

A. INTRODUCTION





The FGEIS analysis concluded that the sale and redevelopment of the First Avenue parcels would not result in significant adverse impacts to the urban design and visual resources of an area within a half mile of the four development parcels. This chapter assesses whether changes in background conditions since the FGEIS, design and programmatic differences between the proposed development program and the three Rezoning Scenario programs analyzed in the FGEIS, or new proposed zoning actions would alter the FGEIS findings with respect to impacts on urban design and visual resources.

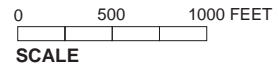
This analysis assesses the potential for impacts within the same ½-mile study area analyzed in the FGEIS (see Figure 8-1). Since views to the four development parcels are primarily limited to the immediately surrounding area, the following analysis, like the FGEIS analysis, focuses in more detail on the area within 400 feet of them, an area roughly bounded by East 34th and 42nd Streets, Second Avenue, and the East River (see Figure 8-2). From beyond 400 feet, the large United Nations Headquarters complex to the north and other tall buildings to the west and south typically form barriers to views of the development parcels. Within the larger ½-mile study area, visibility of the development parcels is more limited but impacts may still occur, and the larger study area accounts for views from the opposite Queens shoreline and from river traffic on the East River.

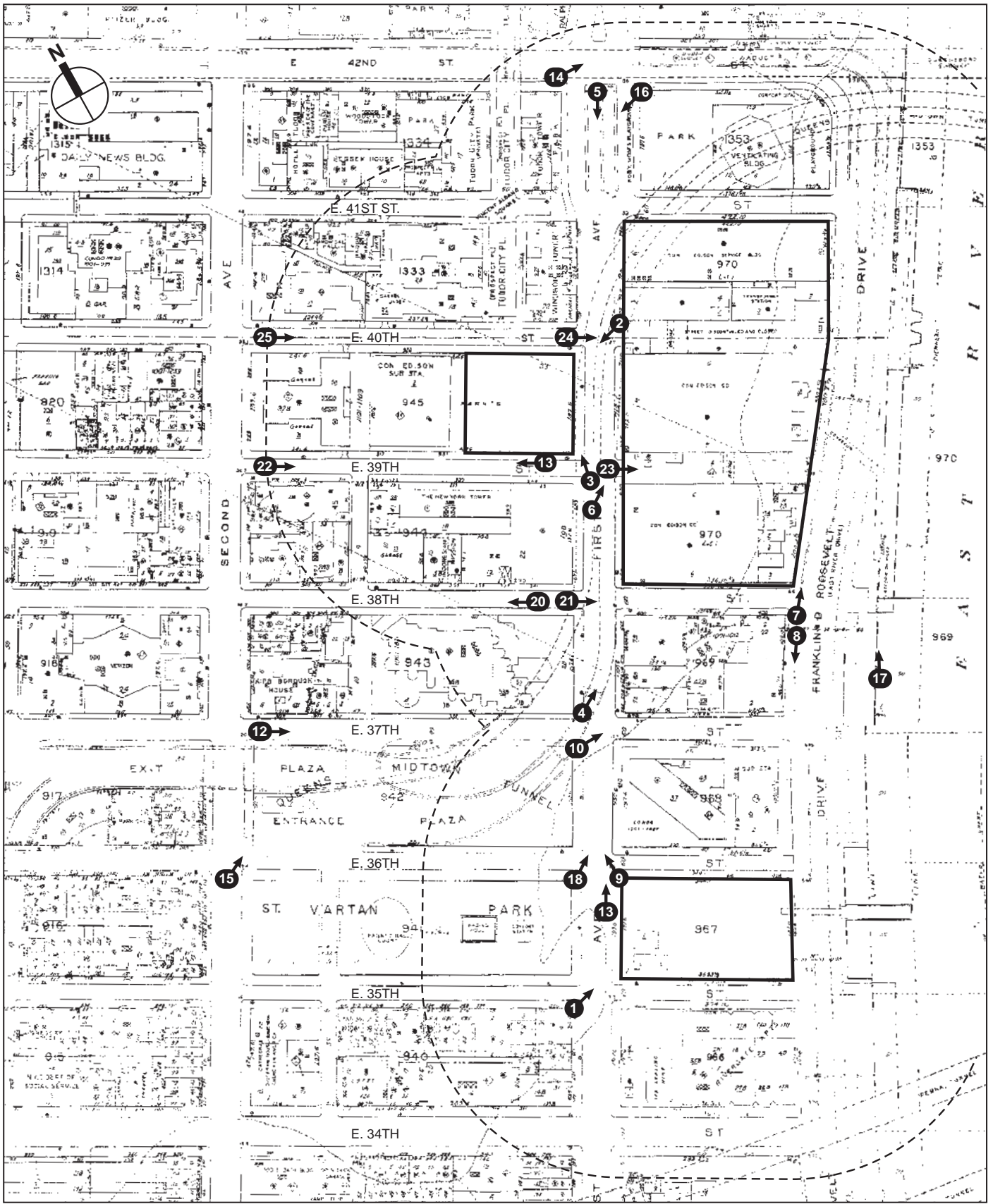
As defined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, urban design components and visual resources determine the “look” of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the size and shape of buildings, their arrangement on blocks, the street pattern, and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis addresses each of these characteristics for existing conditions, the future without the Proposed Actions, and the probable impacts of the Proposed Actions for a 2014 build year when the development is expected to be completed.

As described more fully below, it is not expected that the Proposed Actions would have significant adverse impacts on the urban design and visual resources of the study area. The proposed development program would have beneficial effects on the study area by redeveloping vacant parcels and providing new publicly accessible open spaces. The proposed development program would not affect the street pattern and hierarchy, block forms, or building arrangements. Proposed streetscape elements would be compatible with the study area and new ground-floor retail uses and open space would enliven the area’s streetscape and provide pedestrian amenities. While the tallest of the proposed buildings would be taller than most buildings in the immediately surrounding area, they would be similar in bulk, massing, and height to some tall buildings along First and Second Avenues within 400 feet and to numerous tall buildings in the ½-mile study area. In addition, the slender tower forms of the proposed buildings would be compatible with the urban design of the study area as they would be similar in form to many of the surrounding tall buildings that are massed as towers. This building form, because of its relatively small footprint, allows the creation of large open space areas. The proposed residential, commercial, community facility, and retail



-  *Development Parcels*
-  *Study Area Boundary (400-Foot Perimeter)*
-  *Study Area Boundary (1/2-Mile Perimeter)*
-  *Photograph View Direction and Reference Number*





Development Parcels
 - - - Study Area Boundary
 (400-Foot Perimeter)

1 Photograph View Direction
 and Reference Number

0 200 400 FEET
 SCALE

Urban Design and Visual Resources
 Study Area
 Figure 8-2

uses would be in keeping with the study area's mix of uses. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts related to building use, bulk, height, setbacks, and density. Further, the proposed development would create new and enhanced views toward the East River waterfront through the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels and new views from the proposed open spaces, and it would not block significant views of any visual resources or obstruct significant views and view corridors.

B. SUMMARY OF FGEIS FINDINGS

The FGEIS concluded that the three illustrative development programs under the Rezoning Scenario would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design and visual resources of the study area. However, it also concluded that should future urban design characteristics of a specific project plan differ from the illustrative scenarios and conflict or be inconsistent with the urban design of the study areas, then significant adverse urban design and visual resource impacts could occur. While impacts from the three illustrative development programs would differ slightly due to variations in building heights, uses, placement and footprints, and the location of open spaces, impacts would be similar, and are summarized generally below.

The FGEIS assumed that development under the Rezoning Scenario would result in the construction of a number of tall, freestanding buildings and public open spaces on the development parcels. Construction of the new buildings would alter the existing built form of the study area, but the proposed residential, office, community facility, and ground-floor retail uses would be consistent with the mix of uses in the study area. The anticipated building arrangements of towers set in plazas would be similar to nearby developments, especially along First and Second Avenues. The proposed bulk and height of the buildings would be compatible with those urban design features of the study area. While the FGEIS expected that development under the Rezoning Scenario would result in prominent new buildings in the study area, the analysis concluded that any buildings would be of a comparable height, massing and arrangement, and contemporary design to other recently built residential and office towers in the area. The new open spaces and ground-floor retail uses were concluded to benefit the urban design of the study area and enliven the streetscape. Therefore, the FGEIS concluded that the Rezoning Scenario would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design of the study area.

The FGEIS concluded that the three Rezoning Scenario development programs would not block significant views of visual resources or obstruct significant view corridors. Some limited views on First Avenue of the United Nations Secretariat building and Windsor Tower within Tudor City were expected to be obstructed; however, better views of those resources from other locations would remain unchanged. As seen from Gantry Plaza State Park in Queens, the new buildings were expected to add to the Manhattan skyline, without blocking significant views of visual resources within that skyline, such as the United Nations Secretariat or the Empire State Building.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

DEVELOPMENT PARCELS

URBAN DESIGN

The four development parcels are located along First Avenue between East 35th and 41st Streets. The 616 First Avenue parcel fills an entire block, the 685 First Avenue parcel occupies the eastern end of block that contains an existing Con Ed Sub substation, and the 700 and 708

First Avenue parcels occupy a superblock. Each of the parcels is vacant and surrounded by fencing. The parcels are described in more detail below.

616 First Avenue

Since completion of the FGEIS, the 616 First Avenue parcel has been cleared of a paved parking surface and a two-story metal structural frame. Bordered by First Avenue, the FDR Drive, and East 35th and 36th Streets, the parcel is currently vacant, and the ground surface of the site is located below street level and covered with gravel (see view 1 of Figure 8-3). A chain-link fence surrounds the parcel.

685 First Avenue

The 685 First Avenue parcel consists of a large, approximately 250- by 200-foot paved parking lot fronting on First Avenue between East 39th and 40th Streets that is part of a larger full-block zoning lot. A metal fence with stone columns borders the parcel's northeast corner and East 40th Street frontage (see view 2 of Figure 8-3). A chain link fence borders the rest of the perimeter (see view 3 of Figure 8-4). The parcel was previously used for parking and vehicle storage related to the Waterside Generating Station and is currently used for temporary storage and parking for trailers and vehicles associated with the ongoing demolition of the Waterside buildings. To the west of the 685 First Avenue parcel is a narrow, two-story modern Con Edison substation that spans the width of the block. It is clad in large stone blocks and is without windows. The middle part of the structure has an arched roof and is fully covered in horizontal metal louvers.

700 First Avenue (Waterside) and 708 First Avenue

Bounded by First Avenue, the FDR Drive, and East 38th and 41st Streets, the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels consist of three former city blocks and two demapped streets occupied by vacant land and an active demolition site (see view 4 of Figure 8-4 and Figure 8-5). The parcels formerly contained a collection of brick industrial buildings that composed the Con Edison Waterside power generating plant, which was described in the FGEIS. Demolition started on the Waterside Station upon its decommissioning in May 2005 and is nearing completion. Tall wood construction fencing surrounds both parcels.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The four development parcels do not contain any visual resources, as the 616, 700, and 708 First Avenue development parcels are vacant and the 685 First Avenue development parcel contains a paved parking lot. From the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the four development parcels, there are some views east to the East River and the Queens waterfront that are obstructed by the elevated 42nd Street exit ramp of the FDR Drive. On the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the 685 First Avenue parcel, there are views over the site of the façades of the brick Tudor City buildings on East 40th Street; however, these views do not constitute significant visual resources, as they are of the buildings' side and rear façades. There are also northeast views of the United Nations Headquarters from the sidewalks adjacent to the 685 First Avenue parcel. From the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels, there are some views north on First Avenue of Tudor City, views east to the East River and Queens waterfront, and views northeast on First Avenue of the United Nations Secretariat building. Demolition of structures on the Waterside development parcel has



616 First Avenue development parcel. View northeast from First Avenue at East 35th Street 1



685 First Avenue development parcel. View southwest from First Avenue at East 40th Street 2

Urban Design and Visual Resources Development Parcels



685 First Avenue development parcel. View northwest from East 39th Street at First Avenue **3**



Waterside development parcel. View north on First Avenue from East 37th Street **4**

Urban Design and Visual Resources Development Parcels



Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels. View south on First Avenue from East 42nd Street **5**



Waterside development parcels. View north on First Avenue from East 39th Street **6**

Urban Design and Visual Resources Development Parcels

created some new views of the Secretariat building from First Avenue and East 39th Street that were not obtainable when the FGEIS was prepared (see view 6 of Figure 8-5).

