

## 3.8 NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

### INTRODUCTION

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

The proposed action is anticipated to result in changes to the neighborhood character of the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. These changes are considered to be beneficial to the overall character of the corridor and would not constitute significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

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

- *Land Use.* Development resulting from a proposed action could alter neighborhood character if it introduces new land uses, conflicts with land use policy or other public plans for the area, changes land use character, or generates significant land use impacts.
- *Socioeconomic Conditions.* Changes in socioeconomic conditions have the potential to affect neighborhood character when they result in substantial direct or indirect displacement or addition of population, employment, or businesses; or substantial differences in population or employment density.
- *Historic Resources.* When an action would result in substantial direct changes to a historic resource or substantial changes to public views of a resource, or when a historic resource analysis identifies a significant impact in this category, there is a potential to affect neighborhood character.
- *Urban Design and Visual Resources.* In developed areas, urban design changes have the potential to affect neighborhood character by introducing substantially different building bulk, form, size, scale, or arrangement. Urban design changes may also affect block forms, street patterns, or street hierarchies, as well as streetscape elements such as street walls, landscaping, curb cuts, and loading docks. Visual resource changes could affect neighborhood character if they directly alter key visual features such as unique and important public view corridors and vistas, or block public visual access to such features.

- *Transportation.* Changes in traffic and pedestrian conditions can affect neighborhood character in a number of ways. For traffic to have an effect on neighborhood character, it must be a contributing element to the character of the neighborhood (either by its absence or its presence), and it must change substantially as a result of the action. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, such substantial traffic changes can include: changes in level of service (LOS) to C or below; change in traffic patterns; change in roadway classifications; change in vehicle mixes, substantial increase in traffic volumes on residential streets; or significant traffic impacts, as identified in the technical traffic analysis. Regarding pedestrians, when a proposed action would result in substantially different pedestrian activity and circulation, it has the potential to affect neighborhood character.
- *Noise.* According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, for an action to affect neighborhood character with respect to noise, it would need to result in a significant adverse noise impact and a change in acceptability categories.

This chapter of the EIS examines the proposed action’s effects on neighborhood character within the area to be rezoned and its surrounding blocks (a study area defined by a ½ mile radius around the rezoning area, coterminous with the land use study area, see **Figure 3.1-1 in Chapter 3.1**, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy”). The impact analysis focuses on changes to neighborhood character resulting from changes in the technical areas listed above as follows.

### **3.8.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The proposed rezoning area consists of 24 blocks in East, Central and West Harlem. The proposed rezoning area is generally bounded by 126<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, 124<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, Second Avenue to the east and Broadway to the west (see Figure 3.8-1).

For the purposes of studying neighborhood character, the subareas defined in the **Chapter 3.7**, “Urban Design and Visual Resources,” are used in this chapter. This chapter will discuss the study area in six districts/neighborhoods: 1) East Side; 2) the Transit Hub around Park Avenue; 3) the Mid Corridor (generally between Lennox and Madison Avenues); 4) the Mixed Use Core (the area between Frederick Douglass Boulevard and Lennox Avenue); 5) the St. Nicholas Intersection; and 6) West Side. Due to the presence of important built features and the conditions in the future with the proposed action, each neighborhood was found to have a distinct character.

## **Primary Study Area**

### *East Side*

The East Side subarea includes the four blocks that flank East 125<sup>th</sup> Street between 124<sup>th</sup> and 126<sup>th</sup> Streets, plus most of the block between Second and Third Avenues, between East 124<sup>th</sup> Street and 125<sup>th</sup> Street. Visual boundaries are provided on the east end of the East Side subarea with the distinctive arch of the Triborough Bridge and on the west by the Park Avenue Viaduct. There is a sense of openness, but the lack of development, wide disparity in building heights and types and limited street amenities results in a lack of cohesive urban form. This is particularly true on the north blockface of East 125<sup>th</sup> Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues, which contains several unattended parking lots and a large auto fueling station. The southern blockface contains multiple boarded-up buildings in varying stages of maintenance.

Along building frontages, signage indicates the presence of retail establishments, and the bare walls of building frontages that abut vacant lots or shorter buildings are often used for advertisements. The streetwalls along the east-west thoroughfares are mostly continuous, but are interrupted occasionally by vacant lots. Retail signage is found on building frontages and painted or mounted on building sidewalls. Grasses, weeds and weed growth are commonly seen within vacant, often fenced lots that are not used for parking.

The buildings found in the East Side subarea are predominantly comprised of one- to ten-story buildings located east of the Park Avenue Metro-North Viaduct. The majority of the structures in this subarea have FARs within the range of 1.0 to 3.0, with some high coverage lots exhibiting FARs in the 4.0 to 6.0 range. Building types vary from one-story retail establishments to residential walk-up buildings, community facilities, large retail (supermarket), to large concrete and masonry structures that have little fenestration or relation to the street. Lot coverage varies from partial to full lot coverage, but most buildings occupy their full frontage. Retail frontages occur in buildings that appear to be converted from industrial buildings, but with 19<sup>th</sup> century detailing. Single-story buildings are interspersed throughout the study area and generally contain light industrial uses, including vehicle storage, or commercial use. Lot coverage is variable both within the rezoning area and the broader study area; however, there is new residential development activity immediately outside the rezoning area that covers lots in full and reinforces the street line. Two more recent developments, Gotham Plaza and Gateway Plaza are within this study area, and they are low-rise, but high coverage. They have substantial glazing, and relate to the street through retail transparency and limitation of non-active uses at the street level.

The presence of the Engine Company #36 Firehouse (S/NR-eligible), located on East 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Park and Lexington Avenues, adds a historic element to the area. It stands at a height of four stories with a single vehicular entrance at ground level. Designed by Napoleon LeBrun and Sons in 1889 in the Romanesque Revival style, it is significant example of late-19th-century urban firehouse design in New York City. Rusticated brownstone frames the vehicular entrance, with brownstone ornament also used at the upper stories, including raised molding, window surrounds, quoins, and finials at the roofline. The fourth floor terminates at a gable with a single round arched window, behind which rises a slate mansard roof. Other historic features in this

subarea include the Apple Bank for Savings (S/NR), on 125<sup>th</sup> Street near Lexington Avenue, which is a two-story, stone-clad Neo-Classical Revival bank building erected in 1906-07, and the Twelfth Ward Savings Bank (S/NR-eligible) which occupies the northeast corner of Lexington Avenue and 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and is a six-story Romanesque Revival bank built in 1893.

Several small playgrounds exist along 124<sup>th</sup> Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, though they fall outside the primary study area. This lack of open space, coupled with the modest number of irregularly located street trees and lack of street life create an urban space that is less inviting than the other subareas.

