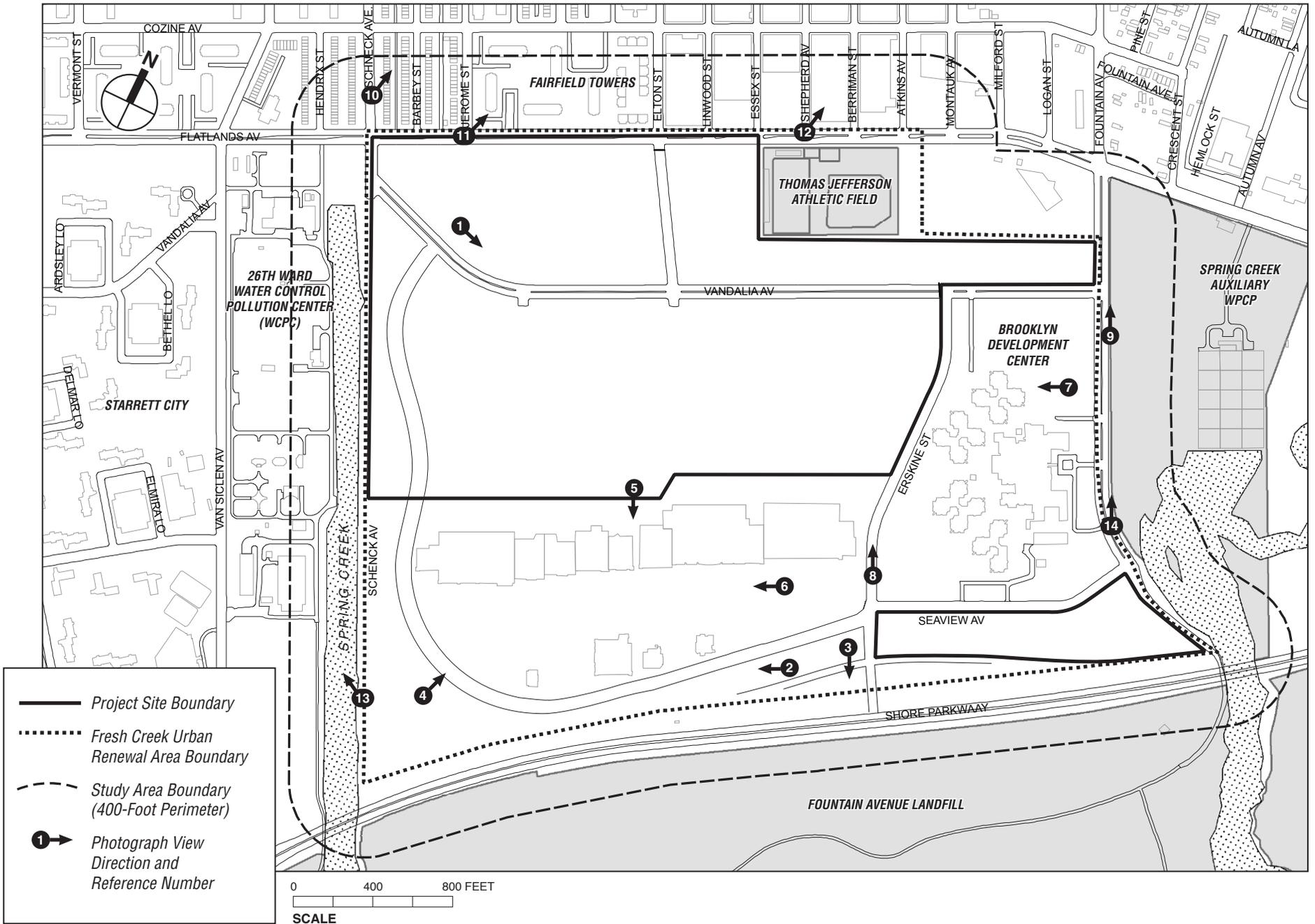


A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential for the Proposed Action, as compared to the original 1996 Plan, to affect the urban design and visual resources within the Fresh Creek Urban Renewal Area (FCURA) and in the surrounding area. The FCURA is a 227-acre site in the Spring Creek neighborhood of Brooklyn and is bordered by Flatlands Avenue to the north, Fountain Avenue to the east, the Shore Parkway to the south, and Schenck Avenue to the west. As described below, development has occurred and is currently under construction within the boundaries of the FCURA. This includes the Brooklyn Developmental Center, the Thomas Jefferson High School Athletic Fields, Nehemiah Housing, and the Gateway Center. The Proposed Action would apply to the undeveloped areas of the FCURA (the Project Site). The Project Site consists of the northern half of the FCURA, the area roughly bounded by Flatlands Avenue to the north, Fountain Avenue to the east, the Gateway Center to south, and Schenck Avenue to the west; and an undeveloped parcel south of the Brooklyn Developmental Center (See Figure 8-1).

As defined in the 2001 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, urban design components and visual resources determine the “look” of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the size and shape of buildings, their arrangement on blocks, the street pattern, and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis addresses each of these characteristics for existing conditions and the future without and with the Proposed Action for the years 2011 and 2013, when the two phases of the Proposed Project are expected to be completed. The study area for urban design and visual resources is defined as extending 400 feet from the boundary of the FCURA (see Figure 8-1).

The 1996 *Gateway Estates Final Environmental Impact Statement* (1996 FEIS) determined that its Proposed Project would have a positive effect on the urban design of the FCURA and the surrounding area. As described below, the Proposed Action would also substantially improve the FCURA; it would replace the vacant portions of the FCURA with retail, residential, institutional and open spaces. The Proposed Action would change the urban design of the FCURA by developing new blocks and streets. Elton Street, which would be extended through the Project Site, would be developed as a mixed-use residential and commercial corridor and would connect the existing retail development in the southern half of the FCURA to the surrounding area. Elton Street would terminate at a town center containing small retail spaces, outdoor cafe areas, and landscaping. Development on Elton Street would direct pedestrian activity to the area and increase the use and vitality of the FCURA. Additional retail and residential uses, as well as planned open spaces, would greatly improve the appearance of the FCURA. Overall, similar to the 1996 Plan, the Proposed Action would have a beneficial impact on the urban design of the FCURA and the surrounding area.