STUDY AREA

The ½-mile study area extends north to East 51st Street and south to East 25th Street (see Figure 8-1). The western boundary is Madison Avenue, while the eastern boundary includes the Queens side of the East River. Since the density of surrounding development largely limits views of the four development parcels to the immediately surrounding streets, the discussion below focuses in more detail on the area within 400 feet, an area bounded by East 34th and 42nd Streets, Second Avenue, and the East River (see Figure 8-2). The FGEIS urban design and visual resources analysis also focused on the same 400-foot area. The following discussion updates the FGEIS descriptions of the study area's urban design characteristics and visual resources to account for changes to existing conditions since completion of the FGEIS.

The study area is a fully developed urban environment that slopes downward from the west to the East River, with the notable exception of East 41st Street that rises sharply upward from Second Avenue through the elevated Tudor City complex. The 400-foot portion of the study area is primarily defined by mid- to high-rise modern residential towers, the easterly section of Tudor City, and the southern edge of the United Nations Headquarters complex (see Figures 8-6 and 8-7). Most of the United Nations complex is located within the ½-mile study area as is a section of Midtown that includes Grand Central Terminal and the Chrysler Building. The discussions below focus first on the areas' urban design—their basic layout and structures—and next on their visual resources.

URBAN DESIGN (400-FOOT STUDY AREA)

Block Form and Street Pattern, and Street Hierarchy

The study area is laid out in the typical Manhattan street grid with wide avenues running north-south and narrow cross streets running east-west, but the presence of some superblocks, including the Waterside and 708 First Avenue superblock, interrupts the street grid. First Avenue has four lanes of northbound traffic and two parking lanes. Between East 41st and 48th Streets, a vehicular tunnel on First Avenue carries four traffic lanes past the United Nations complex. Between First and Third Avenues, the grid network of local streets and avenues is interspersed with the Queens-Midtown Tunnel ramp network. The entrance to the tunnel is in a cut on the block bounded by First and Second Avenues and East 36th and 37th Streets. Streets in the study area carry one-way traffic with the exception of the FDR Drive and East 42nd and 34th Streets. The FDR Drive, a major north-south highway that extends along the east side of Manhattan, is six lanes wide and is bordered by narrow concrete medians that separate the northbound and southbound traffic. In the vicinity of the development parcels, the FDR Drive is elevated (see Figure 8-8). At East 37th Street, it is partially supported by an arched stone structure through which pedestrians pass to access the East River Esplanade. The at-grade entrance and exit ramps to and from the FDR Drive form streets on either side of the structure and have pedestrian crosswalks. Steel trusses support the elevated roadbed of the FDR Drive south of East 37th Street. Steel trusses also support an exit ramp that extends above the FDR Drive and curves onto East 42nd Street.

Within 400 feet of the four development parcels, city blocks west of First Avenue are typically rectangular, with a few blocks between First and Second Avenues bisected north-south by the Queens-Midtown Tunnel approach, which creates smaller blocks. Just west of First Avenue, a



Urban Design and Visual Resources
Development Parcels and Study Area View West
Figure 8-6



Urban Design and Visual Resources
Development Parcels and Study Area View Southwest

Figure 8-7



View north on FDR Drive service road from East 38th Street 7



View south on FDR Drive service road from East 38th Street 8

Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area

Figure 8-8

bridge that is part of the Tudor City complex spans East 42nd Street and allows traffic to pass under the complex. East of First Avenue, the blocks are shorter and irregular in shape, varying in size and configuration depending on the curve of the FDR Drive. The 400-foot study area is dominated by the Waterside and 708 First Avenue superblock that extends for three blocks north of East 38th Street. At the northern and southern edges of the study area are two more superblocks on the east side of First Avenue—those of the United Nations Headquarters complex, which is located between East 42nd and 48th Streets, and the NYU Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital complexes located between East 34th and 25th Streets.

Building Arrangements

Within 400 feet of the development parcels, building arrangements vary from attached low-rise row houses and tenements on small lots to tall, freestanding residential and commercial buildings that occupy partial or full blocks, such as the Corinthian, a mixed-use residential and office building at 333 East 37th Street (between First and Second Avenues), and Manhattan Place Condominiums at 630 First Avenue (on the east side of First Avenue between East 36th and 37th Streets). Building footprints also vary in size and shape; for example, the Corinthian has an irregular, curving footprint and Manhattan Place Condominiums has a canted side facing the intersection of First Avenue and East 36th Street. Most of the new residential and office buildings are set back from the street, while the older buildings tend to be built to the street line. Two large developments in the study area—Tudor City and the United Nations complex—present contrasting examples of historical forms of site planning. Tudor City has an inward orientation away from the surrounding neighborhoods and East River, and a dense, urban arrangement of mostly attached buildings, which have regular and modestly sized footprints and are oriented to the street and small, interspersed open spaces. The United Nations complex presents a modernist arrangement of four large-footprint buildings pulled away from the street and set within a large site that also contains a park and paved courtyards.

Building Use, Bulk, Height, Setbacks, and Density

The 400-foot study area contains a mix of residential, office, and some industrial uses such as the approximately 100-foot-tall, brick and windowless Queens-Midtown Tunnel ventilating structure on the block north of the 708 First Avenue parcel, the Con Edison substation on the FDR Drive between East 36th and 37th Streets, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection Water Maintenance facility between East 37th and 38th Streets east of First Avenue. First Avenue is primarily characterized by recently constructed 35- to 53-story residential buildings, though the older brick buildings of the Tudor City complex occupy several blockfronts north of East 40th Street. The two 22- to 23-story Tudor City buildings on First Avenue between East 40th and 42nd Streets fill the width of the blockfronts and are rectangular, about 200 feet long (the width of the blocks on which they are built), with one approximately 60 feet wide and the other 100 feet wide. Tudor Tower, the building between East 41st and 42nd Streets, is set back approximately 20 feet from First Avenue behind a small park, and it contains an estimated 250,000 gross square feet (gsf). Windsor Tower, located between East 40th and 41st Streets, is built to the property line with a ground-floor arcade, and it contains an estimated 418,000 gsf. Designed with English Gothic-style motifs, these two buildings and the smaller Tudor City buildings on the cross streets are clad in brick and have stone ornament, such as window enframements and spires on the roofs. Windsor Tower and Tudor Tower have exterior light courts, with setbacks limited to the upper stories. The façades facing First Avenue are less ornamented than the interior, west-facing façades and have fewer windows. Two office buildings adjacent to the development parcels include the seven-story, brick former brewery on

the east side of First Avenue between East 37th and 38th Streets and the ten-story, L-shaped brick building that fills the blockfront on the west side of First Avenue between East 38th and 39th Streets.

Tall and bulky, modern residential towers fully or partially occupy five blocks south of the Waterside complex east and west of First Avenue. Six of these are over 30 stories tall. They are freestanding structures (except the Horizon at 410 East 38th Street) typically clad in stone and brick, set back from the street, massed with few or no setbacks except at the upper stories, and designed with façades that lack ornament and are dominated by rows of residential apartment windows. Many of the more recent residential buildings along First Avenue have balconies. The 53-story (512-foot-tall) Corinthian at 333 East 37th Street fills most of the block west of First Avenue between East 37th and 38th Streets. Set back 120 feet from the avenue behind a landscaped plaza, the Corinthian is an asymmetrically massed building with protruding rounded corners, bay windows, and balconies, with small setbacks at the third, fourth, and 50th floors (see view 9 of Figure 8-9). It contains an estimated 880,300 gsf and is approximately 200 feet wide and 300 feet long. Directly south of the Waterside development parcel, the 42-story (378-foot-tall) residential Horizon building at 410 East 38th Street is located midblock east of First Avenue between East 37th and 38th Streets, with a small footprint and an asymmetrical, L-shaped massing (see view 10 of Figure 8-9). The base of this building is adjacent to the seven-story brick office building (the former brewery) with copper corner domes on its west side and the two-story garage on its east. The 37-story (317-foot-tall) Manhattan Place Condominiums building and its plaza at 630 First Avenue occupy most of the full block east of First Avenue between East 36th and 37th Streets, directly north of the 616 First Avenue development parcel. Sited diagonally across the block, Manhattan Place Condominiums is a relatively narrow, diamond-shaped building with setbacks only for mechanical floors (see Figure 8-10). It is set behind a triangular, corner plaza that fronts on First Avenue, and the building is approximately 60 feet wide and 180 feet long. The Rivergate, located directly south of the 616 First Avenue development parcel at 606 First Avenue, is a 35-story (358-foot-tall) residential building clad in brick and glass that is set back behind a plaza on the full block between First Avenue, the FDR Drive, and East 35th and 34th Streets. This approximately 835,200-gsf building has a large footprint, with the upper stories of the building forming an eastward-facing U-shape around a one- to four-story court (see view 12 of Figure 8-10). The Rivergate is set back approximately 120 feet from First Avenue behind a public plaza, and it is approximately 200 feet wide (the width of the block) and 250 feet long. South of the 685 First Avenue development parcel is the 38-story New York Tower at 330 East 39th Street. It is a bulky brick, residential building massed without setbacks and characterized by a proliferation of balconies (see view 2 of Figure 8-3). Set back slightly from East 39th Street by approximately ten feet, the New York Tower is approximately 50 feet wide and 200 feet long.

Additional tall and bulky, modern brick residential towers are located within 400 feet of the development parcels. Located at 728-746 Second Avenue adjacent to the west of the Con Ed substation on the 685 First Avenue development parcel block, the Churchill Apartments is a 32-story (305-foot-tall), T-shaped building. It is set back from Second Avenue behind a landscaped plaza, and like many of the surrounding residential towers it is massed without setbacks and covered by balconies (see view 2 of Figure 8-3 and view 13 of Figure 8-11). The Churchill Apartments is approximately 60 feet wide and 180 feet long. To the south of the Churchill Apartments at 302-306 East 39th Street is the 25-story Sonoma residential building. It is massed as a tower with curved brick and glass facades set back above a six-story base (see view 2 of Figure 8-3). A shorter 10-story, L-shaped office building fills the west blockfront on First Avenue between East 38th and 39th Streets, across from the Waterside parcel. This building is 200 feet



View northwest on First Avenue from East 36th Street **9**



View northeast on First Avenue at East 37th Street **10**



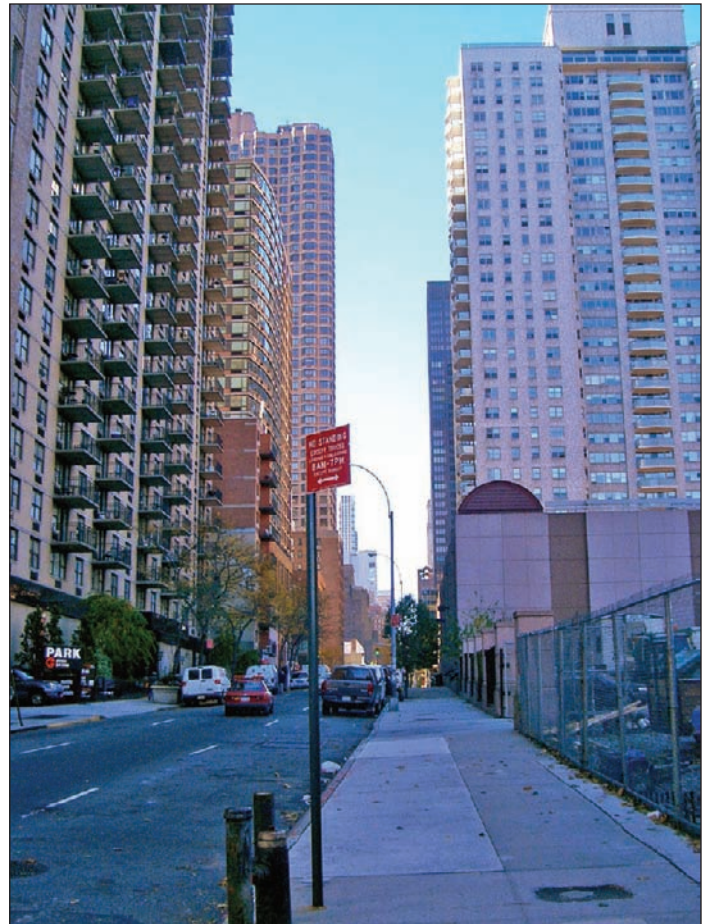
View north on First Avenue from East 32nd Street 11



View southeast on East 37th Street from Second Avenue 12

Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area

Figure 8-10



View west on East 39th Street from First Avenue 13



View northeast on First Avenue at East 42nd Street 14

Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area

Figure 8-11

wide (the width of the block) and is 125 feet long on East 39th Street and 225 feet long on East 38th Street. A bulky, 16-story brick residential building (331 East 34th Street) is located on the north side of East 34th Street west of First Avenue, with an adjacent 14-story brick building at the corner. These buildings are rectangular, built to the sidewalk, and massed with small setbacks at the upper stories. South of East 35th Street, a few blocks contain a small number of four- to seven-story, attached brick tenements, apartment houses, and commercial buildings that have ground floor shops.