As discussed in Chapter 3.15 “Traffic and Parking”, due to the presence of the Triborough Bridge, streets in this subarea are congested at frequent intervals. The southbound approach on Second Avenue operates at LOS “D” during the weekday PM peak hour and at LOS “C” during al three other “C” ~~during all four~~ peak hours analyzed. The westbound approach on 125<sup>th</sup> Street operates in the LOS “C/D/E” ranges during all four peak hours analyzed. The eastbound approach operates at LOS “D” during the weekday AM and Saturday midday peak hours, at LOS “E” “C” during the weekday midday peak hour, and at LOS “F” “E” during the weekday AM ~~and~~ PM peak hour. The southbound approach from the Triborough Bridge off-ramp operates at LOS “D” during the weekday and Saturday midday peak hours, at LOS “E” during the weekday PM peak hour, and at LOS “F” during the weekday AM peak hour. All approaches to the East 125<sup>th</sup> Street/Third Avenue intersection currently operate at LOS “C” or better during all four peak hours, with the exception of the eastbound approach which operates at LOS “E” during the weekday PM peak hour. This intersection currently operates at LOS “C” or better overall during all four peak hours analyzed.

### *Transit Hub*

The Transit Hub subarea is a small area distinguished by the elevated structure of the Park Avenue Viaduct, upon which there are elevated Metro-North tracks and beneath which are connections to NYCT bus lines that service Harlem and connect it to other parts of the City. Only 1 block east of the Transit Hub subarea is the Lexington Avenue Subway, providing connections to the 4 and 5 Express and the 6 Local subways.

The Metro-North viaduct is the major streetscape feature in this subarea spanning the entire subarea from 124<sup>th</sup> to 126<sup>th</sup> Streets. Its outrigger support stanchions, which land on the outer sidewalks of both sides of Park Avenue, affect sidewalk space, as do protective bollards in the area of the Metro-North Station entrance. In the subarea, the viaduct is located over an enclosed train waiting area, which is connected to the overhead platforms by stairs and elevations. The viaduct is decorated in the area of the station over 125<sup>th</sup> Street with two-dimensional steel sculptures that evoke Harlem and New York City images. Elsewhere in this subarea, there is little in the way of streetscape elements. There are no street trees, nor is there distinctive street furniture. Signage is found on retail frontages on the east side of the Viaduct, and painted in large letters on the New York College of Podiatric Medicine. Not all retail frontages are active, given the building type upon which they are mounted and vacancies in the area.

Park Avenue is the main arterial roadway providing transit access to and through this subarea. The NYCT M98 bus provides local service with a stop on 125<sup>th</sup> Street, which thereby creates nodes of pedestrian activity at the intersection of Park Avenue and 125<sup>th</sup> Street. All traffic movements through this intersection currently operate at LOS “C” or better during all four of the peak hours analyzed.

Because of the many vacant or underutilized parking/storage lots in this subarea, and widely varying building heights, there is no overall pattern building arrangement within the project area. There is also a wide range of building types that range from the National Register Mount Morris Bank, known locally as the Corn Exchange, which is five stories in height. It is presently enclosed in scaffolding. Opposite the Corn Exchange on the east side of Park Avenue is a 12-story masonry loft building, in good repair and occupied. On the south side of Park Avenue, opposite this loft building are tenement style buildings interspersed with vacant lots. On the westerly side of Park Avenue, the New York College of Podiatric Medicine adjacent to a large underutilized parking lot.

### *Mid Corridor*

To the west of the Transit Hub subarea lies the Mid Corridor, which generally extends to Malcolm X Boulevard on the west but excludes a portion of 125<sup>th</sup> Street frontage from between Malcolm X Boulevard and 545 feet east.

Within the Mid Corridor subarea, the streetwalls are continuous along 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and there is less variation in building heights across this area, ranging from 3 stories to 6 stories. Residential uses, some with ground floor retail are dominant building forms. Taller buildings frame the broader avenue, with lower brownstones lining the east-west blocks on 124<sup>th</sup> and 126<sup>th</sup> Streets. FARs range from less than 1.0 to 6.0 on 124<sup>th</sup> Street, to 2.7 to near 6.0 on the northerly side of 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

While block forms are geometrically regular, the length of the blocks varies across this subarea. The blocks become longer from east to west, from about 450 feet, counting the entire block between Park Avenue and Madison Avenue, to 500 feet between Madison Avenue and Fifth Avenue, to 950 feet between Fifth Avenue and Malcolm X Boulevard. Block widths are regular. The streetscape character is that of a mature, attractive urban area, with the benefit of being immediately adjacent to the Mount Morris historic district to the south. Along portions of 124<sup>th</sup> and 126<sup>th</sup> Streets within the subarea brownstone residential buildings with building stoops are predominant and contribute to the well-maintained residential low-rise character of the subarea. Street trees are found on many of the east-west streets in this subarea. The north-south streets around the Mount Morris Historic District, which comprises a portion of the Mid Corridor subarea, have distinctive street standards (lighting), and the well-maintained brownstones on tree-lined streets create an appealing street character. The view to Marcus Garvey Park and its raised swimming pool is a distinctive image of the view south along Fifth Avenue in this subarea.

Traffic movement within the Mid Corridor is consistent with the majority of the study area, with levels of service generally within the “C” or “D” range. On Saturday during the midday peak

hour, however, levels of service “F” were noted at 125<sup>th</sup> Street/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West 125<sup>th</sup> Street/Lenox Avenue, thereby adding an element of congestion to the neighborhood’s character.

Overall the neighborhood “feel” of the area is more pleasant than its neighbors to the east, due largely to the presence of the Mount Morris Historic District and Marcus Garvey Park, which create an attractive context more conducive to pedestrian activity and street life. Though the Mid Corridor lacks the pedestrian and retail activity present west of this subarea, the character is balanced by the residential brownstones.

### *Mixed Use Core*

The Mixed-Use Core subarea comprises most of the block from Fifth Avenue to Malcolm X Boulevard, and all of the blocks from Malcolm X Boulevard to Frederick Douglass Boulevard. The Mixed-Use Core subarea is characterized by building heights that vary dramatically across its 125<sup>th</sup> Street frontage. Indeed, within the Mixed-Use Core subarea, the north side of 125<sup>th</sup> Street has taller buildings than the south side. Most buildings are built to their lot lines, with some important exceptions, such as the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building at the corner of 125<sup>th</sup> Street and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard. Building heights along 125<sup>th</sup> Street vary from one story to 20 stories, creating a diverse character. Building types range from attractive residential brownstones, to low-rise retail uses of one to four stories to high-rise office buildings, such as the State Office Building and other bulky office towers in this corridor. Unlike other major commercial buildings in the study area, the State Office Building is set back from its street frontages in a major, landscaped plaza, which provides planters and seating, plus a sculpture of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell at the major corner of Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard and 125<sup>th</sup> Street. Other retail and entertainment building types include large retailers that have continuous retail frontage. Another building type provides individual storefronts within a single larger building, resulting in more articulated but discontinuous retail frontage.