B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

The majority of the Project Site is currently vacant. The northern section of the Project Site is covered in overgrown, tall grass, and is littered with trash and construction debris. At the north end of the Project Site, near Elton Street and Vandalia Avenue, several two-story, attached, concrete residential buildings are under construction. These buildings will have a half story above ground which will be faced in red brick. Fenestration will either consist of projecting bay windows on the second story or grouped fixed windows on each story. Short metal stoops will lead to the entryways (see Figure 8-2).

Along Flatlands Avenue and Fountain Avenue the Project Site is surrounded by a metal chain-link fence. Vandalia Avenue runs east-west through this portion of the Project Site though, for the most part, it is not open to traffic (see View 1 of Figure 8-3). A section of Vandalia Avenue, east of Erskine Street is open to traffic. It is paved, has concrete medians and double cobra-head lights. It is currently used for construction vehicles to access the site.

The area of the Project Site located in the southeast corner of the FCURA is vacant and is covered in grass with tall, mature trees. There is garbage strewn throughout the area and it is degraded in appearance.

VISUAL RESOURCES

There are no visual resources on the Project Site nor are there any significant view corridors. Views to the south terminate with Gateway Center while views to the west include the tall, boxy towers of Starrett City in the distance. Views east are of wetlands and, in the distance, the Spring Creek Auxiliary Water Control Pollution Center. Views north include the low-scale residential and industrial buildings along Flatlands Avenue, described below.

Located in the southwest corner of the FCURA is the completed portion of the perimeter park, a visual resource. The park features a cricket pitch, benches, paved bike and walking paths, trees, and small plantings. The open expanse of greenery provides a visual break in the primarily industrial and vacant surrounding area (see View 2 of Figure 8-3). From the parkland within the FCURA, the Fountain Avenue Landfill is visible in views to the southwest. The landfill is hilly and covered in low-lying vegetation (see View 3 of Figure 8-4).

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

The remainder of the FCURA is developed with Gateway Center Phase I, the Brooklyn Developmental Center, and the perimeter park.

Gateway Center Phase I contains approximately 640,000 square feet (sf) in two groups of retail buildings separated by a small courtyard (see View 4 of Figure 8-4 and View 5 of Figure 8-5). The small courtyard features paved walkways, tall lampposts, and landscaped areas and is surrounded by a tall, metal fence. (The fence would be removed when Gateway Center Phase II and the neighborhood to the north is developed in order to provide for a pedestrian connection.)

Gateway Center's buildings are long and rectangular in shape. The buildings are one story high, built of concrete, and contain small retail spaces flanked by larger stores with large footprints.



Nehemiah Housing



Nehemiah Housing



Vandalia Avenue, view west 1



Spring Creek Park, view west 2



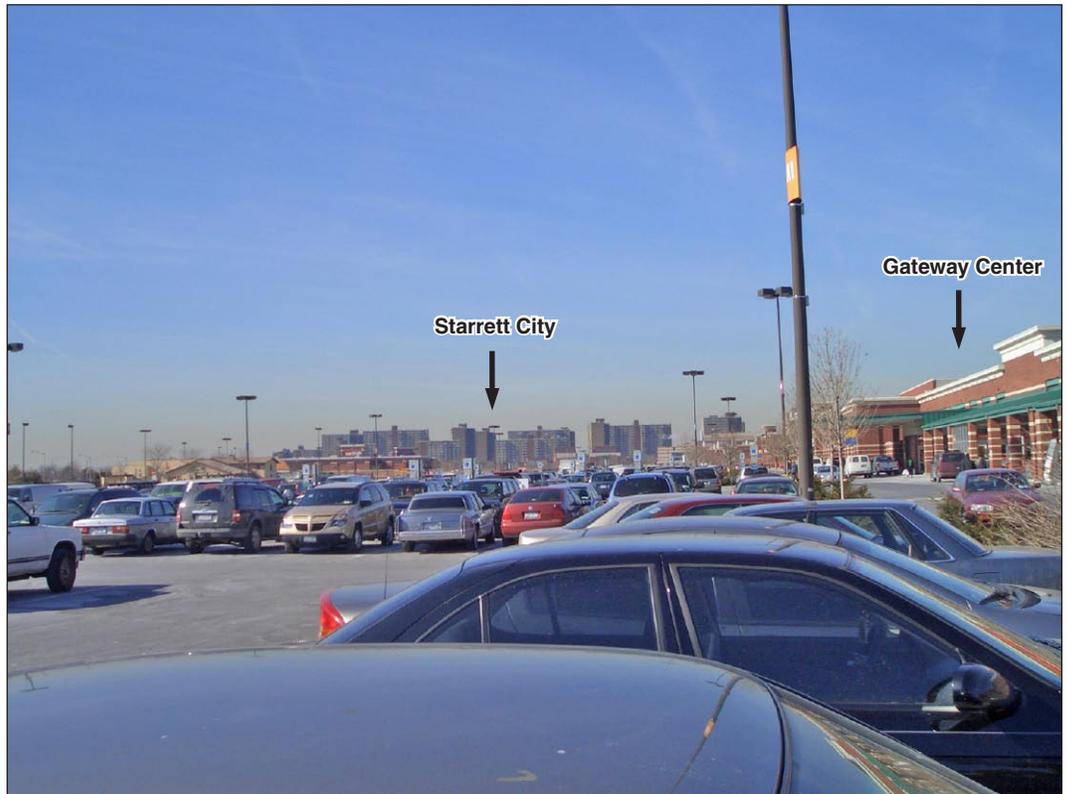
Fountain Avenue Landfill, view south from Spring Creek Park 3



Gateway Center, view northeast 4



Courtyard for Gateway Center, view south 5



Gateway Center, view west 6

Gateway Center is clad in brick, with raised parapet walls and bands of light concrete. The entrances to the retail spaces are further emphasized by wide, projecting bays which are topped with large, backlit signs.

Gateway Center faces the Shore Parkway and is separated from the Parkway by a 2,685-space paved parking lot with small islands planted with shrubs and trees (see View 6 of Figure 8-5). On the perimeter of the site are three, free-standing restaurants (also one story high) with signage incorporating their names. On the south end of the parking lot are two tall structures that hold signs advertising the names of the stores in the shopping center.

