Chapter 8: Urban Design and Visual Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the Proposed Project's effects on urban design and visual resources. The analysis updates the changes in background conditions since the Final Environmental Impact Statement (the 1992 FEIS) was issued, and assesses whether the changes in background conditions and the differences in program elements and site design between the proposed development and the development assessed in the 1992 FEIS for Parcels L, M, and N (the project site) would alter the 1992 FEIS findings with respect to urban design and visual resources.

The primary study area for the urban design and visual resources analysis for this Supplemental EIS (SEIS) has been defined as the area within 400 feet surrounding the project site (Parcels L, M, and N). The analysis also considers a secondary study area, which largely encompasses the area studied in the 1992 FEIS for visual context. However, since the project site's northern terminus extends only to West 61st Street (as compared with West 72nd Street in the 1992 FEIS), the northern boundary of the secondary study area has been established at West 66th Street, approximately ¼ mile from the project site. The eastern, southern, and western boundaries of the secondary study area are those established in the 1992 FEIS—Central Park West/Eighth Avenue, West 52nd Street, and the Hudson River, respectively (see **Figure 8-1**).

As defined in the *City Environmental Quality Review* (*CEQR) Technical Manual*, urban design components and visual resources determine the "look" of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the size and shape of buildings, their arrangement on blocks, the street pattern, and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis addresses each of these characteristics for existing conditions, and the Future Without and With the Proposed Project.

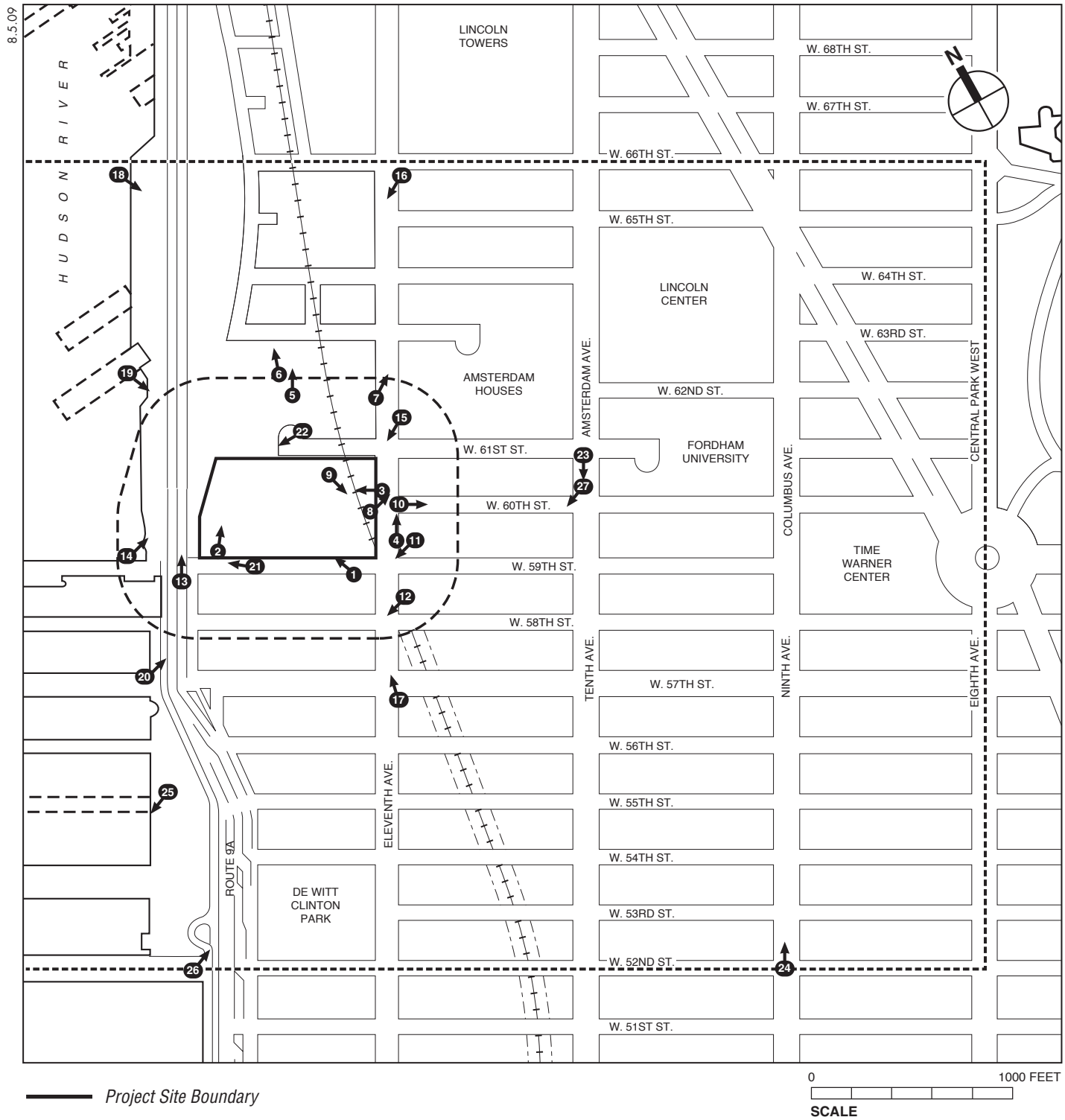
This analysis is based on the proposed program contemplated by the project sponsor, which assumes: 2,500 residential units; 250 hotel rooms; 151,598 gross square feet (gsf) of community facility (a public school); 140,168 gsf of retail (including a 36,701 gsf cinema); 104,432 gsf of office uses; 181,677 gsf of automotive showroom/service space; 1,800 parking spaces; and 2.75 acres of publicly accessible open space.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

PROJECT SITE

Urban Design

The proposed buildings would be taller than those envisioned in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2 and would have faceted—rather than rectilinear—massings. The buildings to be developed in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2 would also be built to the property line, compared with the Proposed Project, which would be set back behind landscaped areas on Riverside Boulevard, the west side of Freedom Place South, and portions of West 59th Street and West End Avenue. The design of



Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Areas and Photo Key

Figure 8-1

the proposed buildings would be governed by new General Large-Scale Development (GLSD) Special Permit approvals; in comparison, the two No Build Scenarios would be governed by the site's existing GLSD Special Permit provisions. The mix of uses on the site would be different with the Proposed Project than with No Build Scenarios 1 or 2, and the density of development on the site would be greater than No Build Scenario 1 by approximately 268,426 gsf. Since Parcel N would remain in its current state under No Build Scenario 2, rather than be developed along with the remainder of the site, the density of development with the Proposed Project would be greater than No Build Scenario 2 by approximately 2,774,379 gsf.

The Proposed Project would create new block forms, splitting the project site into three smaller blocks. This is different from the block forms in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, in which the current superblock would remain. The Proposed Project would also extend the street pattern of the surrounding area through the project site. Neither of the No Build Scenarios would create any new open space on the project site. In comparison, with the Proposed Project approximately 2.75 acres of the 8.18-acre site would be developed as publicly accessible open space, organized around West 60th Street.

The streetscape elements of the project site would improve in the Future Without or With the Proposed Project, as currently there are just a few scattered, small- and medium-size trees near the edges of the site and along the rail culvert, and numerous electrical wires loop overhead. The Proposed Project would include benches, seat walls, street lighting, and street trees, and a variety of other landscaping and open space features. There are no significant natural features on the project site in existing conditions, and this would not change in the Future Without or With the Proposed Project; however, the Proposed Project would provide a pedestrian connection from West 60th Street to Riverside Park South and the Hudson River via a path linking to the park's access staircase at West 61st Street.

In summary, like No Build Scenario 1 and, to a much lesser extent, No Build Scenario 2, the Proposed Project would transform the project site from an underutilized site containing parking facilities to a high-density, mixed-use development. The Proposed Project would enliven the site with new residents and retail shoppers and workers and the new publicly accessible open space, and would provide new connections to surrounding open spaces and natural features. The differences in building uses, bulk, and arrangements compared with the No Build Scenarios would not have a significant adverse effect on the project site's urban design.

With the incorporation of extensive landscaping features into the Proposed Project's open space plan, pedestrian wind conditions that would exceed the safety criteria used for the Proposed Project would be experienced at only one on-site and one off-site location during the winter season. These conditions would be similar to those at comparable locations in the City. The number of locations and the frequency of these wind conditions would also be reduced from those on and around the project site in Existing Conditions and in the Future Without the Proposed Project. The proposed open space plan balances the goal of minimizing elevated pedestrian wind conditions with urban design considerations, including the goals of maintaining view corridors, maximizing views to the Hudson waterfront, maintaining pedestrian circulation and access, and not impeding or blocking circulation and access for emergency service vehicles. Therefore, no significant adverse urban design impacts would result from potential pedestrian wind conditions.

Visual Resources

As with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, the development of new structures on the project site would eliminate some existing views to the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades from within the project site itself; however, these views would still be maintained from adjacent sidewalks. Furthermore, by preserving the westward view corridor along West 60th Street, the Proposed Project would maintain existing views along this corridor to the waterfront. By extending Freedom Place South through the project site, the Proposed Project would also maintain existing views south along that corridor through the project site to the Consolidated Edison Power House. These views would be maintained in No Build Scenario 2—since Parcel N would remain in its current undeveloped state—but would not be maintained in No Build Scenario 1. Therefore, in comparison to No Build Scenarios 1 and 2 the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse effect on visual resources from the project site.

STUDY AREAS

Urban Design

Although the Proposed Project would introduce a higher-density development and a different mix of uses compared with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, these uses and densities would be compatible with the existing and anticipated uses of buildings in the study areas. In addition, the proposed residential uses would complement the ongoing development of the Riverside South parcels to the north, and the proposed retail and publicly accessible open space uses would serve the growing Riverside South neighborhood as well as the emerging neighborhoods to the south and immediately to the east. At 31 to 44 stories (393 to 535 feet tall), the proposed buildings would be taller than most of the buildings in the primary study area; however, this area already contains a number of tall, modern towers ranging in height up to 39 stories (and up to 400 feet tall), including: the 16- and 39-story (up to 361-foot-tall) West End Towers development, along West End Avenue north of West 61st Street; the Helena, a 37-story (350-foot-tall) residential building at the northwest corner of Eleventh Avenue and West 57th Street (601 West 57th Street); and the 31-story (400-foot-tall) residential building at 10 West End Avenue. Since the 1992 FEIS, a large number of tall buildings have been built in the surrounding area. Within the secondary study area, these include towers of a comparable height to the Proposed Project, including buildings of over 40 and 50 stories (up to 750 feet tall).