The Mixed-Use Core subarea contains some iconic streetscape elements. Foremost among these is the neon-lighted Apollo Theater sign, a world-famous symbol of Harlem. It is located in the mid-block of West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Apollo’s presence and function as an anchor is also denoted by decorative brick sidewalks and sidewalk bulb-outs along both north and south 125<sup>th</sup> Street in front of the Theater. The special street paving materials of brick, diagonal scoring and stone curbing at the major corner intersections are present in this subarea, establishing a vocabulary that underscores the prominence of the entertainment subcore in this area. Additionally, the richly detailed Hotel Theresa, at the southwest corner of Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard and West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, has a significant presence in the streetscape, with its white brick and terracotta façade along the principal frontages along West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard and West 124<sup>th</sup> Street. The former Blumstein’s Department Store (NR eligible) at 230 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street was built in 1923. Today retail occupies the ground floor of this building, while floors two through eight are vacant.

This subarea is characterized by the major arterial of 125<sup>th</sup> Street, with Adam C. Powell and Malcolm X Boulevards as major north-south arterials, with pedestrian nodes accumulating at the intersections. Further activity is centered around the subway entrance to the “2” and “3” trains,

located at 125<sup>th</sup> Street and Lennox Avenue. In addition to the four MTA bus routes that travel along 125<sup>th</sup> Street, two buses—the M7 and the M102—travel along Lennox Avenue, with stops on 125<sup>th</sup> Street, making this a transit-oriented subarea.

Traffic patterns are generally reflective of those in the area, with the highest levels of congestion during the Saturday midday peak time, where the intersections of West 125<sup>th</sup> Street/Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard and West 125<sup>th</sup> Street/Frederick Douglass Boulevard operating at LOS “F”.

Uses are almost exclusively commercial along this section of 125<sup>th</sup> Street, which induces more pedestrian activity than any other subarea. A relative lack of street trees creates little to no canopy coverage, and other than the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building plaza no publicly-accessible open spaces are present along this section of 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

### *St. Nicholas Intersection*

The St. Nicholas Intersection subarea comprises the 4 blocks bounded by West 126<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Hancock Place/West 124<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, Frederick Douglass Boulevard to the east and Morningside Avenue to the west. Although the blocks are generally regular, the cant of 125<sup>th</sup> Street and the termination of 124<sup>th</sup> Street at the west end of this area to create the superblocks for the General Grant Houses render the southwest block a triangle rather than a rectangle. As one approaches St. Nicholas Avenue along 125<sup>th</sup> Street from the east, the General Grant Houses act as a visual terminus in much the same way the Triborough Bridge serves the same function along the eastern end of 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

Building heights generally range from two stories to seven stories. The tallest building in the subarea is the new, triangularly-shaped Hotel Trades building, which occupies the corner of the triangular block bounded by West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, West 124<sup>th</sup> Street and St. Nicholas Avenue to the east and Morningside Avenue to the west. It comprises a 4-story base with 5 additional stories in a tower setback from the street, with an FAR of approximately 5.0. Older residential buildings on the north side of 125<sup>th</sup> Street show a handsome masonry finish, while others are tenement style. A major retail and entertainment building type is exhibited in the Loewe’s–Harlem USA with a different range of materials, including upper story glazing which is lit at night and articulated concrete panels. Buildings in the St. Nicholas Intersection subarea are built to their lot lines, and while there are some that have open areas to the rear of the lots, these are largely limited from view.

A number of the five- and six-story buildings on the northern blockface of West 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Manhattan and Morningside Avenues contain boarded-up storefronts, which indicates foot traffic is not as concentrated as in the Mixed Use Core and retail patronage not as consistent. No listed or eligible historic properties are present within this subarea.

Not all pedestrian crossings are improved with decorative paving and stone curbing, as they are in subareas east of this one. Additionally, this subarea lacks area-identification banners, which are also present in varying degrees to the east. Pedestrian activity is concentrated nearest to the

subway station at West 125<sup>th</sup> Street and St. Nicholas Avenue, which provides service on the “A”, “B”, “C”, and “D” subway lines. Additionally, a number of bus routes operate in the subarea: the M3 bus travels along St. Nicholas Avenue, the M18 bus travels along Convent Avenue, and the M10 route travels along Frederick Douglass Boulevard, all of which make stops on 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

Traffic operates at a smoother pace within this subarea, with levels of service in the “B” and “C” range during most peak hours. Though southbound traffic at the intersection of West 125<sup>th</sup> Street/St. Nicholas Avenue operates at a LOS “D” during the PM peak hour, intersections are generally less congested in this subarea when compared with those to the east.

A small public open space, the Roosevelt Triangle, is present within this subarea. Consisting strictly of passive recreation space, features of this park include benches, landscaping, and a sculpture. Aside from this park, there are no other forms of open or green space, and street trees are minimal and irregularly sited. A transitional feel is noted in this area, as it lacks the commercial and entertainment vibrancy east of Frederick Douglass Boulevard and is different in character and scale than the remainder of 125<sup>th</sup> Street to the west.

### *West Side*

The West Side subarea includes the entire length of 125<sup>th</sup> Street from Morningside Avenue to Broadway. It is in this area that 125<sup>th</sup> Street cants to the north, and views west from the adjacent study areas are terminated. On the north side of 125<sup>th</sup> Street, most buildings are occupied by locally-oriented retail with residential uses above. On the south side of the street, the General Grant Houses and their superblock comprise the entire primary study area, with buildings set back from their street frontage, lacking a continuous streetwall. Pedestrian activity is concentrated along 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and the north-south arterials and collectors within this subarea carry significant volumes of pedestrian traffic, but it is lower than other rezoning subareas. The Broadway stops of the No. 1 train bring connectivity from and to this and the other subareas. The steel arches and station over 125<sup>th</sup> Street create a terminal view and one of the major visual organizing features of the entire rezoning area. The intersection of West 125<sup>th</sup> Street/Amsterdam Avenue is frequently characterized by gridlock, with levels of service “D” or “E” during PM peak hours.

In addition to the steel arches and station over 125<sup>th</sup> Street at the intersection with Broadway, a number of other structures of historic significance are present within the immediate rezoning area, including the Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family (NR eligible), located at 405 W. 125<sup>th</sup> Street; the NY Public Library, George Bruce Branch (NR eligible), located at 518 W. 125<sup>th</sup> Street; and the Old Broadway Synagogue (NR listed), located at 15 Old Broadway. These contribute to the historic character of the area and attempt to offset the dominating scale of the General Grant Houses on the southern blockface.

### **Secondary Study Area**

As suggested in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study area for neighborhood character will be





coterminous with the 1/4-mile land use study area. As shown in Figure 3.8-1, the secondary study area covers an area bound at its outer limits by 131<sup>st</sup> Street on the north, 119<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, and the Harlem and Hudson Rivers on the east and west, respectively, and includes portions of the surrounding Manhattanville and Morningside Heights neighborhoods.