In the northeast corner of the FCURA is the Thomas Jefferson High School Athletic Fields which comprises two baseball fields, two tennis courts, one handball court, one football field, and a set of bleachers.

On the eastern section of the FCURA (on a large block bounded by Seaview Avenue, Erskine Street, Vandalia Avenue, and Fountain Avenue) is the Brooklyn Developmental Center. This complex is composed of four, irregular shaped, low-scale buildings; a large main building, and two smaller buildings. The four buildings each have four, six-sided wings; are constructed of dark, cast concrete; and have large, fixed windows (see View 7 of Figure 8-6). The main building is also irregular in shape and constructed of dark concrete. Long ramps connect the wings of each building. The site also has small, paved playground areas with basketball hoops. Along Erskine Street, Vandalia Avenue, and Fountain Avenue the Brooklyn Developmental Center is surrounded by a wall constructed of simulated masonry (see View 8 of Figure 8-6).

The parkland within the FCURA runs the entire length of Gateway Drive from Erskine Street to Hendrix Creek and north along Gateway Drive to the current service entrance for the existing Gateway Center. This park includes paved walking and biking lanes, seating areas with typical park benches, tall lampposts, a cricket pitch, and open grass fields. There are also tall trees and other plantings throughout the park.

Streets within the FCURA include Gateway Drive and Erskine Street. Gateway Drive is a curving road between Erskine Street and Flatlands Avenue in the Project Site. It is paved and carries two lanes of traffic in each direction. Erskine Street runs north-south between Seaview Avenue and Flatlands Avenue and carries one lane of traffic in each direction.

The remainder of the 400-foot study area outside the FCURA includes the Spring Creek Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP), the Fountain Avenue Landfill, and residential and light industrial buildings. The discussion below focuses first on the area's urban design—its basic layout and structures—and then describes its visual resources.

URBAN DESIGN

Street Pattern, Block Shapes, and Natural Features

The street pattern differs based on location in the study area. There are few streets to the south, east, and west of the FCURA. To the north of the FCURA the street pattern is primarily a rectilinear grid with avenues extending east-west and streets running north-south. Flatlands Avenue, which borders the FCURA to the north, is four lanes and carries two-way traffic.

Fountain Avenue, the only street east of the FCURA, carries two lanes of traffic in each direction, divided by a concrete median (see View 9 of Figure 8-7). The median has tall, double “cobra head” lampposts. Fountain Avenue is lightly traveled and has an unused appearance.



Brooklyn Developmental Center 7



Gateway Center and Brooklyn Developmental Center, view north along Erskine Street 8



Fountain Avenue, view north 9



Schenck Avenue, view north 10

Gateway Estates II

Extending along the southern boundary of the FCURA is the Shore Parkway, a major east-west transportation artery through the area. Part of a large series of parkways which connect Brooklyn and Queens, it carries three lanes of traffic in each direction, has landscaped shoulders, and a median with tall, cobra-head lampposts. It is heavily traveled and provides vehicular access to the FCURA via entrance and exit ramps at Erskine Street. The only street to the west of the FCURA within the 400-foot study area is a service road for the Spring Creek WPCP. The narrow, paved road runs along the perimeter of the WPCP.

The block shapes generally conform to the street pattern. North of the FCURA the blocks are rectangular in shape, except for a residential superblock between Jerome Street and Elton Street. The blocks to the west and the east of the FCURA are irregular in shape and size. Also to the east is a large parcel of land with the Spring Creek Auxiliary WPCP and surrounding wetland areas. To the west of the FCURA is a large, irregular-shaped parcel with the 26th Ward WPCP. To the south is the former Fountain Avenue Landfill, another large piece of land, which is undergoing restoration and will eventually be parkland.

Natural features in the study area include Hendrix Creek located to the south and west of the FCURA. Hendrix Creek is a wetland area which runs along the western edge of the existing and future perimeter park from Jamaica Bay to the end of the 26th Ward WPCP. It features a narrow creek and wetland areas and is surrounded by a low metal fence.

To the east end of the FCURA are wetland areas that contain tall grasses and a portion of Spring Creek.

Streetscape

North of the FCURA, the streetscape is residential and industrial. In the northwestern section, the streets between Hendrix Street and Jerome Street are lined with attached houses (see View 10 of Figure 8-7). The low-scale houses are set back from the street behind paved and landscaped areas. These are separated by low, metal, chain-link fences. Numerous curb cuts line the streets. For the most part, there are tall, mature trees along the streets. On a larger block, bounded by Jerome Street, Cozine Avenue, Elton Street, and Flatlands Avenue, is the Fairfield Towers residential complex (see View 11 of Figure 8-8). These freestanding buildings are surrounded by paved parking lots for the residents and there are leafy, mature trees on the site. To the east of Elton Street the streets are industrial in character. Between Elton Street and Milford Street low-scale industrial buildings line the street; they lack exterior details and create solid streetwalls (see View 12 of Figure 8-8). Some of the lots are surrounded by tall, metal chain-link fences or corrugated metal sheets. Signs on the buildings advertise the names of the businesses.

To the east of the FCURA the area is industrial and unused. While the sidewalks are paved, they are only in fair condition and trash and other debris is scattered throughout the area. The wide expanse of Fountain Avenue, which is not well traveled by cars or pedestrians, and the lack of streetscape amenities add to the vacant and industrial feel of the area.

As described above, in the southern section of the study area is the Shore Parkway and the former Fountain Avenue Landfill. Because of its ongoing restoration, the former Fountain Avenue Landfill appears as flat topped hills with some short vegetation.

The western section of the study area contains the 26th Ward WPCP, which is industrial in appearance and served by a narrow, paved service road (see View 13 of Figure 8-9). There are no other streets in the eastern section of the study area.



Fairfield Towers, view northeast from Flatlands Avenue 11



Industrial buildings along Flatlands Avenue, view north at Shepherd Avenue 12



26th Ward WPCP, view west from Spring Creek Park 13



Wetland area and Spring Creek Auxiliary WPCP 14

Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangements

As described above, north of the FCURA is a mix of residential and industrial buildings. With the exception of Fairfield Towers, the houses are either two or three stories in height, have flat roofs, are clad in red brick, and have porches overhung by mental canopies. The Fairfield Towers are composed of five 9-story buildings and four 2-story buildings (see view 11 of Figure 8-8). The buildings are placed perpendicular to each other and have either paved parking areas or small seating areas between them.

