bus parking area will be located north of Meridian Road, in a lot that is currently being used for stadium visitor parking.

Across the Flushing River from the District, a large mixed-use development called Sky View Parc is under construction, with the initial phase of construction expected to be completed in 2008. This development will ultimately include 1,200 residential units, 750,000 sf of retail, and 3,000 parking spaces. It will also include a 40-foot-wide waterfront esplanade along the Flushing River, with an upland connection to 40th Road, as required by zoning as part of the WAP. In recent years, there has been increased interest in the further development of mixed-use projects along the Flushing River waterfront. While official plans have not yet been announced, it is expected that the trend of new mixed-use development along the waterfront would continue over the long term without the proposed Plan, following current development projects and alongside other initiatives proposed as part of the Framework to improve connections between Downtown Flushing and the Flushing waterfront.

Several large-scale mixed-use developments are either under construction or planned for Downtown Flushing. In the heart of Downtown Flushing, a mixed-use development called Queens Crossing was recently completed. It contains 144,000 sf of office space, 110,000 sf of retail space, 29,600 sf of community facility space, and 400 parking spaces. Immediately east of this site, Flushing Commons, a new mixed-use project proposed for development on Municipal Lot No. 1, is expected to contain approximately 508 residential units, 219 hotel rooms, 436,000 sf of retail space, 85,000 sf of community facility space, and 1,603 parking spaces. The former Caldor building at Roosevelt Avenue and Main Street may also be redeveloped with new retail uses. Several other new office buildings and residential developments are under construction in the vicinity of Prince Street. In addition, in an effort to relieve traffic congestion in Downtown Flushing, Main and Union Streets will each be converted from two-way to one-way streets, running north and south, respectively.

North of Northern Boulevard in Flushing, several projects, including a hotel, storage facility, office space expansion, and a new 38-unit residential building, are either under construction or recently completed, and two mixed-use projects are proposed for development. These include a

proposed development on 35th Avenue with 84 residential units, community facility, retail, and approximately 220 parking spaces; and a proposed development on Northern Boulevard with approximately 90 new residential units, 60 hotel rooms, community facility, retail, and parking. In addition, although the redevelopment of RKO Keith's Theater (a 1920s movie house) is currently on hold, it is anticipated that this site would be redeveloped by 2017.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

Approximately 33 development projects are proposed for the secondary study area by 2017. Several new multi-family and mid-rise and residential apartment buildings are currently under construction in the North Corona Subarea. Seven new residential buildings within the area between Roosevelt and 37th Avenues will bring a total of 71 new units to the area. Six additional projects are projected to be developed in the area between Northern and Astoria Boulevards by 2013, as a result of the recent North Corona Rezoning. If developed, these large mixed-use projects would bring a combined 378 new residential units to the area, along with new retail and community facility space.

In the residential area south of Roosevelt Avenue in Flushing, several taller residential buildings are under construction. These include Victoria Tower, a new 178-unit residential building, and two new residential buildings just east of College Point Boulevard with 50 and 43 residential units. Six additional residential projects are either planned or under construction in this area that will collectively introduce approximately 155 new residential units. In addition, a new 441-seat primary school is being constructed at Franklin and Golden Avenues.

North of Northern Boulevard in Flushing, two multi-unit residential buildings have recently been completed on 35th Avenue. Just north of Leavitt Field on 137th Street, several residential projects are under construction, which together will introduce approximately 74 new units to the area.

Two major projects are expected to be completed in the College Point Subarea in the future without the proposed Plan. These include the proposed North Shore converted MTS on Flushing Creek at 31st Street, and a new NYPD police academy on 31st Avenue at College Point Boulevard. The converted MTS is included in DSNY's Solid Waste Management Plan for long-term waste export, and would receive and containerize waste from Queens Community Districts 7 through 14, exporting waste by barge. The MTS facility was originally proposed for operation in 2006, and is expected to begin operating in 2011, once the required permits are granted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). A new police academy, which is planned to be constructed by 2012, will include a 30-acre campus with 250 classrooms, 250 beds for visiting law enforcement agencies, firing ranges, indoor and outdoor tracks, and areas for simulated training activities.

ZONING

In the future without the proposed Plan, no zoning changes are anticipated in the District. Most of the Willets Point peninsula (with the exception of the Flushing Bay Promenade and a small area zoned R3-2) would remain zoned for heavy manufacturing use. The heavy manufacturing zoning on the Willets Point peninsula would remain in sharp contrast to the higher-density mixed-use commercial and residential zoning districts associated with Downtown Flushing and the growing residential neighborhood of North Corona to the west of the District.