The secondary study area contains a variety of uses; however, residential uses predominate. A number of large public facility and institutional uses, including Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary, are located in the secondary study area, west of Morningside Avenue. A number of large open space resources, including Riverside Park, St. Nicholas Park, Marcus Garvey Park, and Morningside Park, are also present in the secondary study area, especially along the rivers. Other land uses in the secondary study area include mixed residential/commercial, commercial retail and office, transportation/utility, industrial/manufacturing, parking facilities, and vacant land.

Within the secondary study area, to the north of the proposed rezoning area, the land use is predominantly residential, including walk-up multifamily dwellings and high-rise elevator apartment buildings. The latter includes the Saint Nicholas Houses, Manhattanville Houses, and Robinson Houses, which are New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments. Other uses include numerous public schools and Saint Nicholas Park, located north of West 128<sup>th</sup> Street between Saint Nicholas Terrace and Manhattan Avenue.

To the east of the proposed rezoning area, the area contains a mixture of uses including parking, transportation and utility, residential, industrial, vacant land and open space. The entrance ramps to Harlem River Drive, Third Avenue Bridge, Willis Avenue Bridge, and the Triborough Bridge are located northeast of the proposed rezoning area. Harlem River Park is located between the entrance ramps to the Third Avenue Bridge and Harlem River Drive. To the southeast, a large NYCHA development, Senator R. Wagner, Sr. Houses, occupies two superblocks between East 124<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, East 120<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, Franklin D. Roosevelt (East River) Drive to the east, and Second Avenue to the west. Southeast of the proposed rezoning area, industrial uses are located along Third Avenue.

The area south of the proposed rezoning area is predominately, residential. Two large NYCHA developments, General Grant Houses and Morningside Houses, occupy three superblocks between West 125<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, West 123<sup>rd</sup> Street to the south, Morningside Avenue to the east, and Broadway to the west. Directly south of the Morningside Houses is the northern boundary of Columbia University, a significant presence in the secondary study area. Other uses include two large open space resources, Marcus Garvey Park, adjacent to the proposed rezoning area, and Morningside Park, located between Columbia University and the residential neighborhood south of the proposed rezoning area. Similar to the northern portion of the secondary study area, there are also several public schools south of the proposed rezoning area.

To the west, the blocks between Broadway and the Hudson River are occupied by a mixture of uses including transportation and utility, industrial, parking, residential, and open space. South of 125<sup>th</sup> Street, Riverside Park occupies the majority of this area. The area to the northwest

features smaller lots consisting of industrial and transportation/utility uses. This area is zoned M1-2 and M2-3, which allows for commercial uses and manufacturing, but does not permit residential.

### **3.8.2 FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION**

In the future without the proposed action, the existing zoning controls would remain in place. It is expected that the rezoning area would continue to experience growth in destination retail establishments centered on 125<sup>th</sup> Street, while outside the rezoning area, market rate and affordable residential housing would continue to be developed.

DCP has developed a scenario of as-of-right development that would reasonably be expected to occur within the rezoning area in the future without the proposed action (No-Action). In order to derive the incremental difference between the future without the proposed action and the future with the proposed action, this Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario (RWCDS) will be analyzed for the year 2017 – the length of time over which developers would likely act on the change in zoning and the effects of the proposed action would be felt. The RWCDS is comprised of known, projected and potential development sites.

The development expected in the future without the proposed action would be dictated by the use and build controls of the existing zoning regulations. The development expected to occur in the future without the action would not be built under a balanced zoning strategy that takes into consideration the scale and character of the area, nor would new development be expected to encourage new mixed used development that would serve to enliven the street during day and evening hours. The current zoning regulations allow tower-in-the-park development that is inconsistent with the surrounding context of street wall buildings. In the future without the action it is expected that the current zoning regulations would potentially promote building forms that are not compatible with the existing built form and are not compatible the existing neighborhood character.

#### **Primary Study Area**

In the future without the proposed action, it is expected that the current land use trends and general development patterns within the primary study area would continue, sustaining the existing neighborhood character as described in the existing conditions section above. These trends are characterized by limited, discrete redevelopment, in accordance with existing zoning. To date, there has been little such development which supports an active street life character; rather, while there has been new development and a variety of commercial uses, the building types are oriented inward without street front glazing or entrances. New housing development has not occurred within the primary study area, although there is substantial market rate and affordable housing development outside the primary study area and individual redevelopment of existing brownstones within and immediately adjacent to the primary study area. Within the primary study area, there has been no private initiative to capitalize on the superior transportation hub opportunities afforded by the Lexington Avenue Subway Line / Metro-North Railroad / New York City Transit bus hub at 125<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Avenue. This is likely due to the number of

discrete ownerships on the east side of the viaduct and the possible mismatch of existing zoning and market opportunity on the west side.

Six known development sites lie within the primary study area. These developments are expected to be in place by 2017 and would occur independently of the proposed action. None of these developments are located on projected development sites. A new development, which would include a 9,992 sf community facility, two levels of 16,986 sf of retail space, and 4,996 sf of office space, is planned for 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Frederick Douglass and Adam C. Powell Boulevards. The former Victoria Theater, located on 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Frederick Douglass and Adam C. Powell Boulevards, would be redeveloped with 10,000 sf of retail, 127,500 sf of hotel space, and a 120,000 sf community facility. An existing building, located on 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Frederick Douglass and Adam C. Powell Boulevards, is expected to be converted to a 148,355 sf education-related community facility. A new commercial building, located on 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Lenox and Fifth Avenues, is planned to include 2,000 sf of ground-floor retail and 16,700 sf of office space. An existing vacant building, located on 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Park and Lexington Avenues, would be converted to an 8,500 sf community facility. An existing vacant building, located on 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Third and Second Avenues, would be developed into a 27,776 sf education-related community facility.

In addition to the six planned developments described above, additional development is expected to occur as-of-right in the future without the proposed action on 14 of the 26 projected development sites as identified in the Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario (RWCDS) as described in Chapter 2.0, “Project Description.” In the RWCDS, DCP has identified likely development that would occur on 14 of the 26 projected development sites within the rezoning study area. In the future without the proposed action, as-of-right development totaling 304 dwelling units (DUs), 364,159 sf of retail, 413,782 sf of office space, 8,512 sf of hotel space, 162,053 sf of community facility space, 20,586 sf of institutional conversions, 4,504 sf of utility space and a total of 208 parking spaces would be expected to occur on 14 of projected development sites. These projected developments are possible under the current zoning regulations, and are in no way dependent upon the proposed action.

If development does not occur on the projected development sites by 2017, some development could reasonably be expected to occur on seven of the 22 potential development sites. This potential development could occur as-of-right, pursuant to existing zoning, in the future without the proposed action. The residential development projected in the No-Action scenario would not be expected to include affordable housing.

During the 2006 to 2017 period, it is also expected that transportation demands in the study area would change due to specific development projects in the area, as well as general background growth over time. In order to forecast these future demands without the proposed rezoning action, an annual growth rate of 0.5 percent was applied to the existing traffic volumes and traffic volumes associated with the specific development projects (“soft sites”) were added to the adjusted traffic volumes. Overall, increased congestion and reductions in levels of service were present at most intersections under the No Action scenario.