Like No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, the Proposed Project would not change any block forms, street patterns, or street hierarchies in the primary or secondary study areas, except on the project site itself. Most of the buildings in the study areas, including new developments, are rectilinear in their massing, rather than faceted like the proposed buildings. However, there are several structures in the study areas with curved façades, and the Hearst Tower—at the southwest corner of Eighth Avenue and West 57th Street—has a diamond-patterned faceted glass façade. Therefore, this difference would not be considered a significant adverse effect of the Proposed Project. The proposed buildings would create new streetwalls along portions of West 61st Street, the east side of Freedom Place South, and portions of West End Avenue, West 59th Street, and West 60th Street, although in some cases these new streetwalls would not meet the street line. The modern buildings in the study areas are of contemporary design and are mainly faced in glass, stone, and metal; therefore, the expected contemporary design and materials of both the No Build Scenarios and the Proposed Project would be consistent with a large portion of buildings in the surrounding area. Neither the No Build Scenarios nor the Proposed Project would change any streetscape elements in the study areas.

Compared with the No Build Scenarios, the Proposed Project would create a new open space that would complement the waterfront parks and De Witt Clinton Park in the study areas, and would enhance access to Riverside Park South and the area's predominant natural feature, the Hudson River. Therefore, compared with the No Build Scenarios, the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse effect on the urban design characteristics of the study areas.

Visual Resources

Views of the Consolidated Edison Power House from the north along West End Avenue and from Riverside Park South, though still available, would be more limited with the development of the Proposed Project; however, these views would also be limited with the development of No Build Scenario 1 and, to a lesser extent, No Build Scenario 2. Views of the power house's smokestack from locations farther north are already obstructed by changes in topography and existing structures, including already built portions of the Riverside South development. Compared with No Build Scenario 1, the Proposed Project—by extending Freedom Place South through the project site to West 59th Street—would provide views along this street south to the power house.

Riverside Park South would continue to provide expansive views of the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades in the Future With the Proposed Project; these views would also be available from the newly created Riverside Boulevard between West 59th and West 61st Streets with the Proposed Project as well as the No Build Scenarios. Unlike No Build Scenario 1, which would completely obstruct the westward view corridor along West 60th Street, the Proposed Project would maintain existing views along this street to the waterfront. Both the Proposed Project and the No Build Scenarios would contribute to the modern visual character of the view corridors along West End Avenue and Riverside Boulevard, and in views from areas farther east, where the proposed buildings would be visible amidst other tall structures. The proposed buildings would generally extend existing and frame newly created view corridors.

In summary, the Proposed Project—compared with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2—would not have a significant adverse impact on visual resources in or visible from the study areas.

B. SUMMARY OF 1992 FEIS FINDINGS

The 1992 FEIS analyzed a large study area bounded by West 52nd Street to the south, the Hudson River to the west, West 79th Street to the north, and Central Park West/Eighth Avenue to the east. The 1992 FEIS analysis concluded that the proposed development would not have any significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual resources.

The 1992 FEIS development would extend the existing urban streetscape, replacing a topographically depressed, largely vacant site with a new street grid and buildings at grade with the surrounding neighborhood. The 1992 FEIS analysis concluded that although the proposed structures would be substantially taller than the majority of buildings in the immediate area, they would be similar in character to the Upper West Side neighborhood. Buildings were proposed to be built to the property line, creating a continuous streetwall, and larger buildings were to line major avenues and cross streets, with smaller, townhouse-like structures on the side streets. On the portion of the 1992 FEIS development site north of Parcels L, M, and N, the project also proposed to extend existing streets as either public streets or private drives, thus reestablishing the street grid and standard-size blocks. The 1992 FEIS concluded that the project's GLSD Special Permit provisions would ensure that the project reflected and reinforced the character of the Upper West Side. The pedestrian environment throughout the project site would be

enlivened through the inclusion of ground-floor retail and cultural uses, as well as special landscaping treatments designed by the Riverside South Arts Program. On the current project site, a superblock would be created to allow for a proposed commercial/studio/theater building, with office towers rising above the studio base on West End Avenue, and residential towers on the west side of the site, facing the Hudson River.

In addition, as part of the 1992 FEIS project, a waterfront park was to be created, which included a 0.6-mile-long waterfront esplanade, the rehabilitation of Pier 1, and two new pedestrian piers. This new waterfront park would increase the amount of publicly accessible waterfront and natural areas in the neighborhood, extending the existing Riverside Park southward from West 72nd Street to West 59th Street, and opening the waterfront between West 64th and West 72nd Streets for the first time since the development of the Upper West Side.

The 1992 FEIS project was not found to have any adverse impacts on visual resources. Existing east-west view corridors on the project site, except along West 60th Street, would be maintained with the extension of the existing street grid. The new buildings would generally extend existing and frame newly created view corridors. Some views of the sky and waterfront would be partially blocked; however, such views are not unique within the study area, and new view corridors would be created down the new side streets. Panoramic views of the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades would be available from the waterfront park, and from most of the extension of Riverside Drive.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

The project site is a superblock, bounded by West 61st Street to the north, West End Avenue to the east, West 59th Street to the south, and the alignment of Riverside Boulevard to the west. The majority of the site is occupied by a large, paved surface parking lot with metal stackers. This parking lot is accessed via an entrance on West End Avenue. On the south side of the project site, on West 59th Street midway between West End Avenue and Route 9A, there are two brick buildings of two- and three-stories that have been connected for their present use as a parking garage (see view 1 of **Figure 8-2**[1]). The first building is Italianate in design; the other is a utilitarian structure. The buildings are built to the lot line and have been heavily altered; most of their decorative elements have been stripped away, and many of their windows have been enclosed with brick, cement, or wood. A paved parking lot for the United States Postal Service (USPS), which uses the lot for the storage of postal vehicles, is located in the southwest corner of the site (see view 2 of **Figure 8-2**). At the northeast corner of the project site, an Amtrak rail line is located within a sub-grade culvert (see view 3 of **Figure 8-3**).

The project site is surrounded by a chain-link fence, which is topped by barbed wire in some places and in others is filled with green PVC privacy slats. Chain-link fencing also divides the site into its various components. There are no significant natural features on the project site. There are a few scattered, small- and medium-size trees, mostly near the edges of the site and along the rail culvert. The project site slopes downward from West 61st Street to West 59th

[1] Figure 8-1 contains a photograph location key for Figures 8-2 through 8-15.

. Project site buildings, view from West 59th Street **1**

View north through project site from truck parking area **2**

Photographs of Project Site
Figure 8-2

Amtrak culvert on project site, view from West End Avenue **3**

View north on West End Avenue toward Parcel O development **4**

Project Site and Study Area Views
Figure 8-3

Street, and downward 17 feet from West End Avenue toward its western edge as part of a long slope from Central Park to the Hudson River. Numerous electrical wires, suspended by wooden posts, loop overhead through most of the project site.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources are an area's unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. These can include historic structures, parks, natural features (such as rivers), or important views. There are no visual resources on the project site. Some views to the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades are available from portions of the project site and adjacent sidewalks; however, these views are partially obstructed by the elevated portion of Route 9A.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

Block Form, Street Pattern, and Street Hierarchy

Portions of the primary study area adhere to the typical Manhattan street grid pattern, with wider avenues running north-south and narrower cross streets running east-west. However, this street grid is interrupted in several locations. West 60th Street ends at West End Avenue. West 62nd Street does not extend west between Amsterdam and West End Avenues, and ends west of West End Avenue at a new open space near what will become Freedom Place South. West 63rd Street extends only halfway east from West End Avenue to Amsterdam Avenue and halfway west from West End Avenue to Freedom Place South. This creates a large superblock bounded by West 61st and West 64th Streets, and Amsterdam and West End Avenues, which is predominantly occupied by the Amsterdam Houses complex (see description below).

In addition, portions of the street grid have not yet been extended to the Riverside South areas north of the project site, including Freedom Place South between West 61st and West 63rd Streets; Riverside Boulevard south of West 63rd Street; and West 61st Street west of West End Avenue. (A portion of the latter street is under construction along Site O up to the future intersection with Freedom Place South.) Without these streets, this portion of the study area—effectively a large, irregularly-shaped superblock—is mostly inaccessible and does not currently provide connections to Riverside Park South to the west.

West End Avenue, which runs north-south, is a major thoroughfare in the study area. It carries two lanes of traffic in each direction, with a lane of parking on each side, and becomes Eleventh Avenue south of West 59th Street. At the western edge of the study area is Route 9A, which is elevated on a viaduct north of 57th Street and runs parallel to West End Avenue, sloping slightly upward as it moves north. Route 9A is heavily used, carrying four lanes of traffic in each direction, and is accessed within the study area from an on-ramp located just below West 58th Street. The Twelfth Avenue service road terminates at West 59th Street. East-west streets in the study area are one-way—except for West 59th Street—and are less traveled, primarily because they terminate at or just west of West End Avenue. The study area has little pedestrian traffic.

Building Bulk, Use, Type, and Arrangement

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the majority of the Riverside South project has been constructed. Parcels A through I and O have been developed with large-scale residential buildings, with accessory retail, office, and parking uses. These new buildings

have large footprints and are set back above a wide base with one or more towers. The structures are built to their lot lines, creating strong streetwalls, and are mainly faced in glass, stone, and metal. The parcels in construction (Parcels J1 and J2) and those still awaiting development (Parcels K1 and K2) are within the urban design and visual resources study area; however, with the continuing development of the Riverside South project as well as other new buildings constructed since 1992, the study area now mostly comprises recently-built residential and mixed-use towers, community facility buildings, and a large industrial building (the Con Edison plant). There are also a number of sites outside of the Riverside South complex that are also currently under construction or awaiting development.