The United Nations Headquarters complex stretches from East 42nd Street to East 48th Street between First Avenue and the FDR Drive. It consists of four buildings set within a campus-like setting with paved and green open spaces. The entire superblock complex is sited on a podium so that the elevated east frontage of the campus is at a similar elevation to the elevated FDR Drive, while the west frontage is at a similar grade to First Avenue. The four International Style United Nations buildings are grouped around a central pool and are joined to one another by short building wings. These four buildings contain approximately 1,269,000 gsf. On the southernmost portion of the campus, there is a three-story, stone and glass curtain wall building—the library—that faces south on East 42nd Street (see view 14 of Figure 8-11). The library is built to the lot lines on First Avenue and East 42nd Street, and is approximately 50 feet wide and 220 feet long. It is located on a podium so that it is at grade on First Avenue and elevated above the FDR Drive, and there are loading docks on the south façade. The remainder of the buildings are located in the center of the site and along the FDR Drive. The Conference Building is a bulky, six-story building that extends along the FDR Drive for approximately 380 feet and is approximately 160 feet wide. It is linked to the library and the Secretariat by a plain, flat-roofed building that extends eastward and over the FDR Drive. The 41-story Secretariat building, a modernist slab with glass and metal curtain wall facades that face east and west, is the focal point of the campus (see view 6 of Figure 8-5). It straddles the East 43rd Street view corridor. The approximately 861,000-gsf Secretariat has a narrow, rectangular footprint measuring approximately 60 feet wide and 280 feet long, with a floorplate of approximately 21,000 square feet. It has no setbacks and is approximately 503 feet tall. North of the Secretariat, the General Assembly Building is a long, domed rectangular building oriented north-south. It has a floorplate of approximately 60,800 square feet.

On the cross streets west of First Avenue, the buildings are of somewhat smaller bulk and height than those found along First Avenue. North of East 40th Street, the cross streets are lined with 10- to 14-story Tudor City residential buildings, which are attached and uniform in appearance. They are characterized by brick cladding and ornate stone entrances and English Gothic-style ornament. The Tudor City buildings are typically 100 feet deep (approximately half the width of the blocks on which they are built), and they range in width from 60 to over 100 feet wide. There are also a few small, two- and four-story structures on the block east of the Queens-Midtown Tunnel approach between East 38th and 39th Streets. On Second Avenue, the heights, shapes, and bulk of the buildings vary. There are small four- and five-story tenements with ground floor stores that are built to the lot lines, and taller, bulkier buildings that are either built to the lot lines or set behind plazas (see view 15 of Figure 8-12). The taller buildings include a 21-story rectangular building at the northeast corner of Second Avenue and East 40th Street that is approximately 80 feet wide and 140 feet long and built to the lot lines (305 East 40th Street), and the Churchill Apartments and the Sonoma building described above.

Immediately outside the 400-foot study area, there are four tall modern residential buildings and one office building on the west side of Second Avenue. The Paramount Tower apartment building at 240 East 39th Street is a 52-story (600-foot-tall), through-block structure. It is



View northeast on Second Avenue from East 36th Street **15**



View southwest from First Avenue and East 42nd Street **16**

Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area

Figure 8-12

located mid-block and set back from East 39th Street behind a port-cochere, landscaped area, and fence. A one-story base fronts on East 38th Street. Clad in brick with strips of windows, the tower portion of the building is massed with a series of vertical projections and setbacks. Located at 250 East 40th Street, at the southwest corner of Second Avenue, the Highpoint Condominiums is a 48-story (452-foot-tall) building clad in brick and stone and massed as a thin tower with balconies and a recessed corner. It is set back behind a shallow plaza at the corner. The south façade of the building is a mostly blank masonry wall. The Marlborough House at 245 East 40th Street is a 35-story, rectangular brick residential building with balconies. Located mid-block at 240 East 41st Street, the Vanderbilt Condominiums is a 41-story (343-foot-tall), through-block brick residential building. It is massed as a 41-story tower set above an eight-story base that contains a garage. The tower facades include strip windows, vertical recesses, and balconies. Across East 38th Street from the Paramount Tower is a telecommunications and office building. This 390-foot-tall structure fills the middle of the block bounded by Second and Third Avenues and East 38th and 37th Streets. The bulk of the structure is set back from the streets and raised above elevated plazas. The east and west facades are windowless and clad in light-colored masonry, while the north and south facades are angled and clad in dark-colored masonry and opaque glass.

Streetscape

The streetscape of the 400-foot study area is urban in character, with streets bordered by paved sidewalks. The avenues have numerous ground-floor shops and greater pedestrian activity than the quieter residential cross streets south of East 40th Street. Street walls in the study area are inconsistent. Adjacent to the development parcels, the street wall on First Avenue is broken due to the presence of St. Vartan Park, Robert Moses Playground, and modern apartment buildings that are set back and canted from the street grid with plazas in front. Both the Corinthian, located on the west side of the avenue between East 37th and 38th Streets, and the Manhattan Place Condominiums, located on the east side of the avenue between East 36th and 37th Streets, are set back behind residential plazas, while the former brewery to the south of the Waterside parcel is built to the property line on First Avenue. The base of Tudor City along First Avenue consists of an arcade with ground-floor retail spaces between East 40th and 41st Streets and a blank masonry wall between East 41st and 42nd Streets (see view 16 of Figure 8-12). In front of the blank Tudor City base is a small plaza with some trees and benches. On the cross streets, the street wall is typically more uniform since those streets are often lined with row houses and some tenements, mostly east of Second Avenue and south of East 40th Street. The older row houses and tenements, as well as the Tudor City Apartments, typically present uniform street walls. Curbcuts for loading docks and entrances to below-grade garages are found on the cross streets rather than on the avenues.

Typical street furniture in the area is confined to standard light poles, traffic lights, and bus stops. In the 400-foot study area, there are few street trees on First and Second Avenues and none along the FDR Drive, although there are a fair number on the side streets. St. Vartan Park, which is located west of First Avenue between East 35th and 36th Streets across from the 616 First Avenue development parcel, contains trees and landscaped areas. The blockfront to the north between East 36th and 37th Streets contains a landscaped area with grass, trees, and low, curving stone walls. It is surrounded by a tall metal mesh fence that prohibits public access, and behind the landscaped area is the below-grade cut of the Queens-Midtown Tunnel entrance and exit. Benches and seating areas are located in the parks and plazas along First Avenue, and there are outdoor tables and chairs in front of the ground-floor shops at the Manhattan Place Condominiums building, just north of the 616 First Avenue development parcel. The residential

plazas on First Avenue vary in appearance, but most have low seating walls, benches, and shrubs. The large plaza in front of the Corinthian at 330 East 38th Street has a large number of trees, shrubs, and decorative paving elements. The Rivergate plaza at 606 First Avenue, on the east side of First Avenue between 34th and 35th Streets, contains metal pergolas and a paved recreation area with playground equipment and a basketball court. The plaza at Manhattan Place Condominiums (630 First Avenue) contains a large circular fountain. The plaza in front of the United Nations Secretariat building contains a circular pool with a modern metal sculpture, and it is blocked to public access by a gate and security booth. The Robert Moses Playground, a paved playground located adjacent to the Queens-Midtown Tunnel ventilating structure on the block directly north of the 708 First Avenue development parcel, has street hockey field and some trees, benches, and basketball hoops along the eastern portion of the park facing the FDR Drive.

The East River Esplanade, located east of the FDR Drive and south of East 38th Street, is a paved passive and active recreation area along the East River. In the vicinity of the development parcels, it contains trees, benches, and decorative lampposts. North of East 38th Street, the public esplanade ends and a paved parking area used by Con Edison begins—that parking area is separated from the esplanade area by a tall metal fence.

VISUAL RESOURCES (400-FOOT STUDY AREA)

St. Vartan Park, the East River and East River waterfront, and views of some notable buildings (the Empire State Building, Chrysler Building, and United Nations Secretariat) are the area's important visual resources. St. Vartan Park is a visual resource that contributes sloping landscaped lawns, large mature trees, and a small brick comfort house to the area's visual character. South of East 38th Street, the East River Esplanade, which includes Glick Park between East 38th and East 36th Streets, represents a prominent visual resource in the area. The esplanade consists of a wide paved walkway on the river, with trees, shrubbery, and benches located along it. A low metal fence borders the walkway along the East River, a scenic body of water with intermittent river traffic of large barges, tugboats, sightseeing boats, and small personal craft. The esplanade provides unencumbered views of the river and of the opposite Queens shoreline. Northerly views take in the United Nations Secretariat building and the metal trusses of the Queensboro Bridge (see view 17 of Figure 8-13). The elevated FDR Drive obscures views of the development parcels from the esplanade. Southerly views from the esplanade take in an old wooden pier, the tall brick towers of the Waterside apartment complex, the bulky eight-story Con Edison East River Power Plant at 14th Street, and the Williamsburg Bridge, visible within the view corridor formed by the curve of the Manhattan shoreline. Easterly views take in industrial and warehousing uses on the Queens shoreline, a large, prominently visible Pepsi Cola sign, taller round cement plant structures, a large brick power plant, and the three tall Queens West Development buildings. Also present in this view are Gantry Plaza State Park and the 50-story green-glass-faced Citibank Tower that is located further inland.

Northerly views along First Avenue are typically long, since First Avenue is a wide street and has a gradual slope. Views north and south take in the variety of tall buildings that contribute to the general urban design of this part of Manhattan. These views include the decorative stone ornament on the top of the Tudor City towers and the upper portion of the Trump World Tower (see view 18 of Figure 8-13 and view 19 of Figure 8-14), as well as the more modern buildings of the United Nations Headquarters, most specifically the Secretariat and the library. The Secretariat is an important visual resource, but it and the adjacent library are best seen from



View north on East River Esplanade from around East 37th Street 17

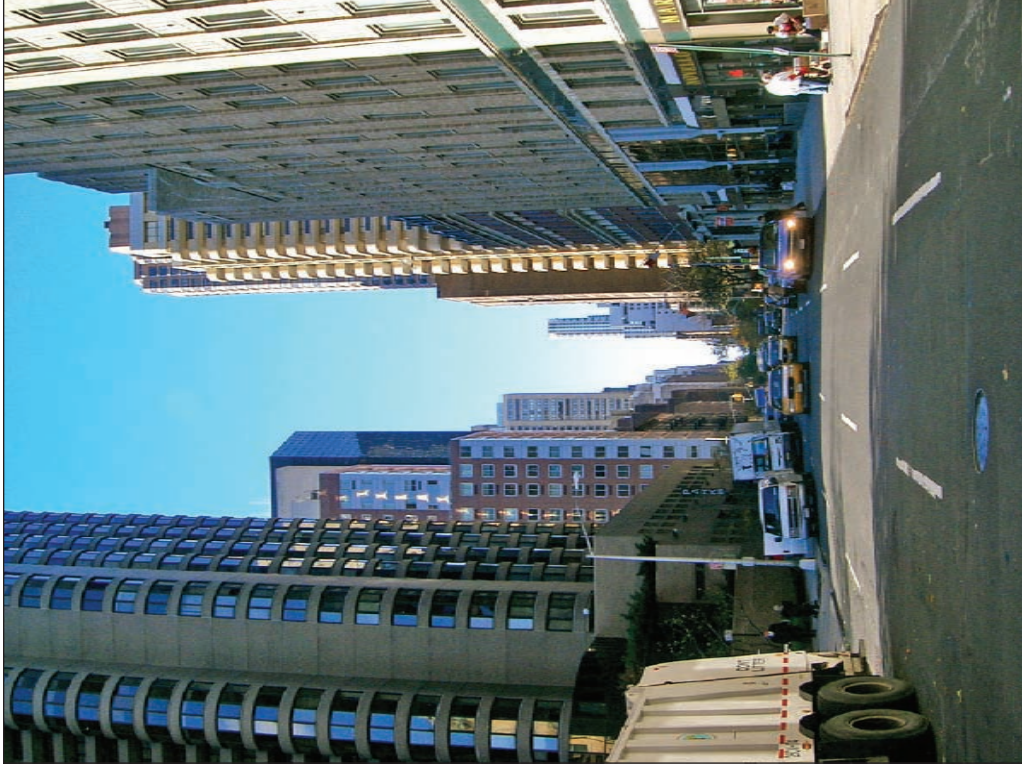


View northeast on First Avenue from East 36th Street 18

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Study Area
Figure 8-13



View northwest on First Avenue from East 36th Street 19



View west on East 38th Street from First Avenue 20

north of East 40th Street, as intervening buildings block northerly views on First Avenue from south of East 38th Street. East 43rd and 44th Streets provide the area's most significant views of the United Nations Secretariat, as they terminate in front of the building.