Also north of the FCURA are low-scale, boxy, light industrial buildings with large footprints. They are built either to the lot line or set back with parking areas (see View 12 of Figure 8-8). They have flat roofs and solid walls with few openings except for large vehicular openings. To the east are wetland areas and the buildings for the Spring Creek Auxiliary WPCP. The wetland areas contain tall grasses, trees, and part of Spring Creek.

West of the FCURA is the 26th Ward WPCP. This group of buildings includes low-scale, round buildings; a main building, and smaller auxiliary buildings. The main building is a large three- and four-story structure designed with alternating bands of concrete and rows of dark, fixed windows (see View 13 of Figure 8-9).

VISUAL RESOURCES

There are no visual resources in the FCURA.

Views are long along Flatlands Avenue, Fountain Avenue, and Gateway Drive although they do not contain any prominent natural features or architecturally distinguished buildings. The Shore Parkway is a prominent visual corridor within the study area and provides motorists with views of the Fountain Avenue Landfill and the FCURA. Views to the east include the Spring Creek Auxiliary WPCP and wetland areas (See View 14 of Figure 8-9). Though they are outside of the 400-foot study area, the residential towers of Starrett City dominate views to the west (see View 2 of Figure 8-2 and View 6 of Figure 8-4).

Gateway Center is highly visible in views north from the Shore Parkway. The main façade of the shopping center, the restaurants on the perimeter, and the parking areas are visible to motorists traveling along the Shore Parkway. The landscaped areas of the parkland within the FCURA are also visible from the Shore Parkway.

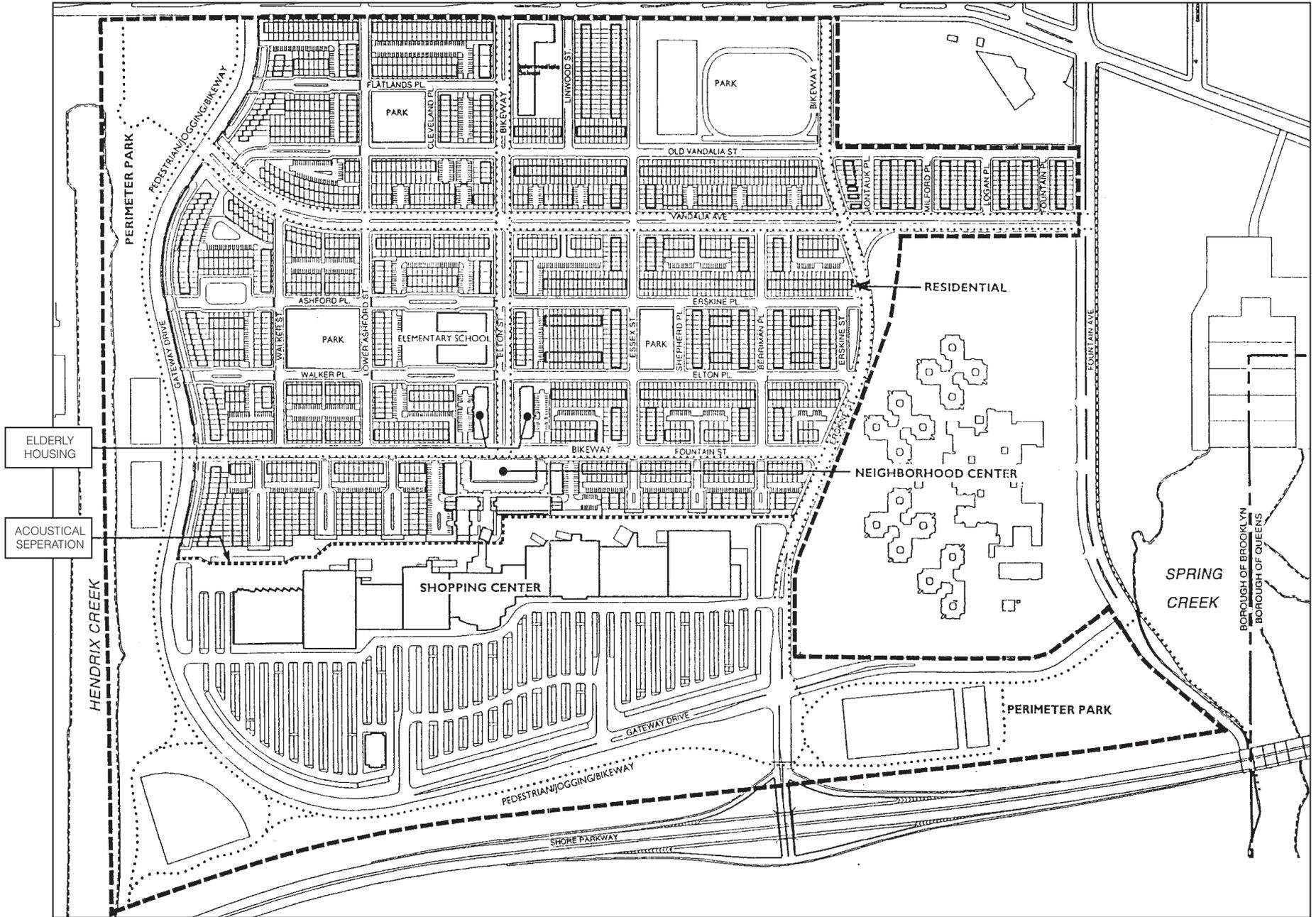
C. 2011 THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION

PROJECT SITE

Without the Proposed Action, development under the 1996 Plan will occur by 2011 (see Figure 8-10). This includes the construction of up to 378 housing units. Phases I and II of the Nehemiah Housing. Phase I is complete and is in the process of being occupied and Phase II is in the design phase. These units are or will be attached, two- to four-story, single- and multi-family dwellings. The housing has been and will be constructed east of Elton Street, south of Flatlands Avenue, west of Fountain Avenue, and north of Schroeders Avenue.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

There is one development project located in the 400-foot study area. By 2010, a shopping center will be built on a vacant parcel at 830 Fountain Avenue, adjacent to the FCURA.