The area immediately north of the project site includes Riverside South Parcels K and O, the West End Towers residential complex, and the West End Towers open space. Riverside South Parcel O, at West 61st Street and West End Avenue, was developed in 2006 with a 25-story (222-foot-tall) residential building. It is a large, bulky structure built to the lot line along West 61st Street and West End Avenue, and is faced in masonry (see view 4 of **Figure 8-3**). Directly adjacent to this new building is a small, new open space that at present is only accessible from the south (see view 5 of **Figure 8-4**). The open space is mainly a paved area with some benches, small landscaped areas, and a few trees. To the north of Parcel O are the West End Towers, developed in 1995 and located at 55 West End Avenue between West 61st and West 63rd Streets. This development is built to the lot lines along West End Avenue and West 62nd and West 63rd Streets, and includes 16- and 39-story towers (up to 361 feet in height) above a large base. The Towers are clad in red and tan brick and have large windows and balconies. Directly north of the western part of the project site, Parcels K1 and K2—at West 61st Street near Route 9A—are in the planning stages and awaiting development. When completed, these parcels are expected to contain a mix of uses within one 13-story tower and another 33-story tower. Just north of Parcels K1 and K2 are Parcels J1 and J2, which are currently under development with two towers, approximately 41-stories and 23 stories tall, clad mainly in glass with a masonry base (see view 6 of **Figure 8-4**). The building meets the lot line along Freedom Place South and West 64th Street.

To the northeast of the project site, across West End Avenue on the superblock described above, are the Amsterdam Houses, a series of 10 six-story "T" and "H" plan residential buildings and three 13-story (116-foot-tall) cruciform brick residential towers. The Amsterdam Houses (discussed in further detail in Chapter 7, "Historic Resources") are set back from the street on landscaped grounds, and are oriented to face inward, away from the surrounding streets. The portion of the complex closest to the project site, along West End Avenue, includes several six-story structures, and is slightly above grade and separated from the sidewalk by a red brick retaining wall with chain-link fencing above (see view 7 of **Figure 8-5**). There is no access to the complex from West End Avenue.

To the east of the project site, along West End Avenue between West 60th and West 61st Streets, is a recently constructed six-story building with a brick, metal, and glass façade that contains the Abraham Joshua Heschel High School. Adjacent to this building, at the corner of West 61st Street, is a four-story masonry warehouse that is currently in use as a car dealership (see view 8 of **Figure 8-5**). Farther south on West End Avenue, between West 59th and West 60th Streets, there is 10 West End Avenue, a modern 31-story (400-foot-tall) residential tower with ground-floor retail. The building is built to the lot line along West End Avenue, and is clad in glass and brick (see view 9 of **Figure 8-6**). The blocks between West 58th and West 61st Streets, east of West End Avenue, have several large-scale sites that are currently under construction or recently completed for institutional, residential, and other mixed-use buildings

New public open space at West 62nd Street and Freedom Place **5**

View north toward ongoing development of Parcels J1/J2 **6**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-4

View west to Amsterdam Houses from West End Avenue **7**

View northeast on West End Avenue from West 60th Street **8**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-5

View southeast from project site to new development in study area **9**

View of construction east on West 60th Street from West End Avenue **10**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-6

(see view 10 of **Figure 8-6**). Among these developments are the expansion of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Adagio 60/Sessanta project (see description below under "Future Without the Proposed Project"). Residential uses in these blocks are high-density and include the 35-story (335-foot-tall) Concerto and the 33-story (307-foot-tall) Roosevelt Hospital staff residence on the eastern side of the block between West 59th and West 60th Streets. The 59th Street Recreation Center, a public recreation center with a non-functioning outdoor pool, is located in the midblock between West 59th and West 60th Streets. It is a two-story, through-block brick structure with an entrance portico and stone ornamentation. Recently completed buildings in these blocks include the residential building 10 West End Avenue and the Element Condominium and the Hudson, two mixed-use residential and institutional buildings.

The southern portion of the study area is largely occupied by the Consolidated Edison Power House, which comprises the entire block bounded by West 58th and 59th Streets, West End Avenue, and Route 9A. The power house is a six-story, bulky industrial building built in 1904, highly ornamented and constructed of buff-colored brick with terra cotta detail (see view 11 of **Figure 8-7**). The tall smokestack at the West End Avenue side of the building is nearly as tall as neighboring high-rise structures. Farther south along West 58th Street, the neighborhood is primarily industrial, with an eight-story building used for storage and some parking areas. A 20-story (298-foot-tall) office building occupies the southeast corner of West 58th Street and Eleventh Avenue, and at Eleventh Avenue and West 57th Street is the Helena, a high-rise (350-foot-tall) residential building (see view 12 of **Figure 8-7**). On the same block, the Durst Organization recently received approvals to construct a private school for grades Pre-K through 12 in the midblock.

The area directly west of the project site below the elevated portion of Route 9A is partially closed off with chain-link fencing and is currently used as a staging area for the construction of Riverside South parcels and Riverside Park South (see view 13 of **Figure 8-8**). The Hudson River Park bicycle path also is routed beneath Route 9A. To the west of Route 9A is Riverside Park South, which is described below under "Natural Features." At the end of West 59th Street there is the West 59th Street Marine Transfer Station, a two-story, blue corrugated metal facility for the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY), which sits on Pier 99 above the Hudson River.

Streetscape Elements

The primary study area is urban in character, with streets flanked by concrete sidewalks. Parked cars are located on most streets, and several buses park on West End Avenue and along West 59th Street, adjacent to the project site. Modern lampposts are used in the area, and there is typical street furniture (e.g., bus shelters, newspaper bins) throughout the study area and some large signage on the sides of or atop buildings. There are a small number of street trees in the study area, mostly along West End Avenue. With the exception of the project site, the buildings along West End Avenue create consistent streetwalls along this thoroughfare; however, the streetwalls along the east-west streets east of West End Avenue are less consistent due to the mixture of open spaces, low-scale buildings, and tower that aren't built to their lot lines.

Natural Features

The topography of the primary study area is generally flat south of the project site. North and east of the project site, the topography of the area generally slopes downward to the Hudson River. The predominant natural feature in the study area is the river, which forms the western

View southwest on West End Avenue to Consolidated Power House **11**

View southwest on West End Avenue from West 58th Street **12**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-7

View north from West 59th Street, beneath Route 9A viaduct **13**

Riverside Park South, view north from study area **14**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-8

border of the study area. The river's edge is predominantly man-made, and within the study area the bulkhead consists of a concrete wall set on piles.

Riverside Park South has been developed along the river within and north of the study area. This new park, 12.9 acres (Phases I-IV) of which has been completed to date, includes a soccer field, a baseball field, handball courts, playground equipment, the reconstructed Pier 1, and an esplanade, as well as landscaped areas. The esplanade connects with the existing esplanade at Riverside Park to the north and to the Hudson River Park esplanade to the south. The park was designed to retain the industrial flavor of the railroad yard. Angular paths, intended to evoke railroad tracks, have been created from old concrete railroad platforms; other reused artifacts include ramps, piers, and a gantry. A portion of the park within the study area (Phase VII) has not yet commenced construction and is enclosed by a chain-link fence (see view 14 of **Figure 8-8**). As described above, the park is bordered on the east by the Hudson River Park bicycle path. Within the study area, the bicycle path is separated from Riverside Park South and is routed beneath Route 9A.

Another new open space in the primary study area is a privately owned public space (POPS) located on West End Avenue between West 63rd and West 64th Streets. This 1.7-acre space—connected with the West End Towers development—is bordered on its west side by Riverside South developments. Oriented toward active use, with children's play equipment and courts, this open space also includes walking paths, lawns, trees, sculptures, and playgrounds.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Several visual resources can be seen from within the primary study area. The Consolidated Edison Power House and its tall brick smokestack are visible throughout most the study area, particularly from the waterfront parks, the elevated portion of Route 9A, and along West End Avenue (see view 15 of **Figure 8-9**). From vantage points along this street, the full bulk of this massive building is visible due to the lack of development on the project site. Views of the power house from the cross-streets and the northern portion of the study area, however, are blocked by intervening tall buildings and changes in topography. Views north and south along West End Avenue are long and include modern high-rise buildings; however, other than the power house, these buildings do not contain any notable features (see views 16 and 17 of **Figures 8-9 and 8-10**). Views east on the east-west streets similarly continue for long distances, but do not contain notable features. Although the modern buildings in the study area are not considered to be visual resources, they do contribute to its visual character.

Riverside Park South provides expansive views of the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades as well as the project site and surrounding area, beyond the elevated portion of Route 9A (see views 18-20 of **Figures 8-10 and 8-11**). Within the rest of the study area, views west to the river are limited and, where they exist, are mainly obstructed by the elevated portion of Route 9A (see view 21 of **Figure 8-12**). A Consolidated Edison facility obstructs views on West 58th Street to the Hudson River, and views west along West 59th Street end with the DSNY facility on the waterfront. Views west on West 60th and West 61st Streets are largely blocked by uses and vegetation on the project site, and construction and staging mounds (see view 22 of **Figure 8-12**).

View south on West End Avenue to Consolidated Edison Power House **15**

View south on West End Avenue from West 66th Street **16**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-9

View north on West End Avenue/Eleventh Avenue from West 57th Street **17**

View south on Riverside Boulevard from West 66th Street **18**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-10

View toward project site from Riverside Park South **19**

View north from Hudson River Park towards project site **20**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-11

View west on West 59th Street, west of West End Avenue **21**

View southwest from West 61st Street **22**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-12

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

Block Form, Street Pattern, and Street Hierarchy

The secondary study area is developed in the typical Manhattan street grid pattern, which typically forms rectangular shaped blocks that are 200 feet wide and 800 feet long. As in the primary study area, the north-south avenues are wider while the cross streets are typically only 60 feet wide (including sidewalks). West 57th Street carries two-way traffic and is a major east-west artery through Manhattan. Broadway cuts through the study area at a diagonal, creating triangular and other irregularly-shaped blocks. Route 9A's orientation at the west end of the study area, which angles west at West 55th Street for two blocks before continuing north on a viaduct, also creates irregularly-shaped parcels. Riverside Boulevard gently curves along the edge of Riverside Park South. Freedom Place interrupts the grid west of West End Avenue, between West 64th and West 63rd Streets. Columbus Circle is another street feature that differs from the grid, with a traffic circle created by a roadway circling a landscaped open space and monument at the intersections of Eighth Avenue/Central Park West, Central Park South, and Broadway.