No zoning changes are anticipated to occur in the primary study area by 2017. In the secondary study area, one zoning change is proposed in connection with the Flushing Commons project. To

Willets Point Development Plan

facilitate this project, the entire block bounded by 138th Street, 37th Avenue, 39th Avenue, and Union Street would be rezoned from a C4-3 district to a C4-4 district. The proposed C4-4 district is similar to C4-3 in use but allows slightly higher density and less required parking. If approved, the permitted commercial FAR (3.4) would not change, but the permitted residential FAR would increase from 2.43 to 3.44 and permitted community facility FAR would increase from 4.80 to 6.50.

No changes to zoning are expected in the College Point Subarea in the future without the proposed Plan. Much of the residential College Point neighborhood was rezoned by DCP in 2005. The rezoning covered a 161-block area and was proposed to comprehensively establish contextual zoning districts for the residentially developed portions of College Point in order to preserve the one- and two-family character of the neighborhood. Since the manufacturing zoning in the study area south of 28th Avenue was preserved, it is not anticipated that the zoning in this area would change in the near future.

As described previously, most of the North Corona Subarea was recently rezoned by DCP. Therefore, zoning in this area is not anticipated to change in the near future.

PUBLIC POLICY

In the future without the proposed Plan, no new policies are expected for the District, or the primary and secondary study areas. Without the proposed Plan, an essential component of the Downtown Flushing Development Framework—the redevelopment of the Willets Point peninsula—would not proceed, and many of the Framework’s goals, which focus on facilitating future growth and sustainability of the area through the redevelopment of Willets Point, would not be achieved. It is expected that the City would continue to explore opportunities to advance the other components of the Framework, such as opportunities for mixed-use development in Downtown Flushing, enhancements to public open spaces and streetscapes, improved connections between Downtown Flushing and the Flushing waterfront, and transportation and parking strategies. Specific objectives outlined in the Framework include upgrading streetscapes between the Downtown Flushing core and the waterfront, and improving pedestrian conditions along College Point Boulevard. However, goals such as improving environmental conditions in the District and enhancing adjacent regional destinations would not likely be achieved in the future without the proposed Plan.

E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PLAN

The proposed Plan would require creation of a Willets Point URP to support the major mixed-use development as described below, by establishing the boundaries and maximum development envelope for the District. This plan, together with the zoning regulations established within the Special Willets Point District, would govern all future development within the District, including site planning, land uses, and densities, and would establish design controls for the proposed Plan’s buildings, open spaces, and other features. The Plan would also require the following land use-related actions: a change to the underlying zoning of the District from the existing M3-1 and R3-2 districts to a C4-4 district; demapping of all streets within the District; and possible acquisition of property by the City pursuant to the Eminent Domain Procedure Law (see Chapter 1, “Project Description,” for a complete list of required actions).

The analysis below addresses the potential for land use, zoning, and public policy impacts in terms of direct displacement of other uses on the District, compatibility of the proposed uses and

proposed density with surrounding uses and densities, and consistency of the proposed uses and densities with public land use and development policy.