GATEWAY ESTATES II

1996 Plan
Figure 8-10

Additionally, the Fountain Avenue Landfill is currently being converted into a large open space. Upon completion the landfill will be capped, new topsoil placed down on the site; and, trees, shrubs and other greenery planted.

Plans for both of these projects are not complete and planning and design for both projects is ongoing.

D. 2011 PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

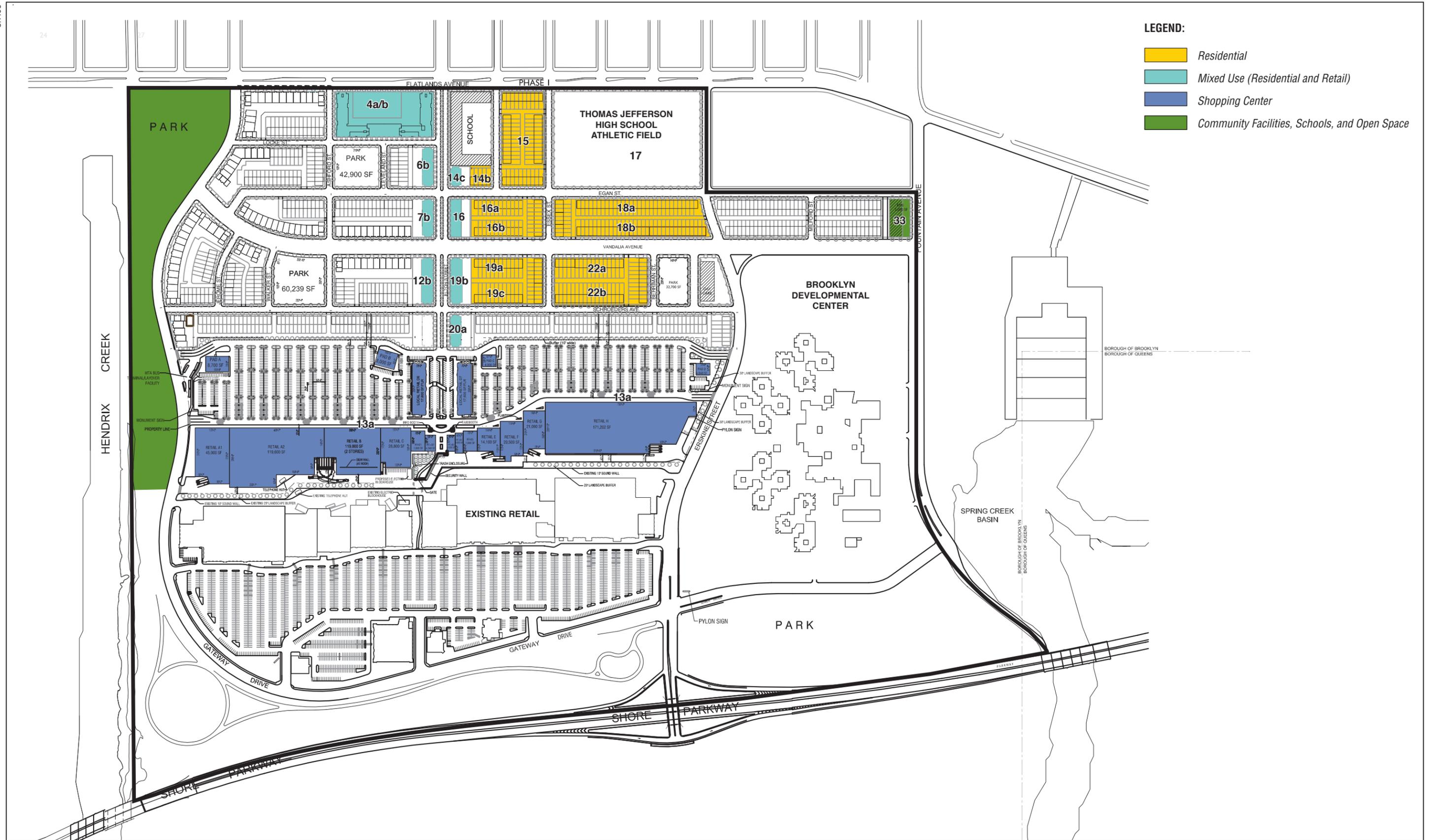
With the implementation of the Proposed Project, 1,027 residential units, a 630,000-square-foot shopping center, 68,000 sf of local retail, and 2,046 parking spaces would be constructed on the vacant portions of the FCURA north of the existing Gateway Center Phase I (see Figure 8-11). In comparison to the 1996 Plan, the Proposed Project would add a new shopping center and associated parking. The shopping center would be constructed to the north of the existing Gateway Center, and would consist of a large building and smaller retail spaces. Its design and façade treatments would be similar to those of Gateway Center Phase I.

Similar to the 1996 Plan, Elton Street would be extended south through the Project Site and would terminate with a small plaza and town center. New six-, seven- and eight-story residential buildings with ground-floor commercial spaces would be constructed along Elton Street (see Figure 8-12). They would be clad in red brick and concrete, have large ground-floor retail windows and projecting awnings, and paired fixed windows on the upper stories. The town center would have wide sidewalks and one-story attached retail spaces. The retail spaces would have small footprints and would be clad in red brick with raised parapets, and large display windows (see Figure 8-13). The town center would also include paved parking areas and landscaped islands. Elton Street would carry two lanes of traffic in each direction and would serve as a neighborhood thoroughfare for vehicles and pedestrians. It would connect the surrounding area to the Project Site, including the new town center and shopping center.

The ground-floor commercial spaces along Elton Street would create a retail corridor leading to the town center; these commercial spaces would serve the surrounding residences with neighborhood amenities. The commercial corridor and town center would be low-scale and arranged to create a pedestrian-friendly retail environment.

Large, paved parking lots with landscaped islands and vegetative swales would be located to the east and west of the new town center for the shopping center. A row of trees would be planted along the northern and western perimeter of the parking area and would visually separate the parking lot from the residential area. Gateway Drive and Erskine Street would serve as the main points of access to the shopping center for vehicles.

As with the 1996 Plan, the Proposed Action would include Vandalia Avenue, which would become a major east-west crossing by connecting Gateway Drive and Fountain Avenue. Elton Street would be the major north-south thoroughfare and would connect the existing and new retail with the residential areas. The blocks would vary in size and shape in keeping with the shape of the FCURA.