North of West 57th Street, Route 9A is carried on a viaduct. To the south it is at grade, with northbound and southbound traffic separated by a narrow landscaped median. South of West 54th Street, a concrete ramp provides access to an elevated parking structure at the Pier 94 Ship Terminal.

Within the secondary study area are a number of superblocks that contain residential and institutional complexes. These include the Amsterdam Houses superblock (described above); Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus, occupying the parcel bounded by Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues and West 60th and West 62nd Streets; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, located north of Fordham's campus between West 62nd and West 65th Streets; and the Time Warner Center, occupying the block bounded by Columbus Circle/Broadway/Eighth Avenue, Columbus Avenue, and West 58th and West 60th Streets. Also occupying a large block is De Witt Clinton Park, between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues and West 52nd and 54th Streets.

Building Bulk, Use, Type, and Arrangement

The secondary study area contains a variety of building uses, types, and arrangements. These include industrial uses south of West 59th Street along the blocks lining Twelfth Avenue, and auto dealerships and repair business predominantly on Eleventh Avenue south of West 58th Street. Residential and office buildings are located throughout the study area, as well as institutional buildings, including Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus, the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital, and John Jay College, all of which are located east of Eleventh Avenue/West End Avenue. Fordham University and John Jay College are both undergoing expansion efforts, and the Lincoln Center campus is being renovated and expanded; see "The Future Without the Proposed Project," below. Since the 1992 FEIS, new residential and office development has resulted in a number of tall buildings that have changed the mix of older low-rise and newer high-rise construction in the area. Buildings in the study area are typically attached with party walls, though a number of complexes—including Fordham's Lincoln Center campus, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and more recently constructed towers set within landscaped plazas—are freestanding structures.

Low-rise structures in the secondary study area, typically located on the cross-streets and including tenement structures on Ninth and Tenth Avenues, do not have setbacks. Taller buildings lining the avenues typically set back above a larger base, as do the completed Riverside South developments to the north, though there are also structures that rise to their full height without setting back (see view 23 of **Figure 8-13**). Most buildings in this area have square or rectangular forms. Exceptions include the Time Warner Center, where the eastern façade of the base of the building follows the curve of Columbus Circle, and 2 Columbus Circle, which has been recently renovated to house the Museum of Arts and Design and also conforms to the curve of Columbus Circle. The Hearst Tower at the southwest corner of Eighth Avenue and West 57th Street has a diamond-patterned faceted steel and glass façade (see view 24 of **Figure 8-13**). The new DSNY parking garage, presently nearing completion along Twelfth Avenue between West 55th and West 57th Streets, has a curved glass façade.

Building footprint shapes and sizes vary, with older tenement and industrial structures having square or rectangular footprints, to more dynamically shaped structures including residential buildings lining the east side of Broadway between West 62nd and West 65th Streets. Building footprints range from small structures on 25-by-100- and 50-by-100-foot lots—primarily on the side streets but also including tenements on Ninth and Tenth Avenues—to much larger footprints, such as the buildings that compose the Fordham University and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts campuses and structures that occupy almost entire blocks. These include the Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle, and the CBS Studios on Eleventh Avenue between West 56th and West 57th Streets.

Buildings in the secondary study area are typically constructed of masonry, glass, and metal. Late 19th- and early 20th-century buildings are typically clad in brick, with more contemporary structures designed with steel and glass curtain walls. The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts buildings are primarily clad in stone and glass; the recent renovation to Alice Tully Hall, which has a contemporary design, is also clad in these materials. There are a number of newer apartment buildings in the area that are clad in brick with punched windows; some of these buildings also have projecting balconies.

Streetscape Elements

As in the primary study area, the streetscape of the secondary study area is urban in character. The side streets and avenues are sporadically lined with street trees. Traffic on Broadway is separated by a wide landscaped median that contains trees, shrubs, and—in warm weather months—flowers. As described above, south of West 57th Street, Route 9A is divided by a narrow median with trees and shrubs. A similar median separates the highway from Twelfth Avenue. Columbus Circle has as its central focus a statue of Christopher Columbus set on a stone pedestal and base. Paved areas with benches, encircled by a fountain and plantings, ring the monument. Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus and plazas in the secondary study area also contain grass, trees, and other landscaping elevated on top of a one-story podium. In addition to Riverside Park South, large publicly accessible open spaces in the secondary study area include Clinton Cove Park—located west of Route 9A between West 54th and 57th Streets—and De Witt Clinton Park—located between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues and West 52nd and 54th Streets.

The public spaces within the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts campus are being renovated as part of the overall reworking of this campus. Josie Robertson Plaza—the central area between the theaters at Lincoln Center—is a major open space and gathering place with a fountain and ledges for sitting. With the proposed changes, the plaza's pavement has been renovated, its

View south on Amsterdam Avenue from West 61st Street **23**

View north on Ninth Avenue from West 52nd Street **24**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-13

fountain enhanced with new lighting and seating, and there is a widened, grand stair leading from the plaza to the Columbus Avenue sidewalk. The North Plaza has been improved with a restaurant along 65th Street that has a usable lawn area on its roof; in addition, the reflecting pool at this plaza was lengthened, a new grand stair entrance has been added, and there is a new grove of pruned trees with perimeter benches and moveable seating to the south of the reflecting pool. Across Columbus Avenue, Harmony Atrium has been completely renovated to become a new gateway to Lincoln Center from Broadway. The renovated atrium features walls of plants, falling water, and seating as well as places to buy food and tickets to Lincoln Center events. In addition, DPR recently completed a renovation of the Guggenheim Bandshell in Damrosch Park, also on the Lincoln Center campus. Damrosch Park also includes a glade of trees and a planted area that serves to buffer the park from an underground parking entrance.

Within the secondary study area there are also a number of privately owned public spaces that are associated with large-scale residential and commercial buildings. These areas typically have seating and landscaping, fountains, or sculpture. They include: The Concerto, at 59th Street between Amsterdam and West End Avenues; One Lincoln Plaza; 30 West 63rd Street; the Regent, at 28 Columbus Avenue; the Beaumont, at 30 West 61st Street; Dale F. Frey Plaza, at the Trump International Hotel and Tower; the entrance plaza at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital; 330 West 56th Street; 555 West 57th Street; the Parc Vendome, at 322-350 West 57th Street; Harborview Terrace Plaza, at 530 West 55th Street; Clinton Towers Plaza, at 790 Eleventh Avenue; Symphony Plaza, at 1755 Broadway; and Balsley Park (see Table 5-4 and Figure 5-1 in Chapter 5, "Open Space"). The Amsterdam Houses complex contains landscaped walkways as well as the Samuel N. Bennerson Playground, which includes play equipment, seating, and basketball courts.

In general, the study area east of Twelfth Avenue has defined streetwalls created by the buildings that line the streets. Breaks in the streetwalls are created by parks and playgrounds, as well as the large complexes that contain freestanding structures. In addition, the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, a portion of Fordham's Lincoln Center campuses, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Educational Campus are raised on podiums above street level. De Witt Clinton Park is bordered by a low metal fence along Eleventh Avenue and a taller chain-link fence along Twelfth Avenue; within the park are baseball and soccer fields, paved basketball and handball courts, a dog run, perennial gardens, and a playground with a children's spray park that operates in warm weather. There are other playgrounds in the area, including at Tenth Avenue and West 53rd Street and the P.S. 191 playground at Amsterdam Avenue and West 60th Street. These playgrounds are also surrounded by metal fencing, including chain-link, and contain paved surfaces and metal playground equipment. Plazas surrounding more recently constructed apartment buildings and a few parking lots also create gaps in the streetwall.

For the most part, the buildings on Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Avenues and on West 57th Street contain ground-floor retail spaces, with shops and restaurants. The ground floors of the buildings on Eleventh Avenue south of West 58th Street generally contain auto showrooms. Some of the buildings in the secondary study area present blank, windowless façades; these include the 21-story, windowless utility building on the west side of Tenth Avenue between West 53rd and West 54th Streets, and the Koch (New York State) Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, which presents blank stone walls on West 62nd Street and Columbus Avenue. Other streetscape elements in the area are primarily limited to sidewalk furniture such as signs, standard light poles, bus stop shelters, and trash cans.

Natural Features

As in the primary study area, the Hudson River is the principal natural feature in the secondary study area (see view 25 of **Figure 8-14**). The river is bordered by bulkheads with piers that extend into the water, including the Pier 94 passenger ship terminal. The topography slopes sharply down to the Hudson River from the east. De Witt Clinton Park is set on a raised promontory above Twelfth Avenue (see view 26 of **Figure 8-14**). Greenery, including lawns and trees, are found in the waterfront parks and De Witt Clinton Park. As described above, some building plazas and privately-owned public spaces, as well as the medians separating the Route 9A and Broadway roadbeds, also contain plantings.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources in the secondary study area include views of the Hudson River and its waterfronts. These views are mostly available from the waterfront parks, including the Hudson River Park pedestrian/bicycle path, and Route 9A. Views of these visual resources are also available to boat traffic, including ships docking at Pier 94. Some of the cross-streets provide views west to the river and the New Jersey waterfront from Amsterdam (Tenth) and Eleventh Avenues.

Other visual resources include Columbus Circle, which is a focal point in views north on Eighth Avenue, views west on Central Park South, views south on Central Park West, and on Broadway. In addition, there are number of architecturally distinguished buildings in the secondary study area that constitute visual resources, including the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts complex and historic churches such as St. Paul the Apostle, clad in stone with large stained-glass windows at the southwest corner of Columbus Avenue and West 60th Street. Other visual landmarks in the secondary study area include a number of newly-constructed towers that are prominently visible in the area, such as the Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle, which has two 54-story glass towers and a curved façade conforming to Columbus Circle, and the Hearst Tower, a 42-story tower with a diamond-patterned faceted glass and steel façade (see view 24 of **Figure 8-13**).