Westerly views on the cross streets are framed by a mix of building types, heights, and bulk, and are typically shorter, since the streets are narrow with upward slopes that truncate the views (see view 13 of Figure 8-11 and view 20 of Figure 8-14). On East 35th Street, there is a largely unobstructed significant view of the upper stories of the Empire State Building, the most prominent structure on the skyline. From other locations within the 400-foot study area, views of the Empire State Building are less prominent due to intervening buildings. There are important views west on East 42nd Street of the Chrysler Building. On the cross streets, easterly views to the East River and the Queens shoreline are somewhat obstructed due to the presence of the elevated FDR Drive and its exit ramp and views diminish from farther west (see Figure 8-15). On East 39th and 40th Streets, the construction fencing around the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels obscures views toward the river (see view 6 of Figure 8-5). From First Avenue, there are some views through the fencing surrounding the sites, but these views at East 39th and 40th Streets are over an active construction site, and the FDR Drive 42nd Street off-ramp is a prominent feature in the foreground of the river (see Figure 8-16). From farther west, views of the development parcels in the East 39th and 40th Street view corridors become less distinct due to distance and intervening buildings (see Figures 8-17 and 8-18).

URBAN DESIGN (½-MILE STUDY AREA)

Block Form and Street Pattern, and Street Hierarchy

The ½-mile study area is laid out in the typical Manhattan street grid with wide avenues running north-south and narrow cross streets running east-west. This grid creates typical, large rectangular blocks. However, there are also a large number of superblocks that interrupt the street grid and are characteristic of this area. They include the United Nations complex along First Avenue to the north of 42nd Street; the NYU Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital complexes along First Avenue south of East 34th Street; the Kips Bay Plaza residential development between First and Second Avenues and East 33rd and 30th Streets; the Henry Phipps Plaza residential complex on Second Avenue between East 29th and 26th Streets; and the superblock created by Grand Central Terminal and its surrounding satellite hotels and office buildings. The United Nations, NYU Medical Center, and Bellevue Hospital superblocks are all located along the East River. Another variation to the street grid is Beekman Place, a short north-south two-block street that bisects the blocks between the FDR Drive, First Avenue, and East 49th and 51st Streets, creating smaller blocks. Streets in the study area carry one-way traffic with the exception of the FDR Drive, Park Avenue, and East 42nd and 34th Streets.

Building Arrangements

Within the ½-mile study area, building arrangements vary as they do in the 400-foot study area. There is a mix of attached and freestanding buildings, and there is wide variation in the size and configuration of building footprints. Examples of large building complexes on superblocks in the study area include the United Nations Headquarters, the Bellevue Hospital NYU Medical Center complex, and Kips Bay Plaza. These three complexes each consist of multiple and often connected buildings with varied building arrangements interspersed with open areas.



View east on East 38th Street from First Avenue 21



View east on East 39th Street from Second Avenue 22

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Study Area

Figure 8-15



View east on East 39th Street from First Avenue **23**



View east on East 40th Street from First Avenue **24**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Study Area

Figure 8-16



View east on East 40th Street from Second Avenue **25**



View east on East 39th Street from Third Avenue **26**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Study Area



View east on East 40th Street from Third Avenue **27**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Study Area

Figure 8-18

Building Use, Bulk, Height, Setbacks, and Density

The ½-mile study area contains a mix of office, residential, institutional uses, and Grand Central Terminal, a prominent structure in the area. The Grand Central Terminal building, along with the Metropolitan Life Building, a bulky, trapezoidal, 58-story concrete office building that rises directly to the north of the Terminal, and the Helmsley Building, a 35-story Classically designed brick building at East 45th Street, form a superblock development with the Grand Hyatt Hotel (a 26-story, H-shaped glass-clad building located at East 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue), the 30-story modified Y-shaped brick Graybar Building at former East 43rd Street and Lexington Avenue, and the square stone-clad Grand Central Post Office with a modern glass-clad tower. A diversity of building uses, bulk, height, setbacks, and density characterizes the area, which in general provides a variety of building shapes, arrangements, styles, and massings. Buildings also vary in bulk, ranging from large commercial buildings such as the Hyatt Hotel and the Metropolitan Life Building, which contain an estimated 1 million and 2.7 million gsf respectively, to small row houses of approximately 10,000 gsf.

Closer to the development parcels, the Bellevue Hospital NYU Medical Center complex occupies a large superblock between First Avenue and the FDR Drive, south of East 34th Street. Bellevue Hospital is composed of older structures that are typically clad in red brick and ornamented with Classical-style motifs as well as more contemporary and taller buildings. Completed in 2005, the Bellevue Hospital Center Ambulatory Care Facility lines First Avenue and was constructed in front of one of the older hospital buildings—the new facility is attached to the older one with a truss-system that creates a glass-enclosed atrium between the two structures. Clad in brick with glass curtain walls, it is set at an angle to the avenue and provides views through the ground floor to the masonry building behind it. The Bellevue Hospital Center Building is a 22-story cast concrete building massed without setbacks and designed in a contemporary style. The white brick-clad buildings of the NYU Medical Center include the 15-story Rubin Hall of Residence of the NYU Medical Center at East 30th Street and First Avenue, and a 27-story building at First Avenue and East 32nd Street. These buildings have no ornament or setbacks and are boxy in form.

Within the study area, there are a large number of recently constructed high-rise office and residential buildings. These structures tend to be freestanding, bulky buildings that occupy full blocks, blockfronts, or corners on the avenues. East of Third Avenue, there are several tall structures that differ in terms of shape, site placement, and bulk. These include the 39-story buildings at One and Two United Nations Plaza on First Avenue at East 44th Street, which consist of modified rectangular or asymmetrically-massed buildings built either to the lot lines (One United Nations Plaza) or set behind a plaza (Two United Nations Plaza) and that vary in terms of bulk. One United Nations Plaza contains a floorplate of approximately 17,000 square feet with an estimated total of 660,000 gsf and Two United Nations Plaza contains a floorplate of 11,000 square feet with an estimated total of 600,000 gsf. The 1,000-foot-tall, 713,500-gsf Trump World Tower is located on the west side of First Avenue between East 47th and 48th Streets. Set back from the avenue and raised on a low podium, the tower is a narrow slab clad in dark glass. Other uniquely massed buildings include: a 36-story office tower that occupies one-half of the block east of Park Avenue between East 40th and 41st Streets and is a diamond-shaped building placed at an angle across the site behind a plaza; the 42-story modified H-plan office building that occupies the full block between East 41st and 42nd Streets and Third and Lexington Avenues with the exception of a 10- to 20-foot setback from the lot lines on all four sides; the 49-story (488-foot-tall) residential building (100 U.N. Plaza) at the northwest corner of First Avenue and East 48th Street, which contains a floorplate of approximately 12,500 square

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feet and totals approximately 1.3 million gsf; and the two rectangular, 38-story (487-foot-tall) towers set on a seven-story base (860 U.N. Plaza Apartments) that occupy the full block between First Avenue, the FDR Drive, and East 48th and 49th Streets.

East of Third Avenue and south of East 40th Street, other skyscrapers include the L-shaped building at the southeast corner of Second Avenue and East 34th Street that is massed with a one-story base along Second Avenue and a 36-story tower along East 34th Street; 42- and 43-story buildings on both sides of Third Avenue between East 39th and 40th Streets with base and tower configurations (605 Third Avenue contains an estimated 1 million gsf); and the five buildings described above on the west side of Second Avenue between East 37th and 41st Streets: the Paramount Tower at 240 East 39th Street, which is massed above a one-story base with a series of vertical projections and setbacks; the Highpoint Condominiums at 250 East 40th Street, a slender tower with a recessed corner; the Marlborough House at 245 East 40th Street, which is a boxy tower with balconies; the Vanderbilt Condominiums at 240 East 41st Street, a tower that contains vertical recesses and balconies; and the telecommunications building at 240 East 38th Street, which is massed without setbacks above grade, although the north and south facades are angled. These buildings are typically bulky, though length, width, and floorplates vary, and many are set behind plazas. They also vary in shape and site configuration. The public open spaces associated with these buildings are typically paved and contain shrubbery and seating. In addition, there are also mid-size buildings ranging in height from 15 to 35 stories in the ½-mile study area.

Many high-rise bulky developments in the study area are located in the Midtown Manhattan office district, west of Third Avenue and north of East 40th Street. These office buildings include the 58-story Metropolitan Life Building, a massive building with no setbacks, a height of approximately 769 feet, and an estimated floor area of 2,760,000 gsf, and the cluster of modern steel and glass office towers lining both sides of Park Avenue north of Grand Central Terminal—270 Park Avenue, at 52 stories (708 feet); 280 Park Avenue, at 31 stories (395 feet); 277 Park Avenue, at 50 stories (686 feet); and 299 Park Avenue (West Vaco Building), at 42 stories (660 feet). These Park Avenue buildings typically rise without setbacks, and differ in shape, arrangement, and bulk. The building at 270 Park Avenue is a dumbbell-shaped office building set behind a shallow plaza on Park Avenue, with an estimated total 1.5 million gsf. It is approximately 140 feet wide and 380 feet long, with floorplates of approximately 17,000 to 52,000 square feet. The building at 280 Park Avenue is also a dumbbell-shaped building set back from the lot lines on three sides. It has floorplates of approximately 17,000 to 24,000 square feet, with an estimated 815,000 gsf. The building at 277 Park Avenue occupies a full block and is set back from the lot lines on three sides. This office building has approximately 1.7 million gsf, is approximately 180 feet wide, 360 feet long, and has floorplates ranging from 21,500 to 84,250 square feet. The office building at 299 Park Avenue occupies approximately half the block and is a square building of approximately 180 feet in width and length. With a floorplate of approximately 26,000 square feet, it contains an estimated total of 1 million gsf. A notable skyscraper within the ½-mile study area is the brick and chrome Chrysler Building at 405 Lexington Avenue. The Chrysler Building is a 77-story, approximately 1,048-foot-tall office building that occupies the western half of the block bounded by Lexington and Third Avenues and East 42nd and 43rd Streets. Capped by an iconic spire, it is massed with numerous setbacks.

Typically, low-rise brick and stone residential buildings line the cross streets south of East 40th Street. These buildings have small footprints, typically measuring 25 feet wide and 100 feet deep (approximately half the width of the blocks on which they are situated) and are attached with their primary facades and entrances facing the street. There are also blockfronts and clusters of

four- to six-story row houses and tenements located on the cross streets east of Third Avenue, north of East 42nd Street. These buildings have slightly larger footprints than the row houses, as they are typically 50 feet wide, though also 100 feet deep. Many have decorative elements such as stone trim, cornices, and stoops. On Second, Third, and Lexington Avenues, there are blockfronts of row houses, also joined, especially on Second Avenue south of the Queens-Midtown Tunnel entrance and exit. There are several neighborhood churches in the area. These include the one- to three-story St. Vartan Cathedral complex. It consists of a group of attached, modern stone buildings on the full block created by East 34th and 35th Streets, Second Avenue, and the Queens-Midtown Tunnel approach. The main cathedral building is designed as a stylized, modern interpretation of a medieval Armenian church.