PROPOSED PLAN

LAND USE

District

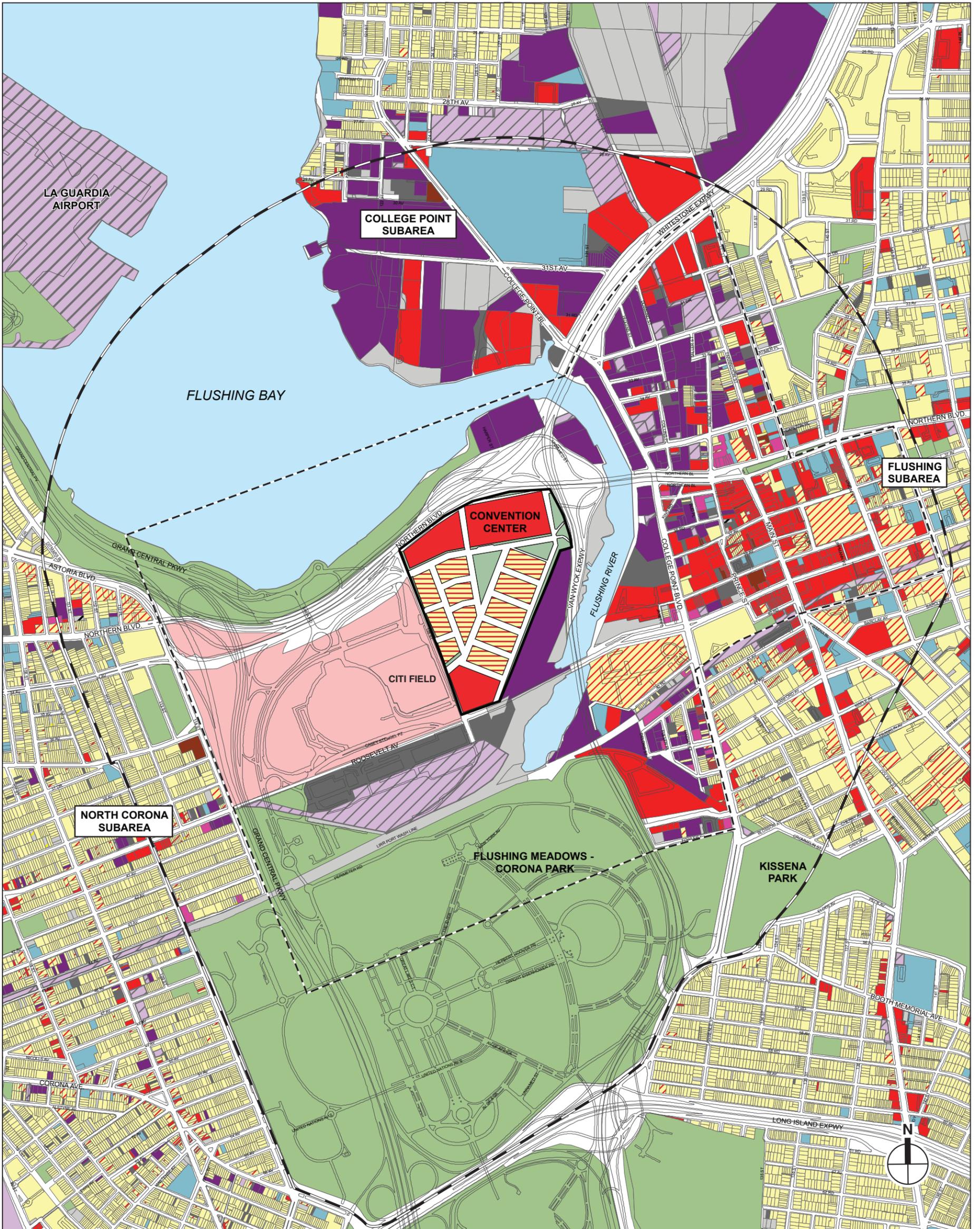
The proposed Plan would change the development potential of the District in a manner consistent with the proposed URP and the Special Willets Point District. As a result, a range of new development could occur within the District. While the actual development will depend on developer proposals and future market conditions, among other things, the City has developed a maximum development envelope for analysis in the GEIS. The maximum development envelope anticipated under the proposed Plan includes up to 8.94 million gsf of new buildings, which would include residential, retail, office space, a hotel and convention center, as well as community facilities and open space. The proposed uses are described in detail in Chapters 1 and 2.

In addition, the Plan would include construction of a new connection between the Van Wyck Expressway and the District to facilitate the movement of traffic into and out of the District and minimize traffic on nearby local roadways. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is currently considering conceptual design alternatives, which include new entrance and exit ramps that touch down in the northeast portion of the District and connect with the primary connector streets in the District.

The proposed Plan would include environmental remediation, the installation of new sanitary and storm sewer lines, and the grading and elevation of the entire District above the 100-year floodplain, and would result in the displacement of all existing uses in the District. Overall, the proposed Plan would dramatically change land uses in the District, replacing predominantly low-density auto-related, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, and waste transfer and recycling uses with a new mixed-use neighborhood (see Figure 3-3). As part of the Plan, residential and retail uses would be the core activities, and office, hotel, and convention center uses would complement these uses to create a regional economic center. Community facilities and open space would support the residential and commercial uses and improve the quality of life for area residents and visitors.

While specific development plans have not been formulated, the Special Willets Point District would create a sustainable, dynamic community by integrating regional attractions—such as the convention center and destination retail—and residential, community facility, and other uses within a network of pedestrian-scaled streetscapes throughout the District. The Special District regulations would determine elements that would apply to each area, such as the placement of uses within the District, building heights and setbacks, street hierarchies, streetscape design, and basic site planning and design provisions.