Views on the avenues are generally long due to their width and straight trajectory. Views along these corridors take in the multitude of buildings that line the streets and the midtown Manhattan skyline, which consists of many tall buildings rising above shorter structures (see view 24 of **Figure 8-13**). As described above, views on the avenues that intersect Columbus Circle feature the Christopher Columbus monument as a focal point. The fountain at the center of Lincoln Center's Josie Robertson Plaza is also a focal point and visual landmark in views along Broadway, Columbus Avenue, and adjacent east-west streets. Also of visual interest is the large steel globe in the plaza of the 44-story Trump International Hotel and Tower at the corner of Central Park West and Broadway.

The Consolidated Edison Power House smokestack is also visible from locations within the secondary study area, including from Clinton Cove Park and from Amsterdam Avenue between West 60th and West 61st Streets through the P.S. 191 playground (see view 27 of **Figure 8-15**).

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

This section projects conditions out to 2018, the future analysis year, without the Proposed Project. These conditions are projected by considering the development that will occur on both the project site and in the study area independent of the Proposed Project. With regard to the

View west of the Hudson River at West 55th Street (Clinton Cove Park) **25**

View northeast of DeWitt Clinton Park from Route 9A at West 52nd Street **26**

Study Area Views
Figure 8-14

View southwest on Amsterdam Avenue between West 61st and 60th Streets **27**

project site, this section assumes that none of the discretionary approvals proposed as part of the Proposed Project, and the subject of this SEIS, would be adopted. Without these approvals, the analysis below considers two different scenarios for developing the site in the Future Without the Proposed Project. Conditions in the study area are projected by identifying proposed developments and other relevant changes anticipated to occur by 2018 independent of the Proposed Project.

PROJECT SITE

NO BUILD SCENARIO 1

Absent the Proposed Project under No Build Scenario 1, Parcels L, M, and N would be developed according to the original 1992 FEIS program (see **Figure 8-16**). Parcels L and M would be developed with two residential buildings with office space and public parking, ranging in height from 18 to 23 stories. Parcel N would be developed with a mix of retail, office, entertainment studio production, cinema, and public parking uses. The building on Parcel N would contain two 25-story tower elements along West End Avenue, built above a base that would occupy the rest of the parcel. The Amtrak rail line that passes through the site would continue to operate. The development would be governed by the site's existing GLSD Special Permit approvals, which would regulate building footprints, bulk, streetwalls, tower shape, height, setbacks, and allowable uses.

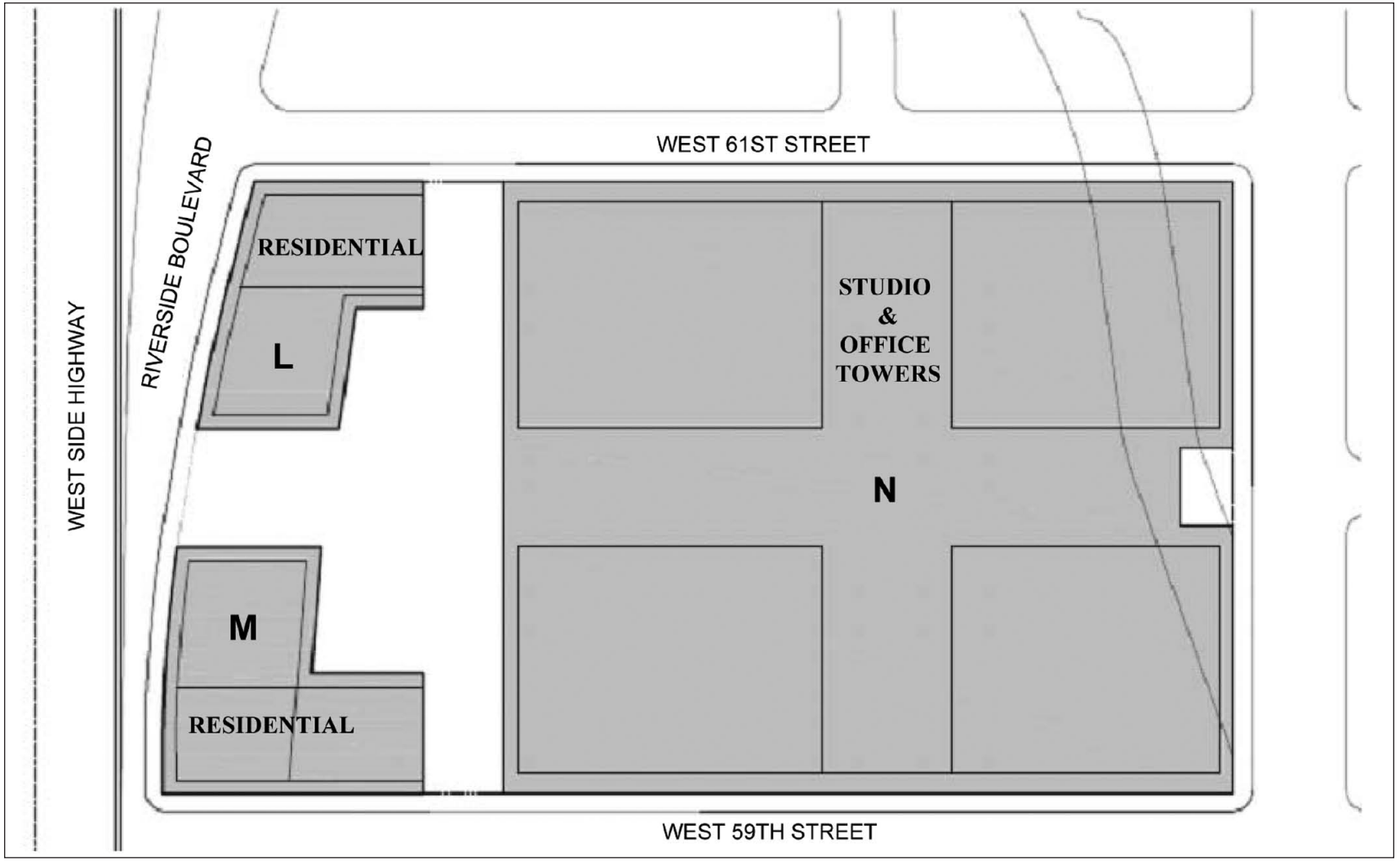
As described above, the original 1992 FEIS program/No Build Scenario 1 would extend the existing urban streetscape onto the project site, replacing a depressed, largely vacant site with new buildings at grade with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed buildings would be built to the property line, creating a continuous streetwall, and the existing superblock would remain. The buildings would have rectilinear massings. The existing GLSD Special Permit provisions would continue to govern the size and shape of the buildings. The pedestrian environment throughout the project site would be enlivened through the development of new, active uses on the site.

In No Build Scenario 1, the western view corridor of West 60th Street would be blocked by the new development on the project site (see **Figures 8-17 and 8-18**). Otherwise, the new buildings would generally extend existing and frame newly created view corridors. No new publicly accessible open space would be developed on the project site in this scenario.

NO BUILD SCENARIO 2

In No Build Scenario 2, the original 1992 FEIS program would be completed for Parcels L and M, but Parcel N would remain in its current parking use. The Amtrak rail line would continue its operations. As in No Build Scenario 1, the development would be governed by the site's existing GLSD Special Permit provisions.

As described above, the 1992 FEIS analysis concluded that the original program would not have any significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual resources; therefore, as No Build Scenario 2 represents less of a change from existing conditions than the original 1992 FEIS program/No Build Scenario 1, it would have similar or lesser impacts on urban design and visual resources. In No Build Scenario 2, the western portion of the project site would be developed with new buildings at grade with the surrounding neighborhood, extending the existing urban streetscape onto this portion of the site. Since Parcel N would remain in its current parking use, no new streetwalls would be formed on this portion of the site. The existing superblock would



No Build Scenario 1 Site Plan (1992 FEIS Program)

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

No Build Scenario 1
View East along West 60th Street
Figure 8-17

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NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

No Build Scenario 1
View East along Continuation Line of West 60th Street
Figure 8-18

remain, and the street grid would not be reestablished. In No Build Scenario 2, the existing view corridor along West 60th Street would not be maintained.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

As described in Chapter 2, a number of developments have been recently completed within the study areas. These include the Element Condominium, a 35-story (298-foot-tall) residential building primarily clad in glass at 555 West 59th Street; the Hudson, an 18-story (254-foot-tall) residential building at 225 West 60th Street; and a 31-story (400-foot-tall) residential glass- and brick-clad building at 10 West End Avenue. In addition, a number of developments are planned for completion by 2018 in the Future Without the Proposed Project. North of the project site, the ongoing Riverside South development will continue between West End Avenue and Riverside Boulevard. Parcel I has been developed with the Rushmore, a two-tower, 42-story (387-foot-tall) residential and office building. When completed, parcels K1 and K2 are anticipated to contain one 13-story (200-foot-tall) tower and another 33-story (410 foot-tall) tower. Parcels J1 and J2 contain two recently completed towers, approximately 41-stories and 23 stories tall (476 and 313 feet, respectively), clad mainly in glass with a masonry base. Both the K1/K2 and J1/J2 parcels developments will include residential and retail space. As these portions of the Riverside South development are completed, portions of the street grid that have not yet been extended to this area will be constructed, including Freedom Place South between West 61st and West 63rd Streets and Riverside Boulevard south of West 63th Street. This will improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation in the study area, as well as the streetscape. Other large developments within the study area include the recently completed Adagio 60/Sessanta project, a 27-story building with a nine-story component on the block bounded by West 61st Street, Amsterdam Avenue, West 60th Street, and West End Avenue. This development includes residential, medical office, ground-floor retail, and public parking. This project will continue the trend in the area toward large residential and mixed-use developments of contemporary design.

South of the project site, the Durst Organization is planning to build out the block on West 57th Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues with a 17-story (approximately 300-foot-tall) commercial office building. Southeast of the project site, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice is expanding to occupy the full block between West 58th and West 59th Streets with a new 13-story academic building. The West 59th Street Marine Transfer Station on Pier 99, which currently processes recyclable paper waste, is proposed to be converted to accept commercial waste.