## Secondary Study Area

There are several other actions and development projects expected to occur in the surrounding secondary study area (within a 1/4-mile radius) and portions of the surrounding East Harlem, Central Harlem, and West Harlem neighborhoods (within a 1/2-mile radius) by the 2017 analysis year. As shown in Table 3.1-5 in Chapter 3.1, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” the anticipated development in the secondary study area and portions of the surrounding neighborhoods in the future without the proposed action is expected to consist of a total of 1,543 new dwelling units; 1,179,645 sf of retail space; 254,808 sf of office space; 100,000 sf of hotel space; 1,142,688 sf of community facility space; 30,000 sf of cultural facility space; 150,000 sf of hospital space; and 1,765 parking spaces.

In the future without the proposed action, there are three major land use changes expected to occur in the secondary study area and portions of the surrounding neighborhoods by 2017: (1) development generated by the proposed Special Manhattanville Mixed-Use Zoning District to the northwest of the project area, (2) the redevelopment of six acres immediately to the east of the project area as part of the East 125<sup>th</sup> Street Development Project and (3) the redevelopment of the Washburn Wire plant site as part of the East River Plaza project, to the southeast of the project area.

### Special Manhattanville Mixed-Use Zoning District

The proposed Special Manhattanville Mixed-Use Zoning District provides Columbia University with a framework to shape the future development of its academic buildings, student housing and other support facilities. The proposed district is generally bounded by 125<sup>th</sup> and 135<sup>th</sup> Streets and Broadway and Twelfth Avenue. The Manhattanville EIS will analyze the future condition for two analysis years, 2015 and 2030. Since the analysis year for the 125<sup>th</sup> Street EIS is 2017, it is only necessary to examine the Manhattanville developments which are reasonably expected to be in place by 2015.

The project area is divided into four subdistricts: Subdistrict A (Academic Mixed-Use), Subdistrict B, Subdistrict C and Other Areas. The reasonable worst case development scenario to be studied in the Manhattanville EIS assumes that by 2015, there will be approximately 1.5 million gross square feet (gsf) of new development in the Manhattanville project area. The ~~DEIS~~ FEIS assumes development of five buildings within Subdistrict A: one for academic research, three for academic instruction and one for housing graduate students and faculty. A new open space would be located on West 129<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as a new landscaped area through the midblock between West 130<sup>th</sup> and West 131<sup>st</sup> Streets, which would connect this portion of the new university area to the administrative functions relocated to the Studebaker Building. Subdistrict A would also include approximately 300,000 gsf of below grade support uses such as energy plants, utility access/service, loading areas and storage. Due to some physical limitations, Subdistrict B would include approximately 180,000 gsf one- to two-story retail and commercial developments. There are no projected development sites in Subdistrict C. The Other Areas would be redeveloped with roughly 88,000 gsf of residential uses (99 units) and a new 60,000 gsf community facility. The reasonable worst case development scenario analyzed as part of the EIS prepared for the rezoning anticipates that approximately ~~1.7~~ 1.8 million gsf of new

development would be completed by 2015.

As a part of the Manhattanville project, only one building would result in new construction, while another would result in the restoration of a landmark theater, and the remaining three would convert extant structures to new uses. By increasing opportunities to add to street life through the addition of new destinations, especially in the case of the Victoria Theater, these would be beneficial to the urban sense of Harlem's Main Street. The character of the project area, especially the Mixed-Use Core subarea would be expected to improve slightly due to site specific improvements, such as the occupancy of vacant buildings and conversion to active uses, but overall would remain similar to existing conditions.

#### East 125<sup>th</sup> Street Development Project

The project site includes three parcels situated on approximately six acres in East Harlem which are generally bounded by East 125<sup>th</sup> and 127<sup>th</sup> Streets and Second and Third Avenues. It is expected that the project site would be rezoned to enable the proposed development project. The development project would include approximately 1.7 million square feet of new mixed-use development to include 700-1,000 low-, moderate- and middle income residential units, 470,000 sf of entertainment/retail space, 300,000 sf of office space, 30,000 sf of cultural space, open space, parking, and an optional 100,000 sf of hotel space. To accommodate the development program, it is expected that an existing MTA bus storage facility would be relocated and constructed below grade. The Build Year for this development project would be 2012.

#### East River Plaza

This development will provide approximately 485,000 gsf of new commercial development and 1,248 parking spaces on the site of the former Washburn Wire plant on East 116<sup>th</sup> Street at the FDR Drive. According to the development's website, the anchor tenants will be Home Depot and Target. East River Plaza is expected to open in Summer 2008.

### **3.8.3 FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION**

This section focuses on potential changes to neighborhood character resulting from changes in the technical areas of Land Use, Socioeconomic Conditions, Historic Resources, Urban Design and Visual Resources, Transportation (traffic and pedestrians), and Noise in the future with the proposed action conditions by 2017. Detailed technical analysis for each of these areas is presented in Chapters 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.16, and 3.17, respectively. As discussed in greater detail in those chapters, environmental and social changes in these technical areas are most likely to result in changes to neighborhood character. In sum, the proposed action would bring about changes to urban design, socioeconomic conditions, traffic, and pedestrians, which would affect neighborhood character. Overall, the proposed action is expected to result in beneficial effects on neighborhood character, and would not result in a significant adverse impact. The proposed action would help sustain the ongoing revitalization of the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, would catalyze the creation of new mixed-use development and would help create the critical mass of commercial and residential uses necessary to help sustain a vibrant Street during the day and evening. In addition, the proposed action would help preserve portions of the corridor with a

strong built character and existing residential uses.

### *Land Use*

Land use is the strongest factor in determining the character of the area because land use creates changes that can alter the “look and feel” of the area, as well as the levels of activity in it (e.g., traffic and pedestrian flows). Land use changes are also the foundation for neighborhood character elements such as urban design and visual character, socioeconomic conditions, and vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy analysis (see Chapter 3.1) indicates that the proposed action would encourage new mixed-use development within the proposed rezoning area, while preserving the existing built character of portions of the corridor. The proposed changes in zoning would preserve the existing low-rise character and residential uses of portions of 125<sup>th</sup>, 124<sup>th</sup> and 126<sup>th</sup> Streets generally maintaining the existing character within these areas.

The proposed action would generally allow the same existing land uses with increased densities in selected areas resulting in increases in commercial and residential uses including affordable housing. The Special District proposed for the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor would contain a “Core Subdistrict” to encourage the creation of arts and entertainment-related uses that would complement existing cultural institutions within the corridor and beyond. Mixed-use development that includes affordable housing and entertainment-related uses can be expected on a number of projected development sites on the corridor. These general changes to land use are expected to positively change the neighborhood character by generating demand for local commercial retail supported by improvements to the pedestrian realm, supporting on-going business development and investment on the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor

As a result of the proposed action, the retail and commercial character of the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor is expected to be improved. The use regulations included in the proposed special district would ensure that new development would locate active uses at the ground floor level coupled with transparency requirements. The use regulations would prevent non-active uses such as banks to locate the majority of their operations at the ground floor level effectively shifting these uses to either the second-story or below grade levels. The active use and transparency requirements associated with new development under the proposed action would further contribute towards creating a vibrant pedestrian environment and would improve the streetscape of the corridor.