The Special District would regulate the general layout of the principal streets—by mandating four or five specific intersections along 126th Street and establishing design parameters for five street types—thereby establishing the basic form of the District and ensuring that the future uses in the District are integrated into a cohesive site design. The Special District would require two connector streets—one would extend from 34th Avenue east into the District, and the other would extend east into the District from Citi Field’s southern edge. The Special District would



- | | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Willets Point Development District Boundary | | Entertainment |
| | Primary Study Area Boundary | | Auto-Related Use |
| | Secondary Study Area Boundary | | Industrial and Manufacturing |
| | Residential | | Transportation and Utility |
| | Residential with Commercial Below | | Open Space and Outdoor Recreation |
| | Hotels | | Parking Facilities |
| | Commercial and Office Buildings | | Vacant Land |
| | Institutional | | Under Construction |

NOTE: Land Uses within the Willets Point Development District are Illustrative (based on Illustrative Site Plan)

0 2000 FEET
SCALE

Figure 3-3
**Land Use Study Area
Future with the Proposed Plan**

Willets Point Development Plan

also require the creation of one primary and two or three secondary retail streets within an entertainment and commercial center, and residential streets within the residential community, as described below. Finally, the Special District would require an eastern perimeter street, which would be located within 20 feet of the eastern boundary of the District, extending between Roosevelt Avenue and a connector street.

The Special District would facilitate development of a pedestrian-oriented regional entertainment and commercial center along 126th Street by requiring continuous retail and service uses on the ground floor level, and would encourage the pedestrian orientation of these uses by requiring transparent ground floor façades and restricting the width of building entryways or lobbies. This area would extend approximately 600 feet east of 126th Street, and would combine retail, residential, and parking uses in mixed-use structures rising up to 218 feet in height. The lower levels of structures would include intensive restaurant, entertainment, and nightlife uses along 126th Street, while the upper stories would contain residential or office uses. A mix of shops and apparel stores would be located along the primary and secondary retail streets within the zone. The Special District would establish large commercial anchor blocks at Northern Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue along 126th Street, so that retail uses would be concentrated in the center of the zone, in proximity to the new Citi Field.

East of the 126th Street corridor, the Special District would provide more flexibility in the placement of various uses and of architectural design, within established parameters, to ensure the compatibility of adjacent uses and the adequate provision of light and air within the District. The convention center would be located in the eastern portion of the district, with frontage oriented along one of the two connector streets (see Figure 1-9 in Chapter 1). Accessory uses—including the hotel and accessory parking—would be located in proximity to the convention center.

The Special District would encourage the development of a residential community in the eastern part of the District. While this area would be predominantly residential, community facility, office, and ground-floor retail uses would also be permitted, creating a lively streetscape. The residential community would also include an approximately two-acre centrally located park, with frontage on a connector street, programmed primarily for active recreational use. The Special District includes design parameters such as setbacks, maximum block dimensions, and building entrances on each blockfront to encourage a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood environment.

The Special District would allow the development of a power plant and an electrical utility substation within the District, provided they would primarily serve the District. However, these uses would be subject to a subsequent approval by the City Planning Commission (CPC)¹. Furthermore, these uses would be required to contain appropriate safeguards to minimize the adverse effects on the character of the surrounding area, including safety devices and concealment through architectural and landscaping treatment.

The Special District would create a walkable, urban streetscape environment by requiring that off-street parking facilities be fully enclosed and wrapped by active uses (with some exceptions, including along parts of Northern Boulevard and the eastern perimeter street, and upper level

¹ A power plant would require a number of discretionary permits, including a special permit by CPC and other approvals, and would be subject to a separate environmental and public review process. An electrical utility substation would require authorization by CPC.

parking along 126th Street). The Special District would mandate the provision of street trees, adequate sidewalks, and planted medians, and the development of a minimum of eight acres of publicly accessible open space, including a centrally located park, as well as pedestrian amenity areas or open landscaped areas at various locations along the perimeter of the District. Together, these features would create a lively, pedestrian-oriented streetscape throughout the District.

Building heights are expected to be highest in the western portion of the District, where buildings may be constructed to a maximum height of 218 feet above ground level (or 232 feet Above Mean Sea Level [AMSL]), which is approximately the same height of the new Citi Field. In the eastern portion of the District, where the residential community and convention center would be located, building heights would not exceed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) height restrictions and special zoning controls that apply around major airports, which range between 175 and 94 feet AMSL. Development within the District would be scaled to enhance pedestrian activity, with prescribed streetwall heights and locations, mandatory pedestrian circulation space, and other design elements to enhance building façades.