Large-scale residential developments occupying superblocks in the study area include Kips Bay Plaza and the Henry Phipps Plaza residential complex. Kips Bay Plaza, located between Second and First Avenues and East 33rd and 30th Streets, consists of two freestanding, narrow, rectangular 21-story concrete apartment buildings with large footprints and no setbacks that are well set back from the street. These buildings are approximately 80 feet wide and 360 feet long. Floorplates range from an estimated 23,600 to 28,800 square feet, with the total floor area of the buildings ranging from an estimated 500,000 to 600,000 gsf. To the south, the Henry Phipps Plaza residential complex occupies the east side of Second Avenue between East 29th and 26th Streets. It consists of a number of 15- to 27-story freestanding red brick buildings with exposed corner balconies. The buildings are mostly sited away from Second Avenue.

Within the ½-mile study area, the Queens shoreline is built up with primarily free-standing three- to four-story bulky warehouse structures and new, tall residential buildings. One of the larger warehouses has a tall metal sign on its roof that reads “Pepsi-Cola.” There are also industrial buildings that include cylindrical concrete mixing structures and a brick power plant. The 42-story (410-foot-tall) residential Citylights Building and 34-story (320-foot-tall) Avalon Riverview of the Queens West Development are also situated on the waterfront. The two Queens West buildings are modern, brick and glass residential structures that are massed as towers on low-rise bases. A third residential building, the 31-story East Coast Tower I, is currently under construction to the north of the Citylights Building.

Streetscape

The streetscape of the ½-mile study area is similar to that of the 400-foot-study area. Through the ½-mile study area, the street wall on the avenues is typically not uniform, since blockfronts on Second, Third, and Lexington Avenues have been redeveloped with tall office and apartment buildings that are set back behind plazas. These developments include a cluster of office buildings occupying full blockfronts on Third Avenue between East 39th and 45th Streets, condominiums and office buildings on Second Avenue north of East 40th Street, and the Kips Bay Plaza and Henry Phipps Plaza residential complexes south of East 34th Street, which break the street wall with freestanding towers set back from the street. Along First Avenue, the United Nations Headquarters complex is bordered by a low wall and hedge. On the cross streets, the street walls are typically more uniform. Curbcuts for loading docks and entrances to below-grade garages tend to be found on the cross streets.

Typical street furniture in the area consists of standard light poles, traffic lights, and bus stops. Historic reproduction lampposts are found around Grand Central Terminal and along the East River Esplanade. Throughout the ½-mile study area, the various parks and plazas have a large number of trees, some of which are mature and large, but the residential and office plazas found throughout the study area are mostly paved and provide seating and landscaping. The avenues,

with the exception of the majority of Park Avenue north of Grand Central Terminal, have ground floor shops. Cross streets in the study area have fewer ground-floor stores, but the two major cross streets—East 42nd and 34th Streets—are lined by a variety of ground-floor stores and restaurants and experience greater pedestrian activity than many of the other cross streets.

The streetscape along the Queens waterfront consists of freestanding structures surrounded by paved areas. There is no uniform street wall, and as this area is primarily industrial, street furniture is minimal. Exceptions include the paved open area in front of Citylights, a residential building of the Queens West Development, and Gantry Plaza State Park, located along the Queens shoreline across from the Citylights Building and across the East River from East 39th Street.

VISUAL RESOURCES (1/2-MILE STUDY AREA)

Within the 1/2-mile study area, visual resources include parks, views of notable buildings (like Grand Central Terminal, the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, and the main building of the New York Public Library), and views of the East River and the Manhattan and Queens waterfronts. Ralph J. Bunche Park, located on the west blockfront of First Avenue between East 42nd and 43rd Streets, contains large shady trees and benches. The United Nations Park, a large park located north of East 45th Street between First Avenue and the FDR Drive, is a major contributing factor to the visual character of the area, and it is best viewed in the immediate vicinity on First Avenue. Although it is not publicly accessible and is bordered by a fence, the park contains formal gardens and sculptures with winding pathways, and there are views of the East River and Queens waterfront from First Avenue through the park. Notable buildings that are visual resources in the area include Grand Central Terminal, with its large arched openings and sculpted stone ornament and the Helmsley Building to the north of it (though separated from it by the Metropolitan Life Building), with its grand pyramidal roof capped by an ornate cupola. The most significant views of Grand Central Terminal are north on Park Avenue, but it is also prominent in views from 42nd Street in its immediate vicinity. With its striking Art Deco crown, the Chrysler Building at Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street is a prominent New York City landmark viewable from multiple locations within the study area. The Beaux-Arts style New York Public Library is prominent in the westward view corridor on East 41st Street, but views of the building diminish east of Lexington Avenue. In addition, the United Nations Secretariat is prominent in views east on East 43rd Street. The East River Esplanade provides expansive views of the East River and the Brooklyn and Queens waterfronts, as well as the Queensboro and Williamsburg Bridges, the Empire State Building, and the United Nations Secretariat. Views of those structures are variable along the esplanade due to intervening buildings. Between East 26th Street and Glick Park, the East River Esplanade consists of an unimproved sidewalk with a limited number of benches. It is interrupted at East 30th Street by the Water Club Restaurant.

In the Queens portion of the area, Gantry Plaza State Park and the expansive views it provides of the East River and Manhattan shoreline are prominent visual resources. Gantry Plaza State Park is a recently built open space along the river between 50th Avenue and 47th Road. It consists of a wide paved plaza with planters containing shrubbery. Wood-floored piers extend far out into the water, bounded by low railings. Two recently restored early 20th-century float bridges—tall steel-framed structures originally used for loading and off-loading rail and barge freight—are located between the viewing piers. “Long Island City” is painted in bold red letters on one of the float bridges, facing Manhattan. The park also includes a crushed stone and grassy area at the water’s edge where portions of the original railroad tracks leading to the bridges have been retained. The edge of the park is lined by reproductions of cast-iron gas lampposts. This park is

being expanded in stages to the north (Anable Basin) and to the south (Newtown Creek) as part of the Queens West Development.

From Gantry Plaza State Park, visual resources include views of the river, the bridges that cross the river, and the Manhattan skyline. Located just off the shoreline, the vacant development parcels are prominent (see Figure 8-19). The view of the United Nations complex (more specifically, the glass curtain wall of the Secretariat that faces east to the river) from this location is a visual resource. Views of Tudor City, including the sign “Tudor City” (which reads backwards in views from Queens, since it faces west into Manhattan), and the Empire State and Chrysler Buildings, are partially or completely obstructed by other buildings, depending upon the viewer’s location within the park. In most views, the Chrysler Building is partially blocked by the Secretariat building, although the spire of the Chrysler Building rises higher than the roof of the Secretariat and parts of the shaft and crown of the Chrysler Building are visible. The shaft of the Empire State Building is either fully blocked or almost completely blocked from view by the 53-story, 512-foot-tall Corinthian building. In all views, the crown and spire of the Empire State Building are visible above the roof of the Corinthian.

D. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

DEVELOPMENT PARCELS

In the future without the Proposed Actions, it is conservatively assumed for analysis purposes that the vacant lot on the 616 First Avenue parcel and the paved parking area on the 685 First Avenue parcel will remain in their current condition. In the future without the Proposed Actions, the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels will also be vacant.

STUDY AREA

As described in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy” of this SEIS, several projects are planned for completion within the urban design and visual resources study area by 2014. Many of the proposed projects are infrastructure and transportation projects that would have temporary visual effects from construction on the urban design and visual resources of the study area. In order to construct City Water Tunnel No. 3, a shaft site for spoils removal would be necessary on Second Avenue in the vicinity of St. Vartan Park. That shaft site would be a long-term construction site with associated equipment, protective barriers, signage, and traffic. Transportation projects planned for the area by 2014 include improvements at the 34th Street Ferry Terminal, the 34th Street Metroport (Heliport), and reconstruction of the bridge over the Queens-Midtown Tunnel roadway.

Other development projects planned for completion by 2014 include residential, institutional, and medical buildings. The largest of these projects is the East River Science Park, a 1.5 million-gsf medical complex located between First Avenue and the FDR Drive and East 28th and 30th Streets. In the Queens portion of the study area, a third residential building is under construction as part of the Queens West Development. It will be 31 stories. All of the planned projects will add to the density of development in the study areas and will be in keeping with the areas’ mix of uses, building arrangements, heights, bulk, and massing.



Urban Design and Visual Resources
Development Parcels and Study Area View West from Queens
Figure 8-19

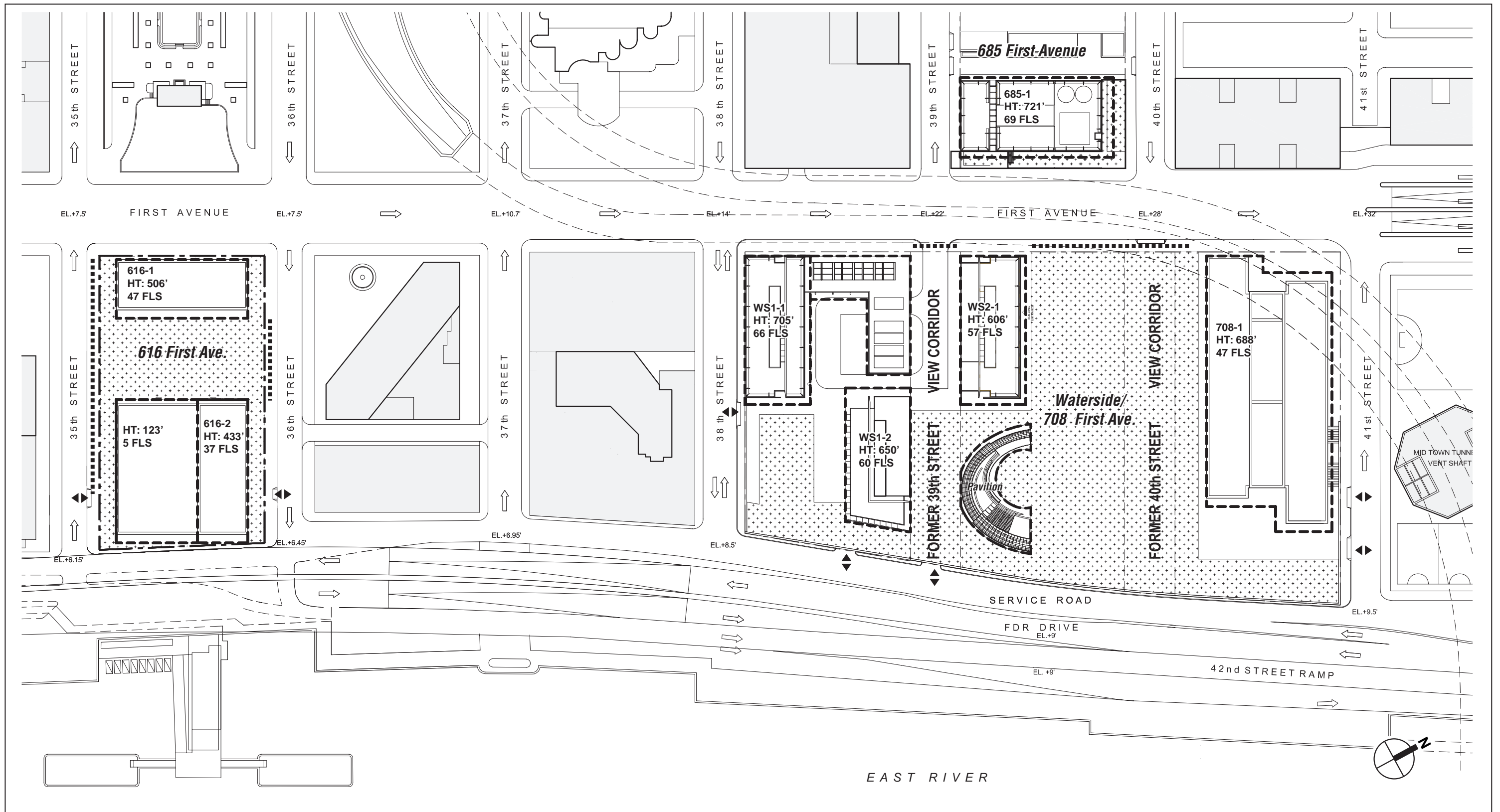
E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS





DEVELOPMENT PARCELS

As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the Proposed Actions would permit a mixed-use development of seven buildings and publicly accessible open space on the four development parcels (see Figure 8-20 for a site plan). The general descriptions of the proposed buildings (in terms of floor area, maximum heights, footprints, and locations) and open spaces in the following analysis would be mandatory pursuant to approval of the Proposed Actions, as the project sponsor intends to record a Restrictive declaration that will govern development of the parcels as described in Chapter 1, “Project Description.” The Restrictive declaration will require that any construction on the development parcels conform to the plans and drawings approved pursuant to the city’s Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The proposed buildings described in this SEIS reflect those plans and drawings, which will regulate the uses and envelopes of all buildings constructed on the development parcels, including their height, dimensions, and location, the floor area of each building in the development, and the location and dimensions of curb cuts. The zoning envelopes for the proposed buildings are shown in plan on Figure 8-20 and in elevation on Figure 8-21. Within these maximum zoning envelopes, the proposed buildings have a leeway of a few feet to shift location and the shape of their footprints and general massing. The zoning envelopes represent maximum building heights, and the heights given below represent those maximum heights.¹ The ULURP plans and drawings will also regulate the dimensions and design elements of the publicly accessible open spaces, including the location and size of view corridors. (See Figures 1-6 through 1-8 in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” for more detailed site plans of the open spaces. Those site plans conform to the plans in the ULURP package.) Pursuant to special permits to modify height and setback regulations within general large-scale developments, the proposed buildings would be cohesively designed as slim, rectangular structures sited and massed to disperse their bulk across the development parcels (see Figure 8-20). Some of the proposed buildings would be set perpendicular to First Avenue, while others would be placed parallel to the avenue. The slender tower forms would allow for the provision of open space on site and would create new, enhanced views to the waterfront. While the proposed buildings would not observe applicable height and setback restrictions or tower regulations, they would be compatible with the typical tower form of the tall modern buildings in the study area.