Elements of the Proposed Action
 Included in the 2011 Build Conditions
Figure 8-11





Elton Street



Town Center



Town Center

The Proposed Project would also result in smaller residences similar to those currently under construction. They would be attached and range in height from two stories to four stories. Exterior materials would include concrete and brick. It is anticipated that some of the buildings would have projecting bay windows while others would have paired, fixed windows (see Figure 8-13).

VISUAL RESOURCES

There are no visual resources on the Project Site and, therefore, there would be no impacts to on-site visual resources with the first phase of the Proposed Project. While the Proposed Project would construct a large retail center and parking lot that were not included in the 1996 Plan, it would not have an adverse impact on visual resources or views corridors.

The proposed retail spaces and residences would be constructed north of the existing Gateway Center Phase I. While the new shopping center would be taller than what is currently on the site, it would be partially screened by the existing Gateway Center in views north from the parkland within the FCURA, and would be separated by a distance of approximately 1,800 feet. The new residences would not be visible in views north from the park. Therefore, the Gateway Center Phase II and new residences would not adversely impact the parkland within the FCURA.

As there are no significant view corridors from the Project Site, development under the Proposed Project would not have any adverse impacts on views from the Project Site. The new development would be visible in views to the east, west and south; however, it would not block any important view corridors or views of resources. The new retail development would be visible to motorists on the Shore Parkway, although these views would be fleeting. Overall, development under the first phase of the Proposed Project would not have an adverse impact on visual resources or view corridors.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

Street Pattern, Block Shapes, and Natural Features

Both the 1996 Plan and the Proposed Action would result in new development within a large area bounded by Flatlands Avenue, Fountain Avenue, Gateway Drive, and the existing Gateway Center. Under both plans, Jerome Street, Elton Street, Linwood Street, Essex Street, and Atkins Street would be extended south and continued through the FCURA. Gateway Drive and Erskine Street would be extended north to connect with Flatlands Avenue, creating additional access points to the FCURA.

The new shopping center and the parking lot proposed under the Proposed Action would reduce the number of small, irregular-shaped blocks originally approved under the 1996 Plan. However, both the new shopping center and the additional parking would be located north of the existing Gateway Center Phase I and would be similar in shape and size to what currently exists on the site. Similar to those found in the study area, the blocks which would be created for these uses would be irregular in shape. The street pattern and block shapes under the Proposed Action would not be substantially different than what was approved with the 1996 Plan.

There would not be any changes to the natural features or in the surrounding area. As with the 1996 Plan, development under the Proposed Action would be limited to the vacant areas of the

Gateway Estates II

FCURA and would not extend into either the parkland within the FCURA or the surrounding wetland areas.

Overall, the Proposed Action would not have an adverse impact on these urban design features.

Streetscape

Similar to what was approved under the 1996 Plan, the Proposed Action would improve the streetscape of the study area by introducing new commercial and residential uses and pedestrian activity to a vacant site. Further, streetscape improvements would include street lighting and landscaping, which would also improve the appearance of the FCURA and would be comparable to that found in the study area.

The first phase of the Proposed Project would include an additional retail space, which was not included in the 1996 Plan. The proposed additional retail space would be housed in a long, rectangular building composed of four large retail spaces and nine smaller stores. The retail center's design, including façade treatments, would be similar to those of Gateway Center Phase I. A parking lot would be provided in the area between the retail center and the new neighborhood to its north, except where the town center would be constructed. Buffer areas planted with trees and shrubs would be provided around the parking lot to screen it from the residential areas to its north.

The new shopping center and the parking lot would be in keeping with the look of the existing retail and parking spaces on the FCURA and the retail development planned at the northeast corner of the FCURA in the future without the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not add any streetscape elements that are incompatible with the surrounding area.

The proposed signs for Gateway Center Phase II would be located on Gateway Drive and Erskine Street, north of the existing shopping center. The Gateway Drive pylon sign would be located 65 feet from the nearest residential building and the structure would extend to a height of approximately 60 feet above curb level. The top of the sign itself would be at 56 feet, 6 inches. This sign would face the side façade of a building whose primary windows would be located in the front and rear of the building. The Erskine Street pylon sign would be 133 feet tall and perpendicular to the buildings within the Brooklyn Developmental Center and 310 feet away from the nearest residential building to the north. The signage would be similar to the signage that already exists at Gateway Center Phase I and would not result in a significant adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Overall, similar to what was approved under the 1996 Plan, the first phase of the Proposed Project would have a positive affect on the streetscape of the study area. It would develop a large, vacant, and underused parcel of land by adding streetscape elements such as landscaping and street lighting to the FCURA.

Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangements

Similar to what was approved under the 1996 Plan, the first phase of the Proposed Project would introduce new residential and retail uses that would compliment what already exists on the FCURA and in the surrounding area. The height of the residential buildings would be similar to that of the residential buildings located north of the FCURA and shorter than those found to the west of the FCURA. Therefore, the proposed buildings would be in keeping with the height and bulk of the existing structures in the study area. It is expected that the residential buildings would be set back a short distance from the street with a small yard area, while the mixed-use

buildings along Elton Street would be constructed to the lot line. This would be in keeping with the general arrangement and bulk of the buildings to the north of the FCURA. The proposed residential buildings would be similar in height, bulk, and arrangement to those approved under the 1996 Plan.

The Proposed Action would introduce a large, retail development which was not included in the 1996 Plan; however, this retail space would be similar in bulk and arrangement to the current Gateway Center on the FCURA. In addition, as described above in “2011 The Future Without the Proposed Action,” a new retail development will be constructed on the northeast corner of the FCURA. Therefore, the retail development proposed under the first phase of the Proposed Project would be in keeping with the general use, bulk, and arrangements of buildings on the FCURA and in the surrounding area.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The new shopping center would be visible in views north from the existing parkland within the FCURA. Since it would be partially screened by the existing Gateway Center, the use and visual appreciation of the existing parkland within the FCURA would not be diminished by the new retail development. Long views through the park and across the Shore Parkway would also still be available. The new retail development would be separated from the park by the existing parking lot and Gateway Center and, therefore, would be located at enough of a distance from the park to not detract from the visual appreciation of this resource, or to effect views north from the park.