The site planning and urban design of the District would serve to integrate the District with surrounding entertainment and recreational uses. In the future with the proposed Plan, 126th Street would connect the entertainment and commercial center and the adjacent Citi Field with pedestrian-oriented design requirements. The Special District regulations would require new bicycle lanes on the connector streets in the District. In addition, NYCEDC is currently considering additional bikeway and greenway connections between the Flushing Bay Promenade to the north and Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, as well as other areas surrounding the District.

While the proposed Plan would result in a significant land use change, the effects of this change would not be adverse. The proposed convention center and commercial uses would enhance Flushing and Corona's roles as regional economic centers, and would attract visitors to the area. The proposed Plan would create a pedestrian-oriented retail corridor along 126th Street, which would complement the new retail uses planned along the west side of 126th Street as part of the new Citi Field, creating a synergy between the new Citi Field and the District. Overall, the proposed Plan would create a dynamic new mixed-use neighborhood with pedestrian-scaled streetscapes, provide new attractions and amenities, and integrate the District with surrounding entertainment and recreational uses.

Lot B

If the proposed Plan is approved and the District is redeveloped into a new mixed-use community and regional destination, it is likely that this could generate increased demand for additional development on Citi Field parking lot B, which is located across 126th Street from the District, directly south of the stadium. Lot B is currently under the jurisdiction of the New York City Industrial Development Agency (NYCIDA) and under lease to the New York Mets. As described in Chapter 2, any future development on Lot B would occur independent of the proposed Plan, and would require separate discretionary actions, each with its own approvals and environmental review processes. However, together they would add substantial new development to the immediate area, and therefore the cumulative impacts of both projects (the Willets Point Development Plan and the proposed development on Lot B) are assessed.

While specific development plans for Lot B have not yet been proposed, it is anticipated that the existing parking lot may be replaced with new structured parking, office, and retail uses. This development could include a 14-story office building containing approximately 280,000 sf of office use, surrounded by two stories of office use, including 184,500 sf of retail and

Willets Point Development Plan

approximately 970 parking spaces. It is assumed that the parking provided would replace the existing parking, as well as provide new parking to serve the new office and retail uses. It is anticipated that any future development on Lot B would not exceed the height of the new Citi Field, which was approved by FAA at approximately 218 feet.

The potential development of Lot B with new office, retail, and parking uses would complement the Citi Field and the mix of new uses proposed as part of the Willets Point Development Plan. The additional commercial uses on Lot B would help attract and retain visitors to the area, adding to the synergy created between Citi Field and the proposed Plan. The anticipated development on Lot B would bring new active uses to the corner of 126th Street and Roosevelt Avenue and along 126th Street, which would enhance the streetscape and support the pedestrian-oriented entertainment and commercial center and regional destination that would be created under the proposed Plan.

Primary Study Area

Land use issues associated with the proposed Plan focus on the compatibility of the new land uses with those that are already established and anticipated to occur in the primary study area without the proposed Plan, the effect on adjacent land use patterns of introducing dense development in the District, and the likelihood for the new land uses to generate land use change in the study area, as discussed below.

Land Use Compatibility

Of the range of uses proposed as part of the Plan, only the convention center would be new to the primary study area. Commercial office, retail, hotel, community facility, open space, parking, and residential uses are prevalent throughout the primary study area, particularly within the dense commercial center of Downtown Flushing. The proposed land uses in the District and anticipated development on Lot B would be more compatible with the adjacent neighborhoods than the existing industrial and auto-related uses, and would reflect the new trend of higher-density mixed-use development that is occurring throughout Downtown Flushing and expected to continue along the Flushing River waterfront.

The proposed convention center use is not common in the primary and secondary study areas—a convention center, by its nature, is singular; there are few such facilities in the region. However, the proposed convention center use would be located in close proximity to LaGuardia airport, and would be compatible with the prevailing land uses in Downtown Flushing—commercial office and retail—as well as recreational and cultural uses in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.

The new Mets Stadium, Citi Field, will be one of the land uses located in closest proximity to the District. In other cities, large sports facilities have proven to be particularly successful in combination with a strong mix of commercial and residential land uses, both as proposed elements of a larger master plan or as a catalyst for urban development. Prime examples include: San Diego's PETCO Park, which was developed as part of a master plan that included approximately 4,600 residential units, 280,000 sf of office space, 500,000 sf of retail, and 2,200 hotel rooms; and San Francisco's AT&T Park, a baseball stadium that has helped to spur adjacent municipally-sponsored redevelopment plans for approximately 6,000 residences, 800,000 sf of retail space, a 500-room hotel, and 6 million sf of university-related uses.