### *Socioeconomic Conditions*

The Socioeconomic Conditions analysis (see Chapter 3.2) indicates that by 2017, the proposed action would not result in direct residential displacement, and indirect residential displacement would be minimal. An estimated 71 businesses with 975 employees could be directly displaced by the proposed action. However, the direct displacement would not result in a significant adverse impact, and no changes to neighborhood character can be expected.

### *Historic Resources*

The analysis in Chapter 3.6, “Historic Resources,” indicates that construction-related significant adverse impacts could result from the proposed action as fourteen designated, eligible or potentially eligible historic resources are located within 90 feet of action-induced development. The proposed action could result in indirect effects to one listed resource, and direct effects to four eligible resources that could be converted or demolished as a consequence of the proposed action. Demolition of the four eligible historic resources would constitute a significant adverse impact. These impacts to eligible historic resources are unmitigable. One listed resource would be converted to a community educational facility, which would not constitute an impact. ~~In addition,~~ The proposed action could have a potential indirect impact on two architectural resources. Several projected and potential developments that are expected to result from the proposed action could potentially cast new incremental shadows on sunlight sensitive historic resources. As further discussed in Chapter 3.5, “Shadows,” the Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family and the Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church contain light-sensitive features and are expected to receive incremental shadowing effects as a result of the proposed action. After the issuance of the DEIS, the Department of City Planning, in consultation with the NYC Landmark Preservation Commission, concluded that the mitigation measures described in Chapter 3.5, “Shadows”, are not feasible and that there are no other feasible or practicable measures that would eliminate or reduce the impacts. Therefore, the significant adverse shadow impacts on these two resources remain unmitigated. However, these impacts would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### *Urban Design and Visual Resources*

The Urban Design and Visual Resources analysis (see Chapter 3.7) indicates that the proposed action would result in positive changes and improvements to urban design conditions of the proposed rezoning area. The most appreciable changes would be seen in the built form of new developments, especially pertaining to building bulk, use, and type, and streetscape elements. Open lots, substantially underutilized parcels and one- and two-story retail structures would be replaced with mixed-use buildings that are appropriate in massing, scale and uses to the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. The proposed building form controls would guide new development to either, complement existing areas with a strong contextual built character, reinforce medium density areas, or, to ensure an appropriate scale and massing for higher-density development.

New development on areas of the corridor with a strong contextual build character, such as the Mid Corridor and the West Side subareas, would be guided by building form controls that would ensure an appropriate relationship to the existing built context of four and five-story tenement buildings and brownstones. The required streetwall heights and the limitations on the maximum building height would be consistent with the bulk and massing of the predominant existing buildings reinforcing the streetwall and low-scale character of these areas.

New development on areas of the corridor where medium density is proposed as part of the



proposed action would reinforce the mixed-use character of the East Side and the St. Nicholas Intersection subareas where existing residential buildings coexist with other commercial, institutional and auto-related uses. Within these subareas single-story retail structures, vacant buildings and at-grade parking lots would be replaced by medium density mixed-use development with ground floor retail.

Higher density new development is expected as a result of the proposed action within the Mixed-Use Core and the Transit Hub subareas. Within these subareas the proposed Special 125<sup>th</sup> Street District would include building form regulations to ensure that new higher density development is of appropriate scale and massing, with appropriate tower and slab controls to frame and enhance the built character of the corridor. The new development at the center of the corridor would replace one and two-story retail structures and vacant lots with new mixed-use buildings. Building form regulations would require the new buildings to frame 125<sup>th</sup> Street with streetwalls of consistent height on both sides of the street and would limit the height of new development, and establish a maximum building height that would be substantially lower than the height possible through the existing zoning and building form regulations on the north side of 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

As new development on the projected and potential development sites would be confined to the existing blocks and lots, it would not affect views to the visual resources from the streets or sidewalks. The context of the visual resources that contribute to the character of the 125<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor would not be significantly or substantially altered by the proposed action, given the bulk and massing of new construction which would be compatible with the study area's existing resources and built context.

### *Traffic*

The Traffic analysis (Chapter 3.15) indicates that the proposed action would result in levels of service similar to those under the No-Action scenario, though some intersections will experience added levels of congestion and unmitigated traffic impacts. These increases are not expected to result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### *Noise*

As discussed in Chapter 3.18, noise increases as a result of additional traffic that would accompany the proposed mixed-use development are expected to be imperceptible in the vast majority of locations throughout the proposed rezoning area. These noise increases are not expected to result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

In addition to the impact areas discussed above, as discussed further in chapter 3.15, "Shadows," the proposed action would result in significant adverse shadow impacts on four sunlight-sensitive resources. The Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family, the Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church, Dream Street Park, and the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building Plaza would receive incremental new shadows as a result of the proposed action that are considered to have a significant adverse impact on these resources. As described above and in

Chapter 3.15, “Shadows”, the Department of City Planning, in consultation with the NYC Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) and NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), concluded that the mitigation measures described in Chapter 3.5, “Shadows” for the Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family, the Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church and the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building Plaza are not feasible and that there are no other feasible or practicable measures that would eliminate or reduce the impacts. Therefore, the significant adverse shadow impacts on these three resources remain unmitigated.

Potential mitigation measures for shadow impacts to Dream Street Park could include relocating the sun-light sensitive features within an open space to avoid sunlight loss, or the provision of new passive facilities on other nearby open spaces to supplement those affected by the action generated shadows. Since the issuance of the DEIS, the Department of City Planning consulted with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) regarding the feasibility of implementing the potential mitigation measures identified. Based on these discussions, DPR concluded that relocating seating areas and replacing plant material was feasible and would allow for partial mitigation of the shadow impacts. If DPR funding becomes available to implement these improvements prior to the project’s build year of 2017, the impacts could be partially mitigated. Absent available funding for the improvements, the significant adverse shadow impacts would remain unmitigated. However, these impacts would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER ANALYSIS BY SUBAREA**

### *East Side*

In the future with the proposed action, the East Side subarea is expected to see the development of four parcels of land, with three of the four sites located between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues. The rezoning is anticipated to result in the construction of 433 dwelling units within this subarea, and a reduction of 3,514 square feet of retail; 25,591 square feet of office space; 8,376 square feet parking/auto space; 13,550 square feet of manufacturing space; and 8,550 square feet of community facility space.

Primarily, the proposed action would facilitate the development of a mixed-use development in this subarea. As a result, the subarea is expected to become enliven with an added presence of ground floor commercial uses and new residents. Ground level provision of retail space is expected to enliven the street and make a stronger pedestrian and visual connection to adjacent subareas to the west.