Finally, by 2018, Riverside Park South is expected to be completed with the construction of Phases V through VII, resulting in approximately 9.6 acres of new mapped parkland. Pier 97 also will be redeveloped with one acre of active and passive recreation space, including lawn and playground areas. These new open spaces will enhance the streetscape of the study area and connections to existing open spaces, and will serve the expanded population generated by the new residential developments.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

As in the primary study area, there is a large amount of development proposed for the secondary study area by 2018. Most of these projects will create additional residential buildings, thus continuing the area-wide trend toward large residential and mixed-use developments of contemporary design. Planned developments within this area include: a mixed-use project at 622 West 57th Street (on the west side of Eleventh Avenue), which will include residential, retail,

supermarket, auto dealership, and public parking uses; an expansion of the Harborview Terrace Houses (a New York City Housing Authority development) with two new 15-story buildings; Hudson Hill, at 462 West 58th Street, which will create 67 new residential units; an affordable housing site for the Western Rail Yard project, at the corner of Ninth Avenue and West 54th Street; two affordable housing developments, each with 100 units, on West 52nd and West 53rd Streets between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues; the Two Trees Site/Clinton Park development at 770 Eleventh Avenue, which is anticipated to include 900 residential units (some of which would be affordable) as well as a food market, retail, auto sales/repair health club, New York Police Department horse stables, and parking uses; the Dillon, an 85-unit development at 405-425 West 53rd Street; and Griffin Court Condos, a 96-unit development at 460 West 54th Street, the former Sony/BMG studio.

In addition to these new residential and mixed-use developments, there are several institutional and commercial expansions planned for the secondary study area by 2018. As described above, Lincoln Center is undertaking a renovation of its campus, which includes an expansion of the Julliard School and Alice Tully Hall (recently completed), a redesign of West 65th Street, and improvements to various public spaces. As part of Fordham University's master plan, the university intends to construct 695 dormitory beds, parking, and approximately 383,000 gsf of new academic space on its campus by 2014. In addition, Fordham University will lease or otherwise convey parcels on the northwest and southwest corners of its campus to private developers for the construction of approximately 730,000 gsf of residential space (approximately 876 units). A new DSNY garage is proposed on Twelfth Avenue between West 55th and West 57th Streets, to replace an existing garage, and Piers 92 and 94 will be expanded to provide additional trade show facility space and a new publicly-accessible waterfront esplanade. Lastly, two of the three new entrances to the IRT station platform, associated with the renovations to the 59th Street-Columbus Circle subway station, have been completed. One of the three new entrances is nearing completion.

E. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

The proposed modifications of the Proposed Project's GLSD Special Permit and Restrictive Declaration would allow for new development to occur on Parcels L, M, and N that would be different than that envisioned in the 1992 FEIS. The Proposed Project would result in five new buildings on the project site. As described in more detail in Chapter 1, "Project Description," these would be as follows:

- **Building 1** would have retail use on the ground floor, office use on the second and third floors and residential use above, and would be located at the northwest corner of the site on West 61st Street near Riverside Boulevard. Building 1 is expected to be approximately 487 feet at its highest point (approximately 38 stories plus mechanical levels).
- **Building 2** would also be located on West 61st Street, east of Building 1, and is expected to be approximately 526 feet tall (approximately 43 stories plus mechanical levels). It would include ground-floor retail, a public elementary and intermediate school, and residential use on its upper levels.

- **Building 3** would be located at the southwest corner of the site, on West 59th Street near Riverside Boulevard. The building is expected to be approximately 456.5 feet tall at its highest point (approximately 34 stories plus mechanical levels), and would include ground-floor retail and residential uses above.
- **Building 4** would be located east of Building 3 along West 59th Street. This building is expected to be approximately 393 feet in height (approximately 31 stories plus mechanical levels), and would include retail on the first two above-grade floors with residential use above.
- **Building 5** would be located at the southeast corner of the site, with frontage on West End Avenue, Freedom Place South, and West 59th and West 60th Streets. It is expected to be approximately 535 feet tall (approximately 44 stories plus mechanical levels) at its highest point. The building is expected to include retail on the ground, second, third and fourth above-grade floors (including cinema use), a hotel, and residential use on the upper levels. Building 5 is required to step back from the streetline of West End Avenue to avoid the Amtrak tunnel below. The resulting open space area in front of Building 5 would be raised from above the sidewalk of West End Avenue.

Below grade, the project site would have up to three levels of developed area. This area is expected to include automotive service use on the first cellar level, and public parking spaces on the two sub-cellar levels.

The proposed buildings would be separated by paved and landscaped areas, and are expected to be of contemporary design with curtain wall façades of glass and metal. As currently designed, the buildings' massings would be faceted rather than rectilinear, with a variety of discrete elements rather than towers above wide bases (see **Figure 8-19**). The Proposed Project would construct Buildings 2 and 5 and portions of Buildings 1 and 4 on Parcel N; in comparison, in No Build Scenario 2 this parcel would remain undeveloped and in its current parking use. The proposed buildings would be taller than those envisioned in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2—which would range in height from 18 to 25 stories—and would have more irregular massings. Furthermore, the buildings to be developed in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2 would be built to the property line, but the Proposed Project would be set back behind landscaped areas on Riverside Boulevard, the west side of Freedom Place South, and portions of West 59th Street and West End Avenue. The design of the proposed buildings, as in the two No Build Scenarios, would be governed by the site's GLSD Special Permit approvals, which regulate building footprints, bulk, streetwalls, tower shape, height, setbacks, and allowable uses. The Special Permit controls are being modified to facilitate the proposed new uses, site plan, and building massings. To grant the requested Special Permits relating to bulk, the New York City Planning Commission (CPC) must make findings relating to the quality of the overall site plan and its relationship to the surrounding area, access to light and air, and the adequacy of surrounding streets.

In terms of proposed uses, No Build Scenarios 1 and 2 do not include any school, hotel, or auto service uses, and the proposed program does not include any entertainment production studio uses. In addition, the amount of residential space to be developed on the site would be increased considerably compared with the No Build Scenarios, and the Proposed Project would introduce community facility and open space uses to the site. Therefore, the mix of uses on the site would be different with the Proposed Project than with No Build Scenarios 1 or 2. The density of development on the site would also be greater than No Build Scenario 1 by approximately 362,760 gsf. Since Parcel N would remain in its current state under No Build Scenario 2, rather

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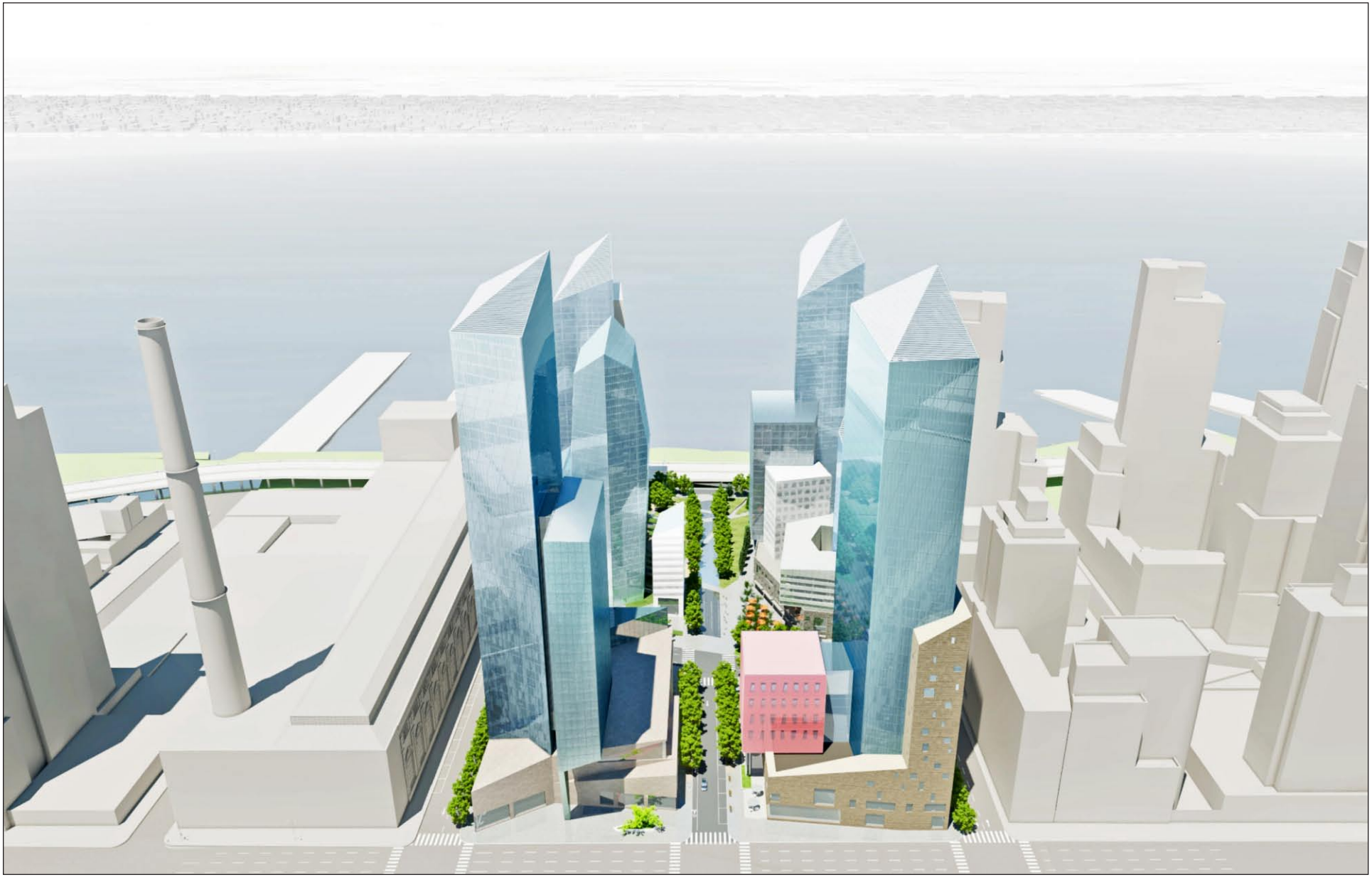

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Aerial View Looking West
Figure 8-19

than be developed this area along with the remainder of the site, the density of development with the Proposed Project would be greater than No Build Scenario 2 by approximately 2,774,379 gsf.