The Proposed Actions would replace three vacant sites and a parking lot with a mixed-use development creating a pedestrian-friendly edge along the east side of First Avenue and two large publicly accessible open spaces. Development on the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels would include four slender towers set around a major open space leading from First Avenue to a north-south promenade at the eastern edge of the site. On these development parcels, the buildings placed along First Avenue would be set back five feet from the First Avenue property line to create wider landscaped sidewalks, with retail at the ground floor of the proposed buildings. View corridors to the East River would be created through the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels along the alignments of East 39th and 40th Streets. On the 685 First Avenue development parcel, a fifth residential tower with retail at its base would be constructed. On the 616 First Avenue development parcel, two residential

¹ As described in this SEIS, building heights are measured above the lowest average curb level. As measured from the elevation of the ground-floor lobby, each building would be shorter by 1 to 22 feet.



-  Publicly Accessible Open Space
-  Access Points to Publicly Accessible Open Space
-  Zoning Envelope
-  Parking/Loading Access

NOT TO SCALE



NOTE: Image not to scale. Height and setback envelopes are abstracted and shown for information only.

ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING WITH ZONING ENVELOPES

--- Zoning Envelope

buildings are proposed. On that site, the eastern building would include a community facility use at its base, and publicly accessible open space would be located between the two buildings. (See Figures 8-21 and 8-22 for illustrative renderings of the proposed development.) Each of the proposed buildings is contemplated to have a sleek modern design with glass, metal, and stone cladding, but this architectural design is illustrative and would not be mandated by approval of the Proposed Actions.

The proposed development program would total approximately six million gsf, and it assumes a rezoning that would permit development at a floor area ratio (FAR) of 12.0, the same FAR considered in the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario. The program would introduce a mix of residential, community facility, office, retail, parking, and open space uses, as considered in the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario. However, the proposed site plan and building heights and masses differ from those features of the illustrative development programs that were analyzed under the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario. The following analysis, therefore, assesses the potential for new or different impacts on the area's urban design and visual resources that could result from the proposed development program.

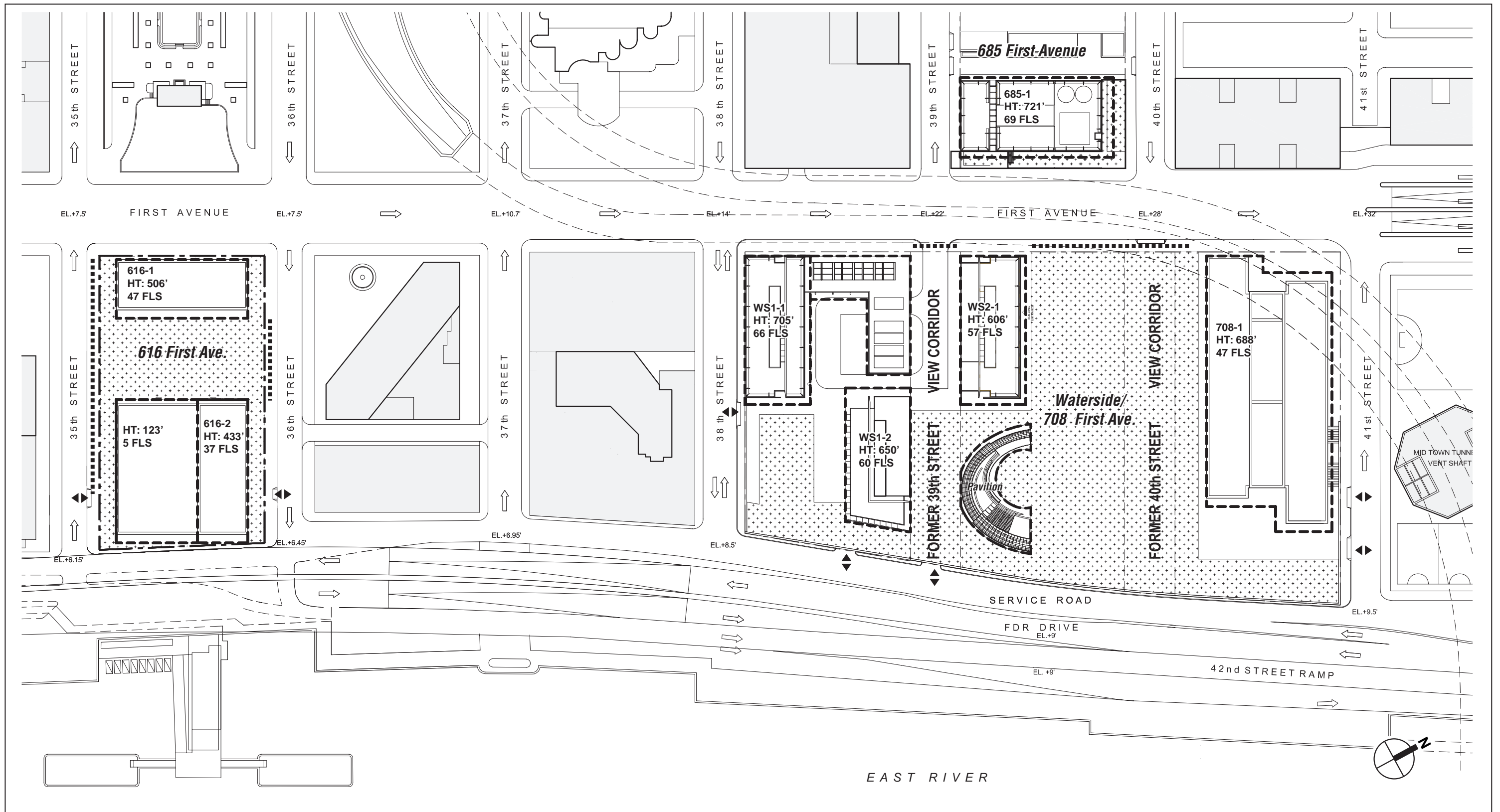
URBAN DESIGN





The building descriptions below represent the project design as proposed by ERRC. The buildings that would be constructed would be similar in terms of location, size, and shape of floor plates and footprints, heights, and general massing, because the final building design would be required to fall within the zoning envelopes approved pursuant to ULURP. The floor area of each building would be the same as described below. See Figures 8-20 through 8-22 for the site plan and illustrative building renderings.

616 First Avenue

Under the Proposed Actions, the vacant 616 First Avenue development parcel would be redeveloped with two residential buildings totaling approximately one million gsf of which approximately 750,000 gsf would be residential. The buildings would be relatively slender rectangular towers that would penetrate the applicable sky exposure planes pursuant to a special permit modifying height and setback regulations. The total lot coverage of the two buildings would be approximately 50 percent. The 444,150-square-foot (above grade) western building would be located on the First Avenue edge of the site and would rise without interruption after an initial at-grade setback. The building's long side would front on First Avenue from which it would set back five feet, and there would be ground-floor retail along a portion of the avenue frontage. The building would be set back 20 feet from East 36th and 35th Streets. The western building would be 47 stories (506 feet) tall, would be 157 feet long and 60 feet wide, and would have floorplates of approximately 9,450 square feet.

The second building would be located on the eastern portion of the site. This 37-story (433-foot-tall) residential tower of 426,431 square feet above grade would include a five-story (123-foot-tall) base housing a community facility, which would not comply with the initial setback requirement along the FDR Drive service road. The eastern building's footprint would be 157 feet by 157 feet, but it would be set back the same distances from East 36th and 35th Streets as the western building. Above the base, the slender tower portion of the eastern building would be located on East 36th Street and it would rise without setbacks and have the same dimensions as the western building, but it would be oriented perpendicularly to the western tower. The floorplates of the first five floors of the eastern building would be approximately 24,806 square feet and the floorplates of the tower would be approximately 9,450 square feet. The central



-  Publicly Accessible Open Space
-  Access Points to Publicly Accessible Open Space
-  Zoning Envelope
-  Parking/Loading Access

NOT TO SCALE



NOTE: Image not to scale. Height and setback envelopes are abstracted and shown for information only.

ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING WITH ZONING ENVELOPES

--- Zoning Envelope



ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING

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portion of the site would be developed with a 34,507-square-foot open space that would contain a public garden area with ground cover and plantings, seating, bicycle parking, and other amenities in conformance with the ULURP plans and drawings. Curb cuts for a loading dock and entrance to below-grade parking would be located on East 35th and 36th Streets on the eastern end of the block.

The total proposed residential development on the 616 First Avenue parcel would be similar to the 850,900 square feet of development assumed in the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario, but the bulk would be split between two slim structures, rather than consolidated in one building with a footprint measuring 214 feet by 170 feet and a lot coverage of 53 percent. The proposed buildings would be substantially shorter than the 655-foot-tall residential building assessed in the FGEIS. Under the Proposed Actions, retail uses would front on First Avenue and the publicly accessible open space would be located in the center of the site instead of on First Avenue as was assumed in the FGEIS.

685 First Avenue

Under the Proposed Actions, the parking lot on the 685 First Avenue parcel would be redeveloped with an approximately 973,728-gsf (above-grade) residential building with retail uses and a below-grade parking garage. The new building would have a rectangular footprint and would rise for its full 69-story height (721 feet) without setbacks pursuant to a special permit to modify height and setback regulations within general large-scale developments—the building would penetrate applicable sky exposure planes and would not comply with applicable height and setback restrictions or tower regulations. The proposed building would be built to the lot line on East 39th Street, but it would set back approximately 28 feet from East 40th Street behind an approximately 7,600-square-foot landscaped area. On First Avenue, the building would have a frontage of 168 feet. The width would be 84 feet, and the floorplate would be approximately 14,112 square feet. The building would cover approximately 44 percent of the development parcel. The entrance to the below-grade parking garage would be on the building's west side from a service drive between the building and the adjacent Con Ed substation. Curb cuts to the site would be located on both East 39th and 40th Streets, pursuant to a certification from the City Planning Commission for streetscape modifications allowing more than one curb cut on a narrow street (East 39th Street).

At 973,728 gsf above grade, the proposed building would be 103,728 square feet larger than the FGEIS residential building or 148,728 square feet larger than the FGEIS office building, although it would have smaller floorplates than the FGEIS office building and floorplates similar to those of the FGEIS residential building. The proposed building would also be different in height and site coverage. The 721-foot-tall proposed building would be approximately 50 feet shorter than the 770-foot-tall residential building assumed under the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario residential program and mixed-use program with office on the 708 First Avenue parcel, and it would be approximately 181 feet taller than the FGEIS office building, a use that is no longer proposed on this site. The proposed building would cover less of the site than the FGEIS residential and office buildings, which were assumed to cover 53 percent and 100 percent of the site, respectively. Like the two FGEIS buildings, the proposed building would have ground-floor retail and a below-grade parking garage.