As noted in Chapter 3.15, “Traffic”, intersections located in the East Side subarea would have unmitigated traffic impacts at the following intersections and time periods:

- East 125<sup>th</sup> Street/Second Avenue (weekday PM peak hour)
- East 125<sup>th</sup> Street/Third Avenue (weekday PM peak hour)
- East 125<sup>th</sup> Street/Lexington Avenue (weekday midday, weekday PM, and Saturday midday peak hours)

Although these traffic impacts would be unmitigated, it is not expected to cause significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

As discussed further in Chapter 3.16, “Transit and Pedestrians”, the proposed action is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts to subway stations or to subway line haul conditions. The analysis of pedestrian conditions does show, however, that two crosswalks within the East Side subarea would be adversely affected under the proposed action scenario. Specifically, the north and south crosswalks on East 125<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue will see reductions in levels of service (LOS), and as such a crosswalk widening has been recommended. Traffic congestion will continue in this subarea, though levels of service will be similar to those under the No Action scenario.

There would be no adverse impacts on historic resources, urban design, or socioeconomic conditions. For a more thorough discussion of these conditions, please see Chapters 3.6, 3.7, and 3.2, respectively.

Dream Street Park, located in the East Side subarea, would receive incremental new shadows as a result of the proposed action that are considered to have a significant adverse impact on the resource. As described above and in Chapter 3.15, “Shadows”, the Department of City Planning, in consultation with the appropriate City and State agencies has determined that there are no feasible or practicable mitigation measures that can be implemented to mitigate these impacts, the significant adverse shadow impacts on these two historic resources and the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building Plaza would therefore remain unmitigated. Impacts to Dream Street Park, however, could potentially be partially mitigated through DPR initiatives to relocate benches and relocating or replacing plant material. If DPR funding becomes available to implement these improvements prior to the project’s build year of 2017, the impacts could be partially mitigated. Absent available funding for the improvements, the significant adverse shadow impacts would remain unmitigated. However, none of the identified shadow impacts would result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### *Transit Hub*

In the future with the proposed action, the Transit Hub subarea is expected to see the development of four parcels of land. The rezoning is anticipated to result in the construction of 258 dwelling units and 51,361 square feet of retail space within this subarea, and a reduction of 8,820 square feet parking/auto space; 8,512 square feet of hotel space; and 4,504 square feet of utility space. It is anticipated that any potential development in the Transit Hub subarea would provide ground floor retail along 125<sup>th</sup> Street, which along with the expected commercial and mixed-use development would help to enliven the Transit Hub subarea.

The Mount Morris Bank, known locally as the Corn Exchange, is located within this subarea. Under No-Action conditions, it is expected that the vacant space would be converted to 20,586 sf of institutional space and that approximately 99 dwelling units (including 20 affordable units)

and 22,938 sf of retail space would be located on the parking/storage portion of the projected site. Therefore uses would be expected to change, but building form and bulk would not. The expected conversion and restoration of the Corn Exchange building would substantially improve this corner of 125<sup>th</sup> Street reinforcing its historic character.

The analysis of pedestrian conditions in Chapter 3.16, “Transit and Pedestrians”, shows that one crosswalk will be impacted as a result of the anticipated development. The south crosswalk on Park Avenue at East 125<sup>th</sup> Street will see a reduction in pedestrian mobility, and thus a crosswalk widening has been recommended to mitigate this impact. This increased congestion is expected to result from the added commercial and mixed-use development, which is expected to contribute positively to the character of the subarea.

### *Mid Corridor*

In the future with the proposed action, the Mid Corridor subarea is expected to see the development of four parcels of land. Compared to the Future No Action conditions, the rezoning is anticipated to result in the construction of 195 dwelling units and 7,655 square feet of retail. A reduction of 102,435 square feet of community facility space, 7,699 square feet of office space, and 13,274 square feet of manufacturing space is also expected.

As a result of the proposed action, the built environment of the Mid Corridor subarea would change to be more in context with its adjacent uses. Few development sites are expected and none would be nearer to the adjacent historic district. The character of the existing townhouse and mixed use development along the 124<sup>th</sup>, 125<sup>th</sup>, and 126<sup>th</sup> Street blockfaces would be reinforced by the change in zoning. Buildings would be created with a contextual reference to the existing structures of the subarea. Streetwalls would be maintained and reinforced. The light and airy character of the Mid Corridor subarea would be maintained. Furthermore, the streetscape would be somewhat improved with the addition of active retail uses along 125<sup>th</sup> Street.

As noted in Chapter 3.15, “Traffic”, an intersection located in the Mid Corridor subarea would have unmitigated traffic impacts at the following intersection and time periods:

- West 126<sup>th</sup> Street/Lenox Avenue (weekday AM, weekday PM, and Saturday midday peak hours)

Although these traffic impacts would be unmitigated, it is not expected to cause significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

No adverse impacts to pedestrian or transit conditions are expected in this subarea as a result of the proposed action. Higher density development in the form of residential and retail are expected to have an overall positive effect on conditions within the subarea, with no adverse impacts to socioeconomic conditions or traffic.

Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church, located in the Mid Corridor subarea, would receive incremental new shadows as a result of the proposed action that are considered to have a

significant adverse impact on the resource. As described above and in Chapter 3.5, “Shadows”, the Department of City Planning, in consultation with the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission concluded there are no feasible or practicable mitigation measures that would eliminate or reduce the impacts. Therefore, the significant adverse shadow impacts on this resource would remain unmitigated. However, the identified shadow impact would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### *Mixed Use Corridor*

In the future with the proposed action, the Mixed Use Corridor subarea is expected to see the development of ten parcels of land. Compared to the Future No Action conditions, the rezoning is anticipated to result in the construction of 1,214 dwelling units; 126,757 square feet of retail space; 419,320 square feet of office space; and 20,184 square feet of hotel space. A reduction of 75,717 square feet of parking/automobile uses is also expected under the Future Action scenario.

As a result of the new development, the built environment of the Mixed-Use Core subarea would undergo substantial change and improvement. The replacement of low-rise commercial buildings and open lots with commercial office and mixed-use buildings of higher density would compliment the two existing taller and bulkier commercial buildings that already exist in this corridor and would result in more consistent streetwalls, building bulks and lot coverages, and building forms. Building forms would establish a stronger central corridor along this portion of 125<sup>th</sup> street, for those lots that are through-lots to 124<sup>th</sup> and 126<sup>th</sup> Streets, the zoning would create street walls consistent or compatible with the 40 to 60 foot streetwalls which exist on these streets. The 60 foot minimum (85 foot maximum) streetwall along 125<sup>th</sup> Street in the new buildings would relate to the existing commercial buildings along 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Malcolm X Boulevard and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard. The uses and building types would be complementary and would relate to the commercial and residential buildings that exist north and south of the central 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.