The Proposed Project would create new block forms, splitting the project site into three smaller blocks. This is different from the block forms in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, in which the current superblock would remain. The Proposed Project would also extend the street pattern of the surrounding area through the project site. West 60th Street would be extended about a third of the way into the site from West End Avenue, and Freedom Place South would extend through the site between West 59th and West 61st Streets. These streets would not be developed in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2. The hierarchy of these streets would not change. In addition, rather than providing vehicular entrances to the project site only at the west side of the site on West 59th and West 61st Streets, the Proposed Project would have a variety of vehicular drop-off areas and vehicular entrances as well as street access through the site.

Neither of the No Build Scenarios would create any new open space on the project site. In comparison, with the Proposed Project approximately 2.75 acres of the 8.18-acre site would be developed as publicly accessible open space, organized around West 60th Street. Along West 60th Street through the project site there would be street trees within a cobbled planting strip. On the north side of the street, where the sidewalk is wider, there would be a raised terrace, and large planters along this terrace would provide landscaping as well as seating opportunities at the sidewalk (see **Figure 8-20**). The West 60th Street corridor of new open space would connect to Riverside Park South via a major pedestrian path linking to the park's access staircase at the intersection of Riverside Boulevard and West 61st Street.

At the intersection of West 60th Street and Freedom Place South, Buildings 1 and 4 would step back to define a central 1.2-acre plaza (see **Figure 8-21**). Within this plaza there is expected to be dynamic fountains with interactive water jets, similar to the Crown Fountain at Millennium Park in Chicago. Adjacent to the fountain, a raised area would contain a grove of trees as well as seating for public use (see **Figure 8-22**). Extending west from the plaza, the West 60th Street axis would become a "scrim" of water, intended as a visual extension of the street (see **Figure 8-23**). Trees would line both sides of the scrim, and benches would line the southern path to allow users to face the water scrim and lawn to the north. Paths would crisscross to create a pedestrian network linking the central open space to sidewalks at the periphery of the site. Lawns and meadows with native plantings would slope to the water, and a dense planting of trees would provide a visual buffer to the West Side Highway (see **Figure 8-24**). Along West 59th Street between Buildings 3 and 4, a grade transition would be accommodated with stepped seating that would face south, providing views to the Consolidated Edison Power House on the south side of West 59th Street.

The streetscape elements of the project site would improve with the No Build Scenarios and the Proposed Project, as currently there are just a few scattered, small- and medium-size trees near the edges of the site and along the rail culvert, and numerous electrical wires loop overhead. As noted above, the Proposed Project would include benches, seatwalls, street lighting, and street trees, and a variety of other landscaping and open space features. There are no significant natural features on the project site in existing conditions, and this would not change in the Future Without or With the Proposed Project. However, the Proposed Project would provide a pedestrian connection to Riverside Park South and the Hudson River via a path linking to the Park's access staircase at West 61st Street.

In summary, as in No Build Scenario 1 and, to a much lesser extent, No Build Scenario 2, the Proposed Project would transform the project site from an underutilized site to a high-density,

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View Looking West on 60th Street
from West End Avenue

Figure 8-20

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

View Looking West at Plaza from West 60th Street

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

View Looking Southwest From Plaza
Figure 8-22

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

View Looking West Along Water Scrim

Figure 8-23

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

View Looking East at Meadow

Figure 8-24

mixed-use development. The Proposed Project would enliven the site with new residents and retail shoppers and workers and the new publicly accessible open space, and would provide new connections to surrounding open spaces and natural features. The differences in building uses, bulk, and arrangements compared with the No Build Scenarios would not have a significant adverse impact on the project site's urban design.

Wind

Large buildings have the potential to intercept the flow of wind at high elevations along the building façade and redirect wind down to ground level. Such a "downwashing flow" can cause accelerated wind speeds at the pedestrian level, which typically occur at the corners of tall buildings where the downwashed wind passes around the edges of the building. When two or more buildings are situated side by side, winds tend to accelerate through the gap between the buildings, known as a "channeling effect." If these conditions occur for prevailing winds, and especially for strong winds, there is an increased potential for the creation of accelerated winds at ground level.

Since the proposed project would result in the construction of multiple large buildings close to one another on the project site, there is the potential for downwash and channeling effects, and consequent elevated pedestrian-level wind conditions. In light of this potential, a pedestrian wind analysis was undertaken by the firm Rowan William Davies & Irwin, Inc. (RWDI) to better understand wind conditions at the project site and assess whether the proposed project might result in accelerated ground-level winds. This testing was conducted using a scale model of the proposed buildings, project landscape elements and surrounding buildings in a wind tunnel. Landscaping features were incorporated into the open space design for the Proposed Project to minimize the potential for elevated pedestrian wind conditions.

In completing the assessment of potential wind effects, wind conditions at and around the project site for Existing Conditions, and the Future With and Without the Proposed Project were compared against wind force criteria developed by RWDI, which has conducted research and observations of wind patterns at developments throughout North America over the past 30 years. The assessment was based on a 55 mile per hour (mph) wind safety criterion, since wind gusts at that level have been shown to have the potential to affect a pedestrian's balance and footing. With this criterion, wind reduction measures should be considered if winds of this magnitude could occur more than two times per season at locations where pedestrians would be expected to be present.

Existing wind conditions at and around the project site were evaluated based on wind conditions monitored at United States National Weather Service meteorological stations at John F. Kennedy, Newark and LaGuardia Airports for the period 1948 through 2005. Wind conditions were analyzed for the May through October "summer" period and November through April "winter" period. A review of these data indicated that winds during the summer period were predominately from the South and Southwest, while winds during the winter period were predominately from the West and Northwest, with winds exceeding 20 mph approximately 5 percent of the time during the summer period and approximately 15 percent of the time during the winter period. The prevailing winds and wind conditions at the project site are similar to those at comparable locations in Manhattan near the Hudson River, since there are no major intervening terrain features that would change the flow of winds from the dominant wind directions affecting the project site.

The wind tunnel model included all relevant surrounding buildings and topography within a 1600 ft radius of the project site. Receptors were placed both on and off-site, in areas where pedestrian activity would be expected.

The results of the wind tunnel analysis indicate that during the summer months (May through October) there is no potential for pedestrian wind conditions which exceed RWDI's safety criteria at any of the receptor locations tested. During the winter months (November through April), the analysis indicates that through the incorporation of the extensive landscape features in the project's open space plan, the potential for pedestrian wind conditions that exceed RWDI's safety criteria at on- and off-site locations would be limited to one on-site location (approximately where the proposed water scrim and fountain would meet) and one off-site location (at the north-east corner of West 58th Street and 12th Avenue). At the on-site location, the results indicate that wind conditions above 55 mph in the winter season would occur approximately four times, and at the off-site location these wind conditions would occur three times. These represent conditions that would just exceed RWDI's safety criteria, and would be similar to conditions at comparable locations in the City. With the Proposed Project, the number of locations at which RWDI's criteria is exceeded and the frequency of those events would also be reduced compared to the number and frequency of events at and around the project site in Existing Conditions and in the Future Without the Proposed Project. Therefore, no significant adverse urban design impacts would result from potential pedestrian wind conditions.

The landscaping features that have been included in the Proposed Project's open space plan to minimize elevated wind conditions would include coniferous trees with foliage that extends to ground level (e.g., evergreens) and marcescent tree species (deciduous trees that retain their leaves in the winter) to deflect and disperse wind gusts. The open space plan balances the goal of minimizing elevated pedestrian wind conditions with urban design considerations, including the goals of maintaining view corridors, maximizing views to the Hudson River waterfront, maintaining pedestrian circulation and access, and not impeding or blocking circulation and access for emergency service vehicles.

VISUAL RESOURCES

As described above, there are no visual resources on the project site. Existing views to the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades from portions of the project site and adjacent sidewalks are partly obstructed by the elevated portion of Route 9A. As with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, the development of new structures on the project site would eliminate some of these views from within the site itself; however, these views would still be maintained from adjacent sidewalks. Unlike No Build Scenario 1, which would completely obstruct the westward view corridor along West 60th Street, the Proposed Project would maintain existing views along this corridor to the waterfront (see **Figure 8-25**). These views would not be maintained in No Build Scenarios 1 or 2. By extending Freedom Place South through the project site, the Proposed Project would also maintain existing views south through the project site to the Consolidated Edison Power House (see **Figure 8-26**). These views would not be maintained in No Build Scenario 1. Therefore, compared with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse impact on visual resources on or visible from the project site.

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Proposed View West Along West 60th Street
from Amsterdam to Project Site