In the future with the proposed Plan it is expected that the adjacent MTA property would continue to be undeveloped, and would contain industrial uses that are the same as or similar to the construction and demolition debris recycling operation that exists there today. The residential

and community facility uses proposed for the District would not be compatible with the industrial activities permitted on that property. However, the industrial use on the MTA property is not expected to result in a significant adverse land use impact on the District. The placement of high-density mixed-use or residential districts adjacent to heavy manufacturing districts is not uncommon in the City. Other City-sponsored initiatives, such as the rezoning of West Chelsea in Manhattan and Greenpoint/Williamsburg in Brooklyn, have resulted in new higher-density residential districts adjacent to older heavy manufacturing districts. These efforts reflect the City's desire to respond to documented land use trends and to facilitate redevelopment of underutilized properties on the waterfront with new mixed-use development.

The proposed Plan would not be consistent with the industrial uses currently located along the waterfront to the north and east of the District. However, these uses are separated from the District by the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard, as well as the Flushing River, and therefore would not result in significant adverse land use impacts on the proposed uses. The proposed uses would also not interfere with the active industrial waterfront uses—including barge operations—in the Flushing River and Flushing Bay. The proposed Plan would be consistent with ongoing land use and development trends expected to continue in this area without the proposed Plan, as higher-density development is expected to extend toward the waterfront, and further mixed-use development is anticipated to replace some older industrial uses along the waterfront. Overall, the proposed Plan would not result in significant adverse land use impacts as they pertain to land use compatibility.

Land Use Density

As described above, the proposed Plan would transform an underutilized area into a new higher-density mixed-use neighborhood. As a result of this development, it is anticipated that additional office and retail would occur on Lot B. However, given existing land use patterns and zoning regulations in the surrounding area, it is unlikely that the proposed Plan would alter land use patterns in the primary study area.

Given the recent trend to redevelop underutilized sites near the Flushing River waterfront, such as the proposed Sky View Parc development described above in Section D, "Future without the Proposed Plan," it is possible that the proposed Plan and new development on Lot B could encourage further redevelopment of some nearby underutilized sites along the Flushing River with uses that do not rely on the waterfront for barging materials. The presence of an active, high-density mixed-use development in the District could lead to new development on the eastern bank of the Flushing River, much of which has been rezoned to allow higher-density, mixed-use waterfront development. Such a change to uses on nearby underutilized sites would not constitute an adverse impact on land uses in the study area, because the potential new uses—including retail, office, convention center, hotel, residential, community facility, and open space uses—would reflect a continuation of an existing trend, would be compatible with other uses in the area, and would conform to existing zoning and public land use policies, including the Downtown Flushing Development Framework. Potential new mixed-use development in these areas would be more compatible with surrounding uses than existing auto-related and industrial uses, and would serve to further integrate the District with the rapidly expanding Downtown Flushing area, as well as to create new opportunities to access the Flushing River waterfront. In addition, the density and height of the proposed development—which would range between 94 and 232 feet AMSL—is consistent with the existing land use patterns in Downtown Flushing, as well as new development that is under construction or planned in the

Willets Point Development Plan

greater Flushing area. Therefore, the proposed Plan would not result in a significant adverse impact on land use within the primary study area.

Related Impacts

The land use changes in the District would create the potential for off-site effects from changes in visual quality, as well as changes in socioeconomic conditions, traffic, noise, and air quality generated by the increase in the number of people using (living, working, and visiting) the site. These analyses are provided in later chapters of this GEIS and are analyzed cumulatively in Chapter 10, "Neighborhood Character."

Secondary Study Area

The secondary study area, roughly between ½ and ¾ mile from the District, is farther from the District than the primary study area, and land use in the secondary study area is therefore less likely to be affected by the proposed Plan.

By 2017, the current trend toward redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties to medium- and high-density residential and mixed uses is expected to continue independent of the proposed Plan throughout the greater Flushing neighborhood. Similarly, low-density residential uses and vacant or underutilized sites in North Corona are expected to be redeveloped to higher-density residential and mixed uses without the proposed Plan by 2017, particularly along Northern Boulevard and in the area immediately adjacent to Shea Stadium.

The proposed Plan would not be consistent with the large industrial uses located in the College Point Subarea. However, these uses are separated from the District by Flushing Bay, as well as by the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard, and therefore would not result in significant adverse land use impacts on the proposed uses. The College Point Subarea is expected to remain industrial in nature, primarily due to the predominant uses by DSNY, NYPD, Con Edison, and well-established cement companies, as well as requirements in place within the College Point Corporate Park. The proposed Plan would not interfere with these industrial uses, nor would it affect the active industrial waterfront uses operating in Flushing Bay. The proposed Plan would not result in a significant adverse impact on land use within the secondary study area.

ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

District

Underlying Zoning

The proposed Plan would result in a change to the underlying zoning of the District from the existing M3-1 and R3-2 districts to a C4-4 district (see Figure 3-4). The proposed C4-4 zoning would allow for the range of residential, commercial, and community facility uses anticipated. The existing permitted FAR in the M3-1 district is 2.0. In the future with the proposed Plan, a maximum permitted far of 3.4 would apply across the entire District, as established by the proposed Special Willets Point District. As stated previously, C4 districts are mapped in regional commercial centers that are located outside of central business districts, and they typically contain medium-density residential uses, as well as specialty and department stores, theaters, and other commercial and office uses. Uses that would disrupt the desired continuous retail frontage, such as home maintenance and auto repair establishments, are not permitted. Accessory off-

street parking is required; the required number of spaces is determined based on the type and amount of a specific use.

Special District

The proposed Plan would include the creation of a zoning Special Willets Point District, which would guide future development in the District consistent with the goals and objectives of the proposed Plan. The Special District would mandate a maximum District-wide FAR of 3.4. In order to promote redevelopment of Willets Point consistent with the goals and objectives of the Plan and to eliminate unnecessary rigidities that would prevent the achievement of the best possible site plan, the proposed Special District would waive certain C4-4 district requirements and CPC and New York City Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) special permits.

The Special District would effectuate the goals of the proposed Plan by regulating a number of urban design elements to create a lively, pedestrian-oriented streetscape throughout the District, and an overall site design that would serve to integrate the District with surrounding entertainment and recreational uses. The Special District would require four or five intersections along 126th Street and five different street types, thereby establishing the basic form of the District and ensuring that the future uses in the District are integrated into a cohesive site design. The Special District would also regulate elements such as the placement of uses within the District, building heights and setbacks, street hierarchies, streetscape design, and basic site planning and design provisions, as described previously. The proposed Special District text is provided in Appendix B.

Public Policy

The proposed Plan represents a critical step in implementing the Downtown Flushing Development Framework. The proposed Plan would advance a number of the Framework's fundamental goals, including the creation of a regional destination that would enhance economic growth in Downtown Flushing, improvement of the environmental conditions, and the integration of new development in the District with surrounding amenities, including the Flushing Bay Promenade, a new Mets stadium (Citi Field), Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, and Downtown Flushing and Corona. In addition, the Plan would provide a substantial number of new housing units that would be affordable to a mix of incomes to help meet the growing demand for housing in Queens and the City as a whole, and would provide a world-class example of superior urban design, with a focus on green building and sustainable design practices.

The proposed Plan would result in the creation of a Willets Point URP to define District boundaries and the area to be redeveloped according to the City's redevelopment goals. As described in Chapter 2, the URP would establish a maximum permitted floor area for both residential and commercial uses, including 5,850,000 gsf of residential use and 3,160,000 gsf of commercial use. However, the overall maximum permitted floor area in the District would be 8.94 million gsf. The Special District regulations and the URP would also require the creation of a minimum of eight acres of open space.

The proposed Plan would be consistent with and vital to the advancement of the goals of PlaNYC, specifically, the following:

- *Create homes for almost a million more New Yorkers while making housing more affordable and sustainable:* As discussed in Chapter 1, the proposed Plan would result in the construction of up to approximately 5,500 housing units, 20 percent of which would be

Willets Point Development Plan

reserved for low- to moderate-income households. Housing units in the District would offer both rental and homeownership opportunities for a range of incomes.

- *Ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of a park:* The proposed Plan would create a minimum of eight acres of publicly accessible open space, including a park of at least two acres in size, which would be located within a 10-minute walk of anywhere in the District.
- *Achieve the cleanest air quality of any big city in America / Reduce global warming emissions by more than 30 percent:* As discussed in Chapter 1, NYCEDC would encourage any future development in the District to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) certification.
- *Develop critical backup systems for the aging water network to ensure long-term reliability:* As discussed in further detail in Chapter 14, “Infrastructure,” new water, stormwater, and sanitary sewer lines would be constructed within the District. In addition, a new pump station and force main would be constructed to convey sanitary flow from the District to the existing City sewer system.
- *Clean up all contaminated land in New York:* As discussed in further detail in Chapter 12, “Hazardous Materials,” environmental remediation would take place across the District as part of the proposed Plan.
- *Open 90 percent of New York City’s rivers, harbors, and bays for recreation by reducing water pollution and preserving natural areas:* As discussed in Chapter 14, the proposed Plan would eliminate potentially polluting septic fields and is expected to result in improved stormwater quality and, consequently, improved water quality in Flushing Bay.