700 First Avenue (Waterside) and 708 First Avenue

Under the Proposed Actions, the site containing the Waterside and 708 First Avenue parcels would be redeveloped with 3,590,932-gsf (above grade) of residential, commercial, and retail

uses allocated in three residential buildings, a restaurant pavilion, and one commercial building. The three residential buildings would total 2,053,825 gsf (above grade) and the commercial building would be 1,537,107 gsf (above grade), and they would not observe applicable height and setback restrictions or tower regulations. Publicly accessible open space totaling 168,659 square feet (or 3.87 acres) would be provided. To meet the existing grade of First Avenue, the site would be designed to rise to the east, so that the eastern portion would be elevated above the height of the adjoining service road and FDR Drive, similar to the United Nations Headquarters complex. At the eastern edge of the site, a pedestrian promenade would be provided. A below-grade parking garage would be located under the site. Three of the four proposed buildings would be sited at the north and south ends of the site, with the central portion of the site between East 39th and 40th Streets containing a large open space and one of the residential buildings. Together, the four buildings and the restaurant pavilion would have an overall lot coverage of approximately 30 percent. Although East 39th and 40th Streets would not be remapped through the development parcels between First Avenue and the FDR Drive, the alignments of those former streets would be designed with sidewalks and a paved pedestrian way to provide 60-foot-wide view corridors through the development toward the East River and to offer access to the promenade and overlook along the site's eastern edge (see Figures 8-23 through 8-25).

Between East 38th Street and the alignment of East 39th Street, two residential buildings would be developed on the Waterside parcel. From First Avenue, the site would rise in grade. Positioned toward the west and east sides of the site, the buildings would be similarly massed, slender structures. The 762,457-square-foot (above grade) western building would be massed with a 66-story (705-foot-tall) tower placed along East 38th Street and a low-rise retail building that would extend along First Avenue and the western portion of the East 39th Street alignment (see Figures 8-25 and 8-26). It would set back five feet from First Avenue, but it would be built to the lot line on East 38th Street. The tower portion of the western building would have an approximately 11,424-square-foot floorplate measuring approximately 168 feet by 68 feet, and the L-shaped retail base would have an approximate floorplate of 8,790 square feet. Fronting on the promenade along the East 39th Street alignment, the eastern building would be 60 stories (650 feet tall) with a floorplate of approximately 10,670 square feet. The 640,200-square-foot (above grade) eastern building would be similar in form to the tower portion of the western building, but the east façade is proposed to align with the angle of the site's eastern edge. Due to this proposed massing, the eastern building would have variable dimensions of 68 feet by 151 to 162 feet. At the southeast corner of the site, there would be an elevated plaza with a stair linking to East 38th Street. A curbcut to the below-grade parking garage would be located mid-block on East 38th Street, and additional curb cuts to the parking garage would be located along the FDR Drive service road, pursuant to a certification from the City Planning Commission for streetscape modifications allowing curb cuts on the FDR Drive service road, a wide street.

A third residential tower would be located on First Avenue on the north side of the alignment of East 39th Street through the Waterside development parcel. Massed similarly to the other two residential buildings, it would have a rectangular footprint measuring 168 feet by 68 feet, with the long side placed along the East 39th Street alignment. This central residential building would be 57 stories (606 feet tall) and would total approximately 651,168 gsf above grade, with floorplates of approximately 11,424 square feet. There would be ground-floor retail on First Avenue, from which the central residential building would set back five feet, in line with the proposed residential building to the south. The restaurant pavilion would be located to the east of the central residential building. It would be an approximately two-story structure with a curved shape, which would be mandated by its zoning envelope. The pavilion would provide both



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View east from First Avenue along the alignment of East 40th Street



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View southeast from the alignment of East 40th Street



ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING

View east from First Avenue and East 39th Street



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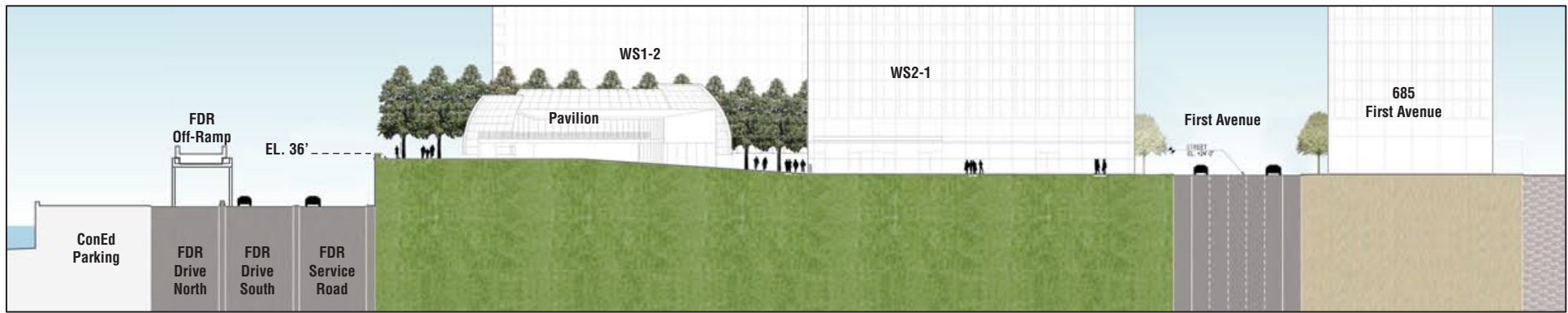
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covered and open seating areas. Illustrative images of the pavilion can be found in Figures 8-24, 8-27, and 8-28.

On the 708 First Avenue development parcel, a 47-story (688-foot-tall) office building with ground-floor retail along First Avenue would be constructed between the alignment of East 40th Street and East 41st Street. Set back approximately five feet from First Avenue and 15 feet from East 41st Street, the office building would have a long, generally regular footprint with a 320-foot frontage on East 41st Street. The building's floorplates would measure approximately 35,755 square feet. Vertical recesses on the west and east facades would articulate the structure. The main entrance would be located along First Avenue through a plaza. Open spaces would be provided adjoining the central open space and the promenade along the site's eastern edge. Curb cuts would be located on East 41st Street toward the eastern end of the site, pursuant to a certification from the City Planning Commission allowing more than one curb cut on a narrow street.

Most of the central portion of the Waterside and 708 First Avenue site between the alignments of East 39th and 40th Streets would be developed as a large publicly accessible open space (see Figures 8-23, 8-24, and 8-27 through 8-29). The open space would meet First Avenue at grade, but would rise in elevation to the east to provide views over the FDR Drive. (See Figure 8-27 for a section through the open space.) The landscaped, east-west connections along the alignments of the two streets would provide view corridors through the site and offer access to the continuous elevated promenade that would run along the full eastern edge of the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels. The promenade along the eastern edge of the open space would be located approximately 27 feet above the FDR Drive service road at a height similar to that of the FDR Drive 42nd Street off-ramp. The western portion of the open space adjoining First Avenue would be a large lawn for active and passive recreation. The lawn and landscaped connections would meet the sidewalk along First Avenue and there would be no curbs or other changes in level. Trees, flower beds, and public seating would be located near the avenue and along the east-west connections, but there would no trees along the avenue between the alignments of East 39th and 40th Streets to increase the space's openness to the street (see Figures 8-23 and 8-24). The eastern portion of the open space would contain the 5,627-square-foot restaurant pavilion, a water feature, and terraced seating and landscaping (see Figure 8-28). It would adjoin the three-block-long promenade and overlook that would provide expansive views of the East River and the Queens shoreline (see Figures 8-28 and 8-29). The design of the open space on the Waterside and 708 First Avenue site would conform to the ULURP plans and drawings in accordance with the Restrictive declarartion and, as proposed, the open space would meet some of the public plaza standards set forth in the zoning regulations. Where it would not comply with certain requirements the applicant would seek a special permit from the City Planning Commission to approve any deviations. Modifications of such requirements pursuant to a special permit would be intended to allow for a better site plan and plaza design and to accommodate the development of a large open space that would rise in elevation to provide views over the FDR Drive.

In terms of building arrangement, bulk, and massing, the proposed program for the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels most closely resembles the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario residential program. Similarities between the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario residential program, which totaled 3.3 million zoning square feet (approximately 200,000 above-grade square feet less than the proposed program), and the proposed development program include a large central open space, residential use, ground-floor retail along First Avenue, a below-grade parking garage, and the placement of buildings at the southwest and northwest corners of the site and in the center of the Waterside parcel. In addition, the proposed buildings, which range in



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Section through open space - view south



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View east adjacent to pavilion



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View north from the vicinity of the East 40th Street alignment

height from 606 feet to 705 feet, roughly fall within the range of building heights analyzed in the FGEIS for the Waterside and 708 First Avenue parcels—505 feet to 660 feet. The FGEIS residential program differed in that it had a larger lot coverage of 40 percent, lacked commercial space on the 708 First Avenue parcel, placed buildings to the lot lines on First Avenue, had an L-shaped building on the 708 First Avenue parcel, and placed the central building toward the eastern edge of the site and oriented it parallel to First Avenue. The FGEIS mixed-use program and mixed-use program with office on 708 First Avenue presented variations of a program that included an office building, and each program totaled approximately 3.4 million square feet above grade on the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels, approximately 100,000 above-grade square feet less than the proposed program. In each FGEIS mixed-used program, the office building was taller than the proposed office building, by either 82 feet or 162 feet. The two mixed-use programs also included residential buildings and open space. The FGEIS mixed-use program had the same amount of lot coverage as the proposed program (30 percent) while the FGEIS mixed-use program with office on 708 First Avenue had a larger lot coverage of 41 percent.

VISUAL RESOURCES

As described above, there are no visual resources on the four development parcels. Therefore, redevelopment of the parcels would not have adverse impacts on views of on-site visual resources. The new publicly accessible open space on the Waterside and 708 First Avenue development parcels would provide new landscaped locations from which to view the East River vista. In addition, the project would provide view corridors from First Avenue through the Waterside parcel to the East River along the alignments of East 39th and 40th Streets.

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN (400-FOOT-STUDY AREA)

Block Form and Street Pattern, and Street Hierarchy

Since the proposed development, like the three development programs assumed under the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario, would be constructed on existing blocks, it would maintain the existing block forms, street pattern, and street hierarchy of the study area. In addition, by providing view corridors through the Waterside parcel along the alignments of East 39th and 40th Streets, the proposed development program would reference the original block and street pattern between First Avenue and the FDR Drive and East 38th and 41st Streets that construction of the Waterside Station obscured by creating a superblock and obstructing views through the site. The development program would also reinforce the sense of the Manhattan street grid. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have any significant adverse impacts on the street pattern, block forms, and street hierarchy of the study area.

Building Arrangements

Under the Proposed Actions, seven tall freestanding buildings would be constructed on the development parcels. These structures would be set back from most of the adjacent streets and set within plazas and open spaces. Building footprints would be rectangular or approximately rectangular. The building arrangement of the proposed buildings would be in keeping with building arrangements in the study area, where there are numerous tall freestanding buildings set back from the street with variously shaped footprints. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have any significant adverse impacts on building arrangements in the study area.

Building Use, Bulk, Height, Setbacks, and Density

Similar to the FGEIS conclusion that the three illustrative development programs of the Rezoning Scenario would not result in significant adverse impacts to building bulk, use, and type, the proposed development program would not have a significant adverse impact on building use, bulk, height, setbacks, and density of the study area. The proposed buildings would be of similar bulk, height, use, and type to the range of buildings analyzed under the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario and would not result in any new impacts to those urban design features. Overall, the proposed buildings would be in keeping with the urban design of the study area that is characterized by a mix of predominantly mid- to high-rise, masonry and glass structures designed in a multitude of historic and modern styles, and residential, commercial, and institutional uses. Figures 8-6 and 8-7 show existing westward views of the development parcels and study area and Figures 8-21 and 8-22 show similar westward views of the proposed development program. Figures 8-30 through 8-32 show illustrative renderings of the proposed development program on First Avenue and view 5 of Figure 8-5, view 10 of Figure 8-9, view 16 of Figure 8-12, and view 18 of Figure 8-13 show similar existing views on First Avenue.