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

South Elevation - Proposed View South from West 60th Street

Figure 8-26

STUDY AREAS

URBAN DESIGN

Block Form, Street Pattern, and Street Hierarchy

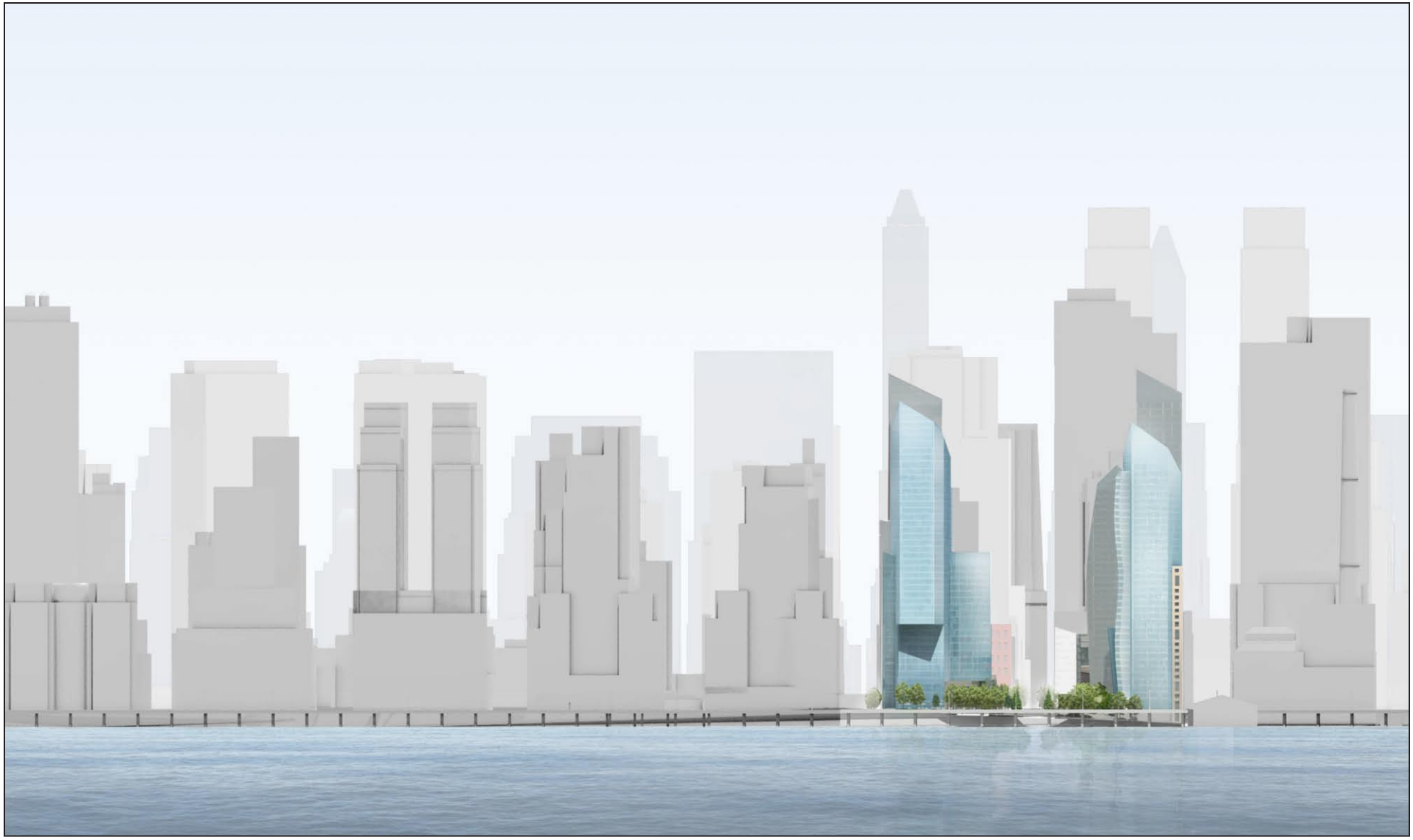
As in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, the Proposed Project would not change any block forms, street patterns, or street hierarchies in the study areas, except on the project site itself. As described above, the street pattern would be extended onto the project site with the Proposed Project, but this would not occur in No Build Scenarios 1 and 2. It is assumed that by 2018 the as-yet unbuilt portions of the street grid north of the project site would be constructed, eliminating the existing superblock north of West 61st Street between West End Avenue and (as-yet unbuilt) Riverside Boulevard. It is expected that pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the study areas would increase with either of the No Build Scenarios as well as with the Proposed Project.

Building Bulk, Use, Type, and Arrangement

Although the Proposed Project would introduce a higher-density development and a different mix of uses compared with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2, these uses and densities would be compatible with the existing and anticipated uses of buildings in the surrounding area. In addition, the proposed residential uses would complement the ongoing development of the Riverside South parcels to the north, and the proposed retail uses and publicly-accessible open spaces would serve the growing Riverside South neighborhood as well as the emerging neighborhoods to the south and immediately to the east.

At 31 to 44 stories (393 to 535 feet tall), the proposed buildings would be taller than most of the buildings in the primary study area; however, the primary study area already contains a number of tall, modern towers as well as some older, shorter buildings. Furthermore, the primary study area has been undergoing a substantial amount of new construction of large-scale buildings, similar to those that would be developed with the Proposed Project (see **Figure 8-27**). Such buildings in the study area include the Riverside South towers north of West 61st Street; the 16- and 39-story (up to 361-foot-tall) West End Towers development, along West End Avenue north of West 61st Street; the Helena, a 37-story (350-foot-tall) residential building at the northwest corner of Eleventh Avenue and West 57th Street (601 West 57th Street); the recently completed 35-story (298-foot-tall) development at 555 West 59th Street (the Element); and the 31-story (400-foot-tall) residential building at 10 West End Avenue. The new developments discussed above in "Future Without the Proposed Project" would also contribute to the primary study area's changing urban design character.

The proposed buildings would be of a comparable height to a number of buildings in the secondary study area. Within this area are numerous buildings that are between 30 and 54 stories tall. The tallest of these include the Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle, which has two 54-story (750-foot-tall) towers; the South Park Tower, a mixed-use residential and medical office building rising 49 stories (525 feet-tall) above a two-story base east of Amsterdam Avenue between West 59th and West 60th Streets; 49-story (490-foot-tall) residential buildings with office and retail uses in the base west of Columbus Avenue between West 58th and West 59th Streets; and a number of buildings of over 40 stories located east of Broadway between West 60th and West 64th Streets, including the Trump International Hotel (583 feet tall). The new developments discussed above in "Future Without the Proposed Project," some of which would be very dense and tall, would also contribute to the changing urban design character of the secondary study area.



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of Proposed Project and Surrounding Buildings

Figure 8-27

Most of the buildings in the study areas, including new developments, are rectilinear in their massing, rather than faceted like the proposed buildings; however, this difference would not be considered a significant adverse impact of the Proposed Project. As described above, there are several buildings in the surrounding area that are of a more contemporary design, with curved façades or geometrically shaped towers.

The modern buildings in the study areas typically have large footprints, and are set back above a wide base with one or more towers. Most structures are built to their lot lines, creating strong streetwalls. No Build Scenarios 1 and 2 would be consistent with this common building arrangement; in comparison, the Proposed Project's buildings would have large footprints, but the bases of the buildings would be generally smaller relative to their height and would be separated into discrete elements of different sizes. The proposed buildings would create strong streetwalls along portions of West 61st Street, the east side of Freedom Place South, and portions of West End Avenue and West 59th and West 60th Streets. To create the publicly accessible open space and streetscape elements noted above, however, the remaining portions of the project site would not continue the strong streetwalls of the surrounding area.

The modern buildings in the study areas are of contemporary design and are mainly faced in glass, stone, and metal; therefore, the expected contemporary design and materials of the Proposed Project—like the No Build Scenarios—would be consistent with a large portion of buildings in the surrounding area.

Streetscape Elements

The Proposed Project—like the No Build Scenarios—would not change any streetscape elements in the study areas. The setting of existing street trees in the surrounding area would be enhanced by the provision of additional trees on the project site, and the new publicly accessible open spaces and street grid, wider perimeter sidewalks, seating, and bike racks would also be expected to enhance the streetscape of the surrounding area.

Natural Features

The Proposed Project—like the No Build Scenarios—would not change any natural features in the study areas. In comparison to the No Build scenarios, the Proposed Project would create a new open space that would complement the waterfront parks in the study areas and would enhance access to Riverside Park South and the area's predominant natural feature, the Hudson River.

In summary, the Proposed Project—compared with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2—would not have a significant adverse impact on the urban design characteristics of the study area.

VISUAL RESOURCES

As described above, the Consolidated Edison Power House and its tall brick smokestack are visible throughout most of the primary study area, particularly along West End Avenue. The smokestack is also visible in some locations in the secondary study area, though intervening buildings tend to block more views due to the greater distance. Views of the power house from the north along West End Avenue and from Riverside Park South, though still available, would be more limited with the development of the Proposed Project; however, these views would also be limited with the development of No Build Scenario 1 and, to a lesser extent, No Build Scenario 2. Views of the power house smokestack from locations farther north are already obstructed by changes in topography and existing structures, including already built portions of the Riverside South development. Compared with the No Build Scenarios, the Proposed

Project—by extending Freedom Place South through the project site to West 59th Street—would provide views from this street south to the power house. Views from the south and west—including along the Hudson River—and from the east would not be substantially changed.

Riverside Park South would continue to provide expansive views of the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades in the Future With the Proposed Project. These views would also be available below the Route 9A viaduct from the newly created Riverside Boulevard between West 59th and West 61st Streets with the Proposed Project as well as the No Build Scenarios. In addition, by preserving the westward view corridor along West 60th Street, the Proposed Project would maintain existing views along this street to the waterfront. Both the Proposed Project and the No Build Scenarios would contribute to the modern visual character of the view corridors along West End Avenue and Riverside Boulevard, and the proposed buildings would generally extend existing and frame newly created view corridors (see **Figure 8-28**).

In summary, the Proposed Project—compared with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2—would not have a significant adverse impact on visual resources in or visible from the study area.

F. FUTURE CONDITIONS WITH THE MILLER HIGHWAY RELOCATION

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," for certain environmental issues—including urban design and visual character—the 1992 FEIS analyzed an additional scenario in which the Miller Highway (also known as Route 9A) between West 59th Street and West 72nd Street would be relocated to an inboard, below-grade location by 2002, the anticipated completion year for the Riverside South project.

At this time the Miller Highway has not been relocated, and there is no funding allocated toward advancing the project. However, since the highway may, in the future, be relocated, this section considers an additional future condition in which the highway relocation takes place by the Proposed Project's Build year of 2018, in a manner similar to that described in the 1992 FEIS, and as analyzed in greater detail as part of the Preferred Alternative scenario in the *October 2000 Miller Highway Project FEIS*.

In this condition, the centerline of the Miller Highway would, for most of its length, be under the western curb line of Riverside Boulevard. The termini would be the same as for the existing Miller Highway: West 59th Street to the south, and West 72nd Street to the north. However, actual construction limits would be somewhat greater to provide necessary transitions to Route 9A on the south and the Henry Hudson Parkway on the north. Between approximately West 61st and West 70th Streets, the north and southbound lanes of the Preferred Alternative would be fully enclosed.

The relocation of the Miller Highway would eliminate the highway as a visual and physical barrier to the Hudson River waterfront, enhancing views west from the project site and the surrounding area. Connections to Riverside Park South would be improved. The visual quality of the study areas would be enhanced, and the project site would be more visually connected to the waterfront. The relocation of the Miller Highway would not affect other urban design elements on the project site or in the surrounding area.

Overall, the Miller Highway relocation would not alter the conclusion that the Proposed Project—compared with No Build Scenarios 1 and 2—would not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design and visual resources. ✷

5.18.10

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View Looking South on West End Avenue from West 60th Street