The new shopping center would also be visible to motorists along the Shore Parkway. Views to the new building would be limited to those motorists immediately passing the site. The new shopping center would not block views along the Shore Parkway.

E. 2013 THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION

PROJECT SITE

In the future without the Proposed Action in 2013, the remainder of the residential buildings which were approved under the 1996 FEIS will be built. In addition, an elementary school, an intermediate school, a day care facility, and other unspecified community facility uses will be built. Finally, 35.5 acres of publicly accessible open space will be developed throughout the site.

The perimeter park will be expanded to include the undeveloped area in the southeast corner of the FCURA and the area west of Gateway Drive. These sections of the park will include both active and passive spaces. The completion of the perimeter park would improve the appearance of the FCURA and would increase the size of this visual resource.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

No other development is planned within the study area between 2011 and 2013.

F. 2013 PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

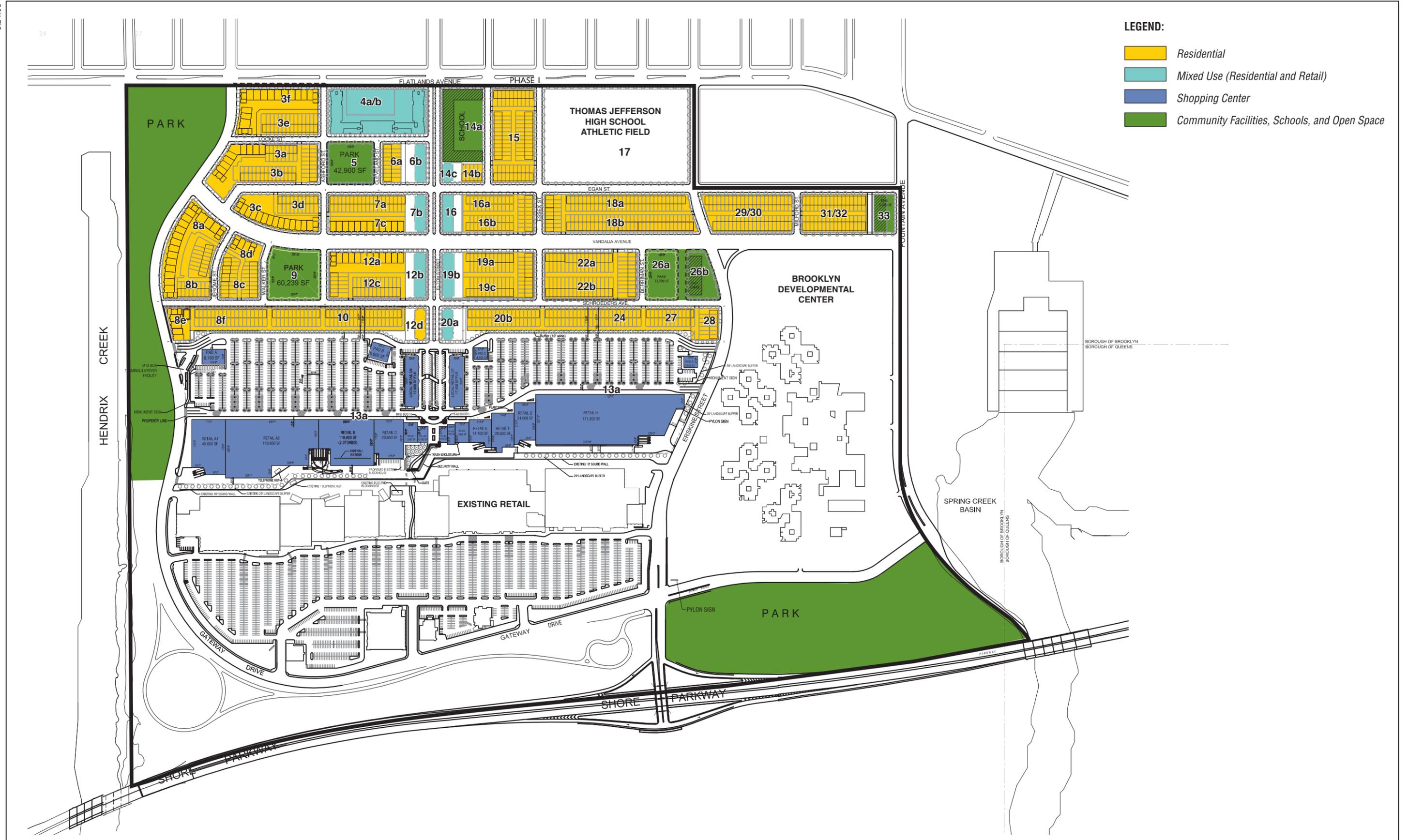
By 2013, the Proposed Project would add a total of up to 2,385 housing units, a new public school for intermediate and high school grade levels, a community/public facility, and a day care facility; and the completion of 36.5 acres of publicly accessible open space (see Figure 8-14).

The new residential buildings would be constructed on the newly created blocks and would be housed in a variety of building types, including one-, two-, and three-family attached houses, and larger apartment buildings. The one-, two-, and three-family houses would be located on the blocks to the east and west of Elton Street. Larger, bulkier apartment buildings would be located on the block bounded by Ashford Street, Flatlands Avenue, Elton Street, and Locke Street, and along Elton Street between the shopping center and Locke Street. These buildings would range in height from six to eight stories. Additional residential buildings would be constructed fronting Gateway Drive, Flatlands Avenue, and Vandalia Avenue. These buildings would be two- to four-stories tall and would be constructed to the lot line creating a consistent streetscape. Though the buildings would vary in height and scale from two to eight stories, all would be designed in a similar manner to create a cohesive streetscape. The new residential development would be buffered from the proposed shopping center by the shopping center's parking lot and associated landscaping, and all uses would be sited to be compatible with uses in the surrounding area.