The streetscape in this subarea is perhaps the best defined where paving patterns and pedestrian bulbouts have been introduced at the middle of the long midblock and the modern style traffic lights have been introduced. With the proposed action, the disparate retail building volumes and irregular appearance of street level activity will be afforded the opportunity to add active uses more related to the street. The “Core Subdistrict” which is coterminous with the Mixed-Use Core subarea would promulgate uses that are announced at the street level through their entrances and activities, and within this district, allowable signage for these uses would promote the visual activity and excitement that would solidify this area as the core of the corridor, building upon its historic cultural legacy.

Historic resources such as the Apollo Theater and the Theresa Hotel will be preserved and will remain central points of attraction within the subarea and the rezoning area in general. No significant adverse impacts to traffic or pedestrian mobility are expected as a result of the proposed action.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building Plaza, located in the Mixed Use Core subarea, would receive incremental new shadows as a result of the proposed action that are considered to have a significant adverse impact on the resource. As described above and in Chapter 3.5, “Shadows”, the Department of City Planning, in consultation with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) concluded there are no feasible or practicable mitigation measures that would eliminate or reduce the impacts. Therefore, the significant adverse shadow impacts on this resource would remain unmitigated. However, the identified shadow impact would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### *St. Nicholas Intersection*

In the future with the proposed action, the St. Nicholas Intersection subarea is expected to see the development of five parcels of land. Compared to the Future No Action conditions, the rezoning is anticipated to result in the construction of 228 dwelling units; 26,328 square feet of retail space; 49,984 square feet of office space; and a reduction of 4,000 square feet of parking/automobile space.

As a result of the new development, the built environment of the St. Nicholas Intersection subarea would undergo substantial change and improvement. The replacement of underutilized buildings and vacant lots with commercial office and mixed-use buildings would compliment the redevelopment activity that has already been undertaken through the Harlem USA and the Hotel Trades Association Building in this subarea. The proposed Special 125<sup>th</sup> Street District regulations would result in more consistent streetwalls, building bulks and lot coverages, and building forms. Street walls would be more appropriately related to those major buildings and existing residential buildings that would remain.

As noted in Chapter 3.15, “Traffic”, an intersection located in the St. Nicholas Intersection subarea would have an unmitigated traffic impacts at the following intersection and time period:

- West 125<sup>th</sup> Street/St. Nicholas Avenue (weekday PM peak hour)

Although this traffic impact would be unmitigated, it is not expected to cause significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

No adverse impacts to land use, pedestrian, or transit conditions are expected in this subarea as a result of the proposed action. It is expected that an increase in residential, retail, and office space will generate positive impacts within this subarea due to the resulting activity on the street.

### *West Side*

The West Side subarea would be the rezoned on the north side of 125<sup>th</sup> Street to an R7A zoning district with a C2-4 commercial overlay maintaining the existing allowed density and establishing contextual building form controls. On the south side of the street, the underlying R7-2 zoning would remain, and the C2-4 commercial overlay would be extended to include potential

development site 27. Within the R7A district, the special urban design controls would be the same as for the C4-4A district, including a required street wall, with a minimum of 40 feet and a maximum of 65 feet. A required 10-foot setback (wide streets) or 15 feet on narrow streets would be required. Building heights would be limited to 80 feet. The character of this subarea is expected to remain as in the existing and future No-Action conditions as the four to five-story residential buildings with ground floor retail along the north side of 125<sup>th</sup> Street would remain.

No projected development sites exist within this subarea, and therefore no adverse impacts are expected as a result of the proposed action.

Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family, located in the West Side subarea, would receive incremental new shadows as a result of the proposed action that are considered to have a significant adverse impact on the resource. As described above, the Department of City Planning, in consultation with the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission concluded there are no feasible or practicable mitigation measures that would eliminate or reduce the impacts. Therefore, the significant adverse shadow impacts on this resource would remain unmitigated. However, the identified shadow impact would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### **Secondary Study Area**

The mixed-use, residential, commercial and entertainment uses expected as a result of the proposed rezoning would be compatible with the residential and institutional uses found in most of the secondary study area. The new development along the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor would not cause significant changes in the character of the surrounding area. The proposed rezoning would strengthen the trend of reinvestment and housing rehabilitation that has been taking place in the secondary study area.

As noted in Chapter 3.15, “Traffic”, an intersection located in the Mixed Use subarea of the secondary study area would have unmitigated traffic impacts at the following intersection and time period:

- West 135<sup>th</sup> Street/Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard (weekday PM peak hour)

Although this traffic impact would be unmitigated, it is not expected to cause significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

The socioeconomic characteristics of the population living within the socioeconomic conditions study area was found to be changing and likely to continue to change as evidenced by continued growth in both the population and employment, as described in Chapter 3.2 – Socioeconomic Conditions. As such, while socioeconomic conditions would change as a result of the proposed action, it would be consistent with the current trend towards commercial and residential development within the secondary study area. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character are expected to result from the proposed action on the blocks

surrounding the proposed rezoning area.

## CONCLUSION

The proposed action would result in changes to the general neighborhood character of the rezoning area. The proposed action would result in an overall change in the character of the proposed rezoning area with respect to land use, socioeconomic conditions, historic resources, urban design and visual resources, traffic, shadows and street-level pedestrian activity. The neighborhood character of the area would not be impacted by noise increases resulting from the proposed action. In addition, the proposed action would not affect historic resources in ways that would affect neighborhood character.

Overall, the proposed action would help sustain the ongoing revitalization of the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. The proposed action would catalyze the creation of new mixed-use development that would help create the critical mass of commercial and residential uses necessary to help sustain a vibrant Street during the day and evening. In addition, the proposed action would help preserve portions of the corridor with a strong built character and existing residential uses, preserving the existing low-rise residential character of portions of 125<sup>th</sup>, 124<sup>th</sup> and 126<sup>th</sup> Streets.

The proposed action would support the creation of arts and entertainment uses that would complement existing cultural institutions within the corridor sustaining and enhancing the corridor's character and identity as an arts and culture destination.

As a result of the proposed action, the retail and commercial character of the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor is expected to be improved. The use regulations included in the proposed special district would ensure that new development would locate active uses at the ground floor level coupled with transparency requirements. The active use and transparency requirements associated with new development under the proposed action would further contribute towards creating a vibrant pedestrian environment and would improve the streetscape of the corridor.

While additional traffic generation and unmitigated impacts to several intersections is are expected as a result of the proposed action, fluctuations in traffic patterns are not likely to have a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character. In addition to the impact areas discussed above, as discussed further in chapter 3.15, "Shadows," the proposed action would result in significant adverse shadow impacts on four sunlight-sensitive resources. The Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family, the Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church, Dream Street Park, and the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building Plaza would receive incremental new shadows as a result of the proposed action that are considered to have a significant adverse impact on these resources. However, these identified shadow impacts would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

The proposed action is anticipated to result in changes to the neighborhood character of the 125<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. These changes are considered to be beneficial to the overall character of the corridor and would not constitute significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.