While the proposed residential buildings—which range from 426,431 gsf above-grade to 973,728 gsf above-grade—would be larger than most of the buildings within the 400-foot-study area, they would be similar in bulk to the Corinthian, the Rivergate, and the United Nations Secretariat, which are approximately 880,200 gsf, 835,200 gsf, and 861,000 gsf, respectively. In addition, the bulk of the proposed buildings, including the office building (that would be larger than any other building in the 400-foot study area), would be similar to the bulk of the illustrative buildings that were analyzed under the three development programs of the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario. Building bulk assessed in the FGEIS ranged from 546,000 square feet above grade (the residential building located in the center of the Waterside parcel under the residential program) to 2.5 million square feet above grade (the commercial building under the mixed-use program with office on 708 First Avenue). The heights of the proposed buildings would also be similar to the heights of the illustrative rezoning scenario buildings assessed in the FGEIS, which ranged from 505 to 850 feet.

The proposed buildings would be consistent with other study area buildings in proportion to their footprints and floorplates. The tower dimensions of the proposed residential buildings that range from 157 feet by 60 feet to 168 feet by 84 feet would be smaller than the dimensions of the Corinthian (approximately 200 feet by 300 feet with floorplates of approximately 60,000 square feet) and the Rivergate (200 feet by 250 feet with floorplates of approximately 50,000 square feet) and similar to the dimensions of the Manhattan Place Condominiums and the Churchill Apartments, both of which measure approximately 180 feet by 60 feet (creating floorplates of approximately 10,800 square feet). The dimensions of the proposed office building (320 feet by 130 feet) would be similar to the dimensions of the Corinthian. In addition, the floorplates of the proposed residential buildings, which range from approximately 9,450 square feet to approximately 14,112 square feet, would be similar to the floorplates of other large residential buildings and would be smaller than the floorplates of the United Nations Secretariat (approximately 21,000 square feet) and the General Assembly Building (approximately 60,800 square feet). The proposed office building would have a floorplate larger than that of the Secretariat building.

The proposed buildings on the 685 First Avenue, Waterside, and 708 First Avenue development parcels would be the tallest buildings in the 400-foot-study area, but there are several nearby tall buildings that include the 512-foot-tall Corinthian, the 378-foot-tall Horizon, the 317-foot-tall



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Manhattan Place Condominiums, the 358-foot-tall Rivergate, the 600-foot-tall Paramount Tower, the 452-foot-tall Highpoint Condominiums, and the 343-foot-tall Vanderbilt Condominiums. The development of these tall rectangular towers set within plazas would fit in with the study area, which is predominantly characterized by residential buildings set back from the street, especially along First and Second Avenues. Further, the proposed buildings' rectangular massing with minimal use of setbacks would be in keeping with the form of numerous recent buildings in the study area, which tend to be set back from the street and massed with few or no upper floor setbacks.

Streetscape

The redevelopment of the vacant development parcels would alter the study area streetscape (see Figures 8-30 through 8-33). However, as was concluded in the FGEIS, the provision of ground-floor retail along First Avenue and public open space on the development parcels would be streetscape improvements. The widened and tree-lined First Avenue sidewalks on the 616 First Avenue, Waterside, and 708 First Avenue development parcels and the open spaces on the Waterside and 708 First Avenue parcels would provide substantial greenery to the area and would be in keeping with the parks and plazas located along First Avenue within the 400-foot-study area—those parks and plazas include St. Vartan Park and Robert Moses Playground, the open space at the United Nations Headquarters complex, the landscaped area adjacent to the Queens-Midtown Tunnel cut between East 36th and 37th Streets, and the plazas of the Corinthian and Manhattan Place Condominiums buildings. In addition, the proposed ground-floor retail along First Avenue would be in keeping with the urban design character of the study area and would provide visual interest and generate pedestrian activity, enlivening the streetscape and positively affecting this urban design feature of the area. Other streetscape elements of the proposed development—the location of curb cuts for loading docks and garage entrances on the side streets, breaks in the street wall, and paved plaza surfaces—would also be keeping with the urban design character of the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions, like the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario, would not have adverse impacts on the study area streetscape.

VISUAL RESOURCES (400-FOOT STUDY AREA)

Similar to the three illustrative development programs assessed under the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario, the proposed development program is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts on visual resources. The proposed development would not block any significant view corridors or views of visual resources, limit access to any resource, change the study area's urban design features so that a visual resource is no longer dominant in the area, or change the study area's urban design features so that the context of a visual resource is adversely altered.

Constructed on existing blocks, the proposed buildings would not block views along the First Avenue and East 35th, 36th, 38th, and 41st Street view corridors that border the development parcels. Further, the buildings would be set back from most of the adjacent streets (except on East 38th Street), and there would be new 60-foot-wide view corridors along the alignments of East 39th and 40th Streets toward the East River (see Figures 8-23 through 8-25). While there are existing views toward the waterfront from First Avenue at East 39th and 40th Streets, these partial views are through fencing over a construction site that is below the grade of First Avenue (see Figure 8-16 for existing views from the same vantage points as the illustrative views through the proposed open space shown in Figures 8-23 through 8-25). In comparison, the new views would be through a landscaped open space, and views of the FDR Drive 42nd Street off-ramp would be obscured, because the ground level of the site would be brought up to the grade

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of First Avenue. Although development on the 616 First Avenue and 708 First Avenue development parcels would block some existing views over those sites to the East River, those existing views are limited, and there would be multiple study area locations from which to better view the East River vista, including the East River Esplanade. From the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the development parcels, there would be views east toward the East River on East 35th, 36th, 38th, and 41st Streets; these views would be partially framed by the proposed buildings where they front on the sidewalks. On East 39th and 40th Streets adjacent to the 685 First Avenue parcel, there would be landscaped view corridors eastward toward the waterfront (along the alignments of those streets through the Waterside parcel). In addition, new views of the East River vista would be obtainable from the proposed open spaces on the Waterside and 708 First Avenue parcels.

The proposed development would not block significant views of other study area resources that include St. Vartan Park, the United Nations Secretariat, the Empire State Building, and the Chrysler Building. Although the proposed office building on the 708 First Avenue parcel would block some northerly views toward the Secretariat building from locations on First Avenue between East 39th and 41st Streets, that change in view would be in a circumscribed area, as there are no existing northward views of the Secretariat on First Avenue from south of East 38th Street. Other, better views of the Secretariat would remain available, such as in the East 43rd Street view corridor where the Secretariat forms the focal point of the eastward view. Further, the eastern edge of the proposed open space on the Waterside and 708 First Avenue parcels would provide new vantage points from which to appreciate views of the Secretariat (see Figure 8-29). Therefore, that obstructed view on First Avenue between East 39th and 41st Streets would not be a significant adverse impact.

Although the proposed development would change the study area's urban design features by redeveloping four vacant parcels with tall buildings set within open spaces, the proposed development would be in keeping with the urban design features of the study area, as described above. The new buildings would add to the many tall, modern buildings lining First and Second Avenues in the 400-foot-study area. In addition, the new landscaped open spaces provided by the proposed project would be amenities to the study area, along with the existing area parks and plazas. These new open spaces would provide greenery, and the open space on the Waterside and 708 First Avenue parcels would provide new access points for waterfront views.

The office building on the 708 First Avenue parcel would be taller than the Secretariat building, but there is an intervening block (between East 41st and 42nd Streets) developed with a Queens-Midtown Tunnel vent shaft between the development parcel and the United Nations complex. This block would buffer the relationship between the proposed office building and the Secretariat—they would not be adjacent structures. Set well back from First Avenue within a large campus of low-rise buildings and open space, the Secretariat building would maintain its iconic position and relationship to the surrounding area. It would also remain the focal point of the East 43rd Street view corridor. Therefore, the proposed development would not adversely affect the Secretariat's context or visual prominence. Similarly, the proposed development would not adversely affect the context of Tudor City, which is raised above the study area and oriented inward away from First Avenue. In addition, the setback position of the building on the 685 First Avenue parcel would create more open views from First Avenue and East 40th Street of Windsor Tower within Tudor City (see Figure 8-33) than the buildings assessed for that site in the three development programs under the FGEIS Rezoning Scenario—those buildings were located closer to East 40th Street.

URBAN DESIGN (½-MILE STUDY AREA)

Block Form and Street Pattern, and Street Hierarchy

The Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on the block forms, street pattern, and street hierarchy of the ½-mile study area. The proposed development program would be constructed on existing blocks and would therefore maintain these existing urban design features.

Building Arrangements

The building arrangement of the proposed buildings would be in keeping with building arrangements in the ½-mile study area, where there are numerous tall freestanding buildings set back from the street with variously shaped footprints. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on building arrangements in the study area.

Building Use, Bulk, Height, Setbacks, and Density

The proposed development program would not have significant adverse impacts on these urban design characteristics of the ½-mile study area. The proposed residential, commercial office, retail, and community facility uses would be in keeping with the mixed-use character of the study area. The proposed buildings would be similar in bulk to, or smaller than, many of the large residential and office buildings found throughout the ½-mile study area, such as the 1.3 million gsf 100 U.N. Plaza building (at First Avenue and East 48th Street), the 713,500 gsf Trump World Tower on First Avenue at East 47th Street, the 1 million gsf building at 605 Third Avenue (at East 40th Street), and the 2.7-million-gsf Metropolitan Life Building on the north side of Grand Central Terminal. In the ½-mile study area, there are several buildings—including the 1,000-foot-tall Trump World Tower, the 1,048-foot-tall Chrysler Building, and the 769-foot-tall Metropolitan Life Building—that are taller than the tallest of the proposed buildings. Further, buildings within the ½-mile study area exhibit a wide range of building use, forms, and setbacks.

Streetscape

The Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on the streetscape of the study area. As described above, they would enliven the streetscape and positively affect this urban design feature of the 400-foot study area. Beyond that radius, the streetscape elements of the proposed development program would not affect the streetscape within the ½-mile study area.

VISUAL RESOURCES (½-MILE STUDY AREA)

Although the proposed buildings would be prominent from within the 400-foot study area, they would be considerably less visible from beyond that distance within the Manhattan portion of the ½-mile study area due to distance and intervening buildings. The upper floors of the buildings could be expected to be visible above shorter buildings, depending on the viewer's location and the size of intervening structures. The upper floors of the building on the 685 First Avenue parcel and of the office building on the 708 First Avenue parcel would be noticeable behind Tudor City in views east along East 41st and 42nd Streets or south on First Avenue, but they would most likely not be noticeable from many portions of the study area due to intervening buildings. The proposed development program would not block views of visual resources within the study area that include Grand Central Terminal, the Empire State Building,

the Chrysler Building, the main building of the New York Public Library, the United Nations Park, or Ralph J. Bunche Park.

As seen from Gantry Plaza State Park in Long Island City, from passing river traffic, or from south along the East River Esplanade, the proposed buildings would be prominent, new features of the dense Manhattan skyline (see Figure 8-21). Views of the Chrysler Building, Empire State Building (views of which are currently blocked by the Corinthian), and the Secretariat would not be blocked from Gantry Plaza State Park. Therefore, the new additions to the skyline would not have any significant adverse impacts on views or visual resources.

F. FUTURE CONDITIONS WITH THE UNDC PROJECT

As described in Chapter 25 of the FGEIS, the United Nations proposes to construct a 35-story (505-foot-tall), 950,000-square-foot office building on the site of Robert Moses Playground, located across East 42nd Street from the United Nations Headquarters complex and across East 41st Street from the 708 First Avenue development parcel. This building would have approximate dimensions of 200 feet by 158 feet, creating 31,759-square-foot floorplates. However, it is uncertain as to whether this project will be built, as described in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy” of this SEIS.

If the United Nations office building is constructed by 2014, it will remove a public open space and add a large building to the study area, increasing the number of tall, modern buildings lining First Avenue in the vicinity of the four development parcels. In terms of building use, bulk, setbacks, and density, the proposed buildings would be similar to the United Nations office building. They would, however, be taller.

It is expected that the United Nations office building will block existing views of the Secretariat building in views north on First Avenue from between East 39th and 41st Streets. This project, if constructed, would stand between the office building constructed on the 708 First Avenue parcel and the United Nations complex, and it would block views of the Secretariat from First Avenue between East 39th and 41st Streets that would otherwise have been blocked by the proposed development. The United Nations office building will not block views of other visual resources in the area that include the East River waterfront and the Empire State Building. *