The new blocks created with the Proposed Project would be irregular in shape and would conform to the street network. Similar to the 1996 Plan, the Proposed Project would extend streets outside the FCURA to create new streets within the undeveloped portions of the FCURA. The new street network would include narrow, one-way streets running north-south, and wider east-west streets. The new north-south streets would include Egan Street, Walker Street, Ashford Street, Cleveland Street, Linwood Street, Essex Street, Milford Street, and Atkins Place. Vandalia Avenue would be constructed from Gateway Drive to Fountain Avenue; it would carry traffic east-west in both directions and serve as the major east-west thoroughfare through the FCURA. Other east-west streets would include Schroeders Avenue and Egan Street which would also connect Gateway Drive and Fountain Avenue. Elton Street and Erskine Street would be extended and serve as the major north-south corridors—both would carry traffic in each direction. Elton Street would also have a landscaped median from Flatlands Avenue to the town center and would serve as the main pedestrian thoroughfare in the FCURA.

On-street parking would be available along the new streets and rear parking would be provided for the buildings along Elton Street and for the residential buildings. Limited curb cuts would be located on the residential blocks to allow access to the rear parking areas. A surface lot would be located on Flatlands Avenue between Elton Street and Ashford Street.

Two of the three interior parks approved under the 1996 Plan would be reconfigured with the Proposed Action. Under the Proposed Action, the parks would be relocated—one would be located south of Vandalia Avenue while another would be located between Vandalia Avenue and Schroeders Avenue. The open spaces would improve the appearance of the FCURA by adding additional landscaping and greenery and by providing a visual amenity. Two of the parks would be large and cover the entire blocks on which they are located. While planning for the parks is



on-going, it is anticipated that they would be primarily active spaces and include such amenities as play areas and climbing equipment.

As with the 1996 Plan, the Proposed Action would greatly improve the appearance of the FCURA by developing the vacant and overgrown parcels of land and by adding streetscape elements such as trees, light fixtures, and signage for the retail spaces. The open spaces and the landscaped medians along Vandalia Avenue and Elton Street would further improve the visual appearance of the FCURA and provide an attractive amenity.

The full implementation of the Proposed Action would transform the FCURA from a vacant site to a vibrant, mixed-use area with new residential uses, a new shopping center, a town center and plaza, community facilities, streets, landscaping, and parks. This would substantially improve the urban design of the Project Site. With the full implementation of the Proposed Action, new streets and sidewalks would be created within the FCURA. These streets would have wide, concrete sidewalks and new streetscape elements such as trees and street signs. The FCURA would be transformed into a low-scale pedestrian-friendly environment with new sidewalks, wide avenues and narrow streets, and the low-scale town center.

VISUAL RESOURCES

As there are no visual resources on the Project Site, the Proposed Project would not have an adverse impact on on-site visual resources. The creation of new parks would have a positive impact on the FCURA. Similar to the 1996 Plan, views north and west from the existing parkland within the FCURA would contain the additional residential structures; however, they would be located at a great enough distance so as to not detract from the visual appreciation of the park or affect views north from the park.

With the full implementation of the Proposed Project, new view corridors would be created within the FCURA. Views would be long on the major thoroughfares, such as Schroeders Avenue, Elton Street, and Vandalia Avenue. Views west would be improved with the creation of the parkland within the FCURA. Views along the other streets would be shorter and limited to the immediately surrounding streets.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

Street Pattern, Block Shapes, and Natural Features

The full build-out of the Proposed Project would fully develop the FCURA. While the Proposed Project would create a street pattern and block shapes that are different from what was approved under the 1996 Plan, it would be in keeping with what currently exists on the site, and with block shapes and the street pattern found in the surrounding area. Like the 1996 Plan, the Proposed Project would result in a grid pattern of streets forming small blocks rather than superblocks, which had been contemplated during the original planning of the FCURA.

The full build-out of the Proposed Project would occur on vacant parcels. There would be no changes to nearby natural features, including Hendrix Creek and surrounding wetland areas.

Streetscape

As with the 1996 Plan, the full build-out of the Proposed Project would improve the streetscape of the surrounding area. Similar to the residences located north of Flatlands Avenue, the residences built under the Proposed Project would be built to the lot line, creating a consistent streetscape. The new residential and institutional uses would further increase activity on the site and would enliven the vacant and unused parcel. Further improvements to the appearance of the streetscape would include street lighting and landscaping along the residential streets.

Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangements

Both the 1996 Plan and Proposed Project would result in new residential and institutional uses on the site. The Proposed Project would result in a high school instead of the elementary and intermediate schools approved with the 1996 Plan. The high school would complement the residences currently being constructed on the Project Site and in the surrounding area.

The residential buildings would be arranged in a similar fashion under both the 1996 FEIS and the Proposed Project and they would be constructed to the lot line. In addition, the height and general bulk of the residential buildings would be similar under both the 1996 Plan and the Proposed Project. Therefore, there would be no impacts to these urban design features with the Proposed Project.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Development under the full build-out of the Proposed Project would be visible in views north and east from the existing parkland within the FCURA; however, these views would primarily be limited to the new shopping center and the residences along Gateway Drive. The Proposed Project would not result in any unusually tall structures and, therefore, view corridors from the existing parkland within the FCURA would remain long through the park. The development resulting from the Proposed Project would also be visible from the Shore Parkway; however, these views would be fleeting and would not detract from the overall enjoyment of the long view corridors of the Shore Parkway.

The new parks created with the Proposed Action would create new visual resources within the FCURA which would be visible in views west from Erskine Street and Fountain Avenue. These new resources would improve the views to the FCURA from the surrounding area.

CONCLUSION

The full build-out of the Proposed Project would include additional retail and parking space beyond what was approved in the 1996 FEIS. However, like the 1996 Plan, the Proposed Project would have a beneficial impact on the urban design of the FCURA and the surrounding area. The Proposed Project would enliven the vacant parcel by bringing new uses to the site, including a school, three open spaces, and a town center, which would improve the appearance of the FCURA. The Proposed Project would create a street network on the site by extending the existing streets and creating new streets; this would link the FCURA to the surrounding area.

While development with the Proposed Project would be visible in views north and east from the existing parkland within the FCURA and in views from the Shore Parkway, it would not create any unusually large or tall structures and would not detract from the visual appreciation of these resources. Views from the existing parkland within the FCURA would remain long across the Shore Parkway to the Fountain Avenue Landfill. Views east from the park would contain the

new retail and residential development; however, they would be in keeping with building arrangements and bulk currently found in the study area.

Overall, the Proposed Action, like the 1996 Plan, would have a beneficial effect on the urban design and visual resources of the FCURA and the surrounding area. *