The proposed Plan would be consistent with the coastal policies set forth in the New York City WRP, as described in Chapter 13.

Primary and Secondary Study Areas

The proposed Plan would change the zoning in the District from M3-1 and R3-2 to C4-4. The adjacent MTA property, which is zoned M3-1, would not be compatible with all of the uses permitted in the proposed C4-4 district, such as residential and community facility uses. However, as described above, it is not uncommon for new higher-density residential and commercial districts to be located next to older heavy manufacturing districts near the waterfront. Furthermore, zoning requires that when a manufacturing district adjoins a residential district, the manufacturing uses must adhere to stricter performance standards with respect to noise, vibration, and flammable materials. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts with respect to zoning would result from the proposed Plan.

The other M3-1 districts located on the Willets Point peninsula are separated from the District by the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard, and therefore would not result in significant adverse impacts on the proposed uses. The proposed C4-4 district is similar to the zoning that exists throughout much of the Downtown Flushing area.

While greatly increasing the overall development potential within the District, the proposed Plan would not introduce or expand high-density zoning districts, and so would not set a precedent for denser zoning in the primary and secondary study areas. Furthermore, development of this density in the District would allow the Flushing and Corona areas to benefit from the future regional demand for commercial and residential development in the area, generated by the proposed Plan.

The presence of a denser mixed-use development in the District could possibly generate further redevelopment of nearby underutilized sites within the primary study area along the eastern bank of the Flushing River, which were recently rezoned to C4-2 to allow denser mixed-use development. However, redevelopment in this area is already under way, and is expected to conform to existing zoning and public policies. Thus, no significant adverse zoning and public policy impacts are anticipated for the primary and secondary study areas as a result of the proposed Plan.

NO CONVENTION CENTER SCENARIO

Since the URP would allow flexibility in the combination of uses to be developed in the District, this GEIS analyzes a development scenario in which the convention center is replaced with additional residential and retail development (the No Convention Center Scenario). As with the proposed Plan, the No Convention Center Scenario would change the development potential of the District in a manner consistent with the proposed URP and the Special Willets Point District. In this development scenario, the overall maximum development envelope in the District would remain 8.94 million gsf; however, the approximately 400,000-sf convention center would be replaced with approximately 350,000 sf of residential use (approximately 350 units) and 50,000 sf of retail use. The other anticipated uses in the District, such as the office, hotel, open space, and community facility uses would remain the same.

The additional residential and retail development in the No Convention Center Scenario would be located in the eastern portion of the District, and the regulations pertaining to the residential community zone within the Special District would apply. There would be no changes to the provisions in the Special District text with respect to streets and streetscapes, the entertainment and lifestyle center, the residential community, open space, parking and loading, and signage. As in the future with the proposed Plan, it is anticipated that the No Convention Center Scenario may result in the redevelopment of Lot B with additional office, retail, and parking uses.

As compared with the proposed Plan, the effects of the No Convention Center Scenario on land use conditions would be largely the same. Both development scenarios would dramatically change land uses in the District, replacing predominantly low-density industrial uses with a new higher-density mixed-use neighborhood. Residential and retail uses would be the core activities, supported by office, hotel, community facilities, and open space uses. Without the convention center, the entertainment and commercial center would be the primary regional attraction within the District. As with the proposed Plan, the No Convention Center Scenario would not result in any significant adverse impacts with respect to land use compatibility or density. As described above, the No Convention Center Scenario would not require any changes to the proposed zoning or Special District text and, as with the proposed Plan, no significant adverse impacts on zoning would occur.

With respect to public policy, the No Convention Center Scenario would advance several of the Framework's fundamental goals, including improvement of environmental conditions, integration of new development in the District with surrounding entertainment and recreational amenities, and the provision of a substantial number of new housing units that would be affordable to a mix of incomes. Although this scenario does not include a convention center—one of the uses that would strengthen Flushing and Corona's roles as regional economic centers—the primary regional attraction in the No Convention Center Scenario would be the pedestrian-oriented entertainment and commercial center which would create a synergy between the new Citi Field and the proposed District, and attract and retain visitors to the area. Similar to the proposed Plan, the No Convention Center Scenario would advance several of the goals of PlaNYC. Overall, the No Convention Center Scenario would not result in any significant adverse impacts on land use, zoning, or public policy. *