

PARKCHESTER/VAN NEST STATION AREA **VIBRANT COMMUNITIES**



CONTENTS

1. VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

- A. LAND USE AND PLACEMAKING
- B. STATION AREA AND ACCESS
- C. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
- D. HOUSING
- E. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

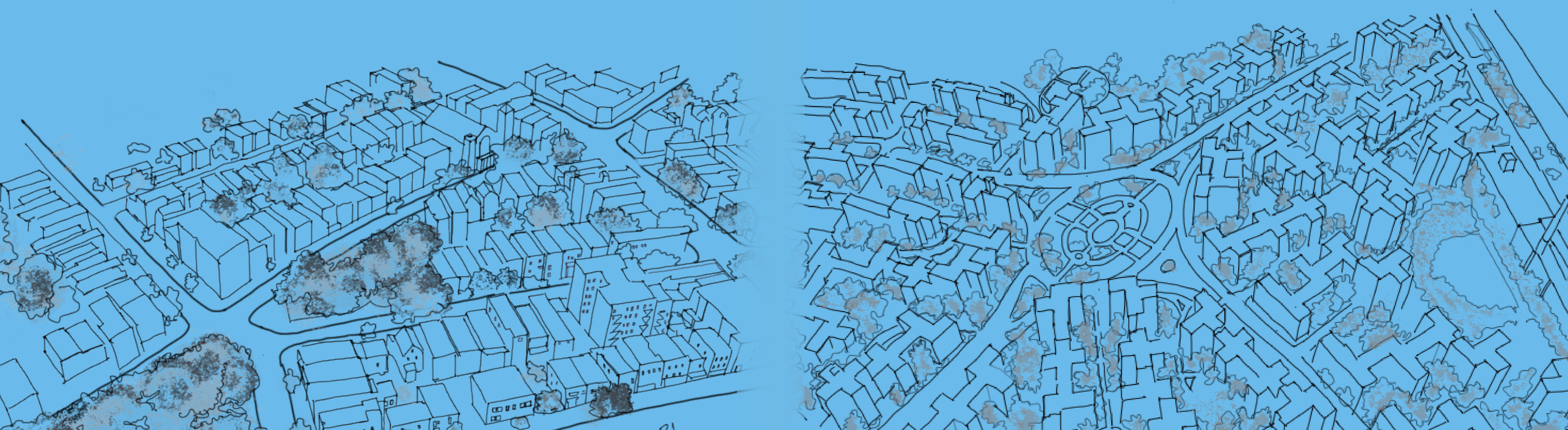
Vibrant Communities, which relates to how we plan for growth while celebrating who we are

2. WORKING COMMUNITIES

- A. CONNECTING TO THE REGION
- B. SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES AND JOBS GROWTH
- C. JOB PREPAREDNESS

3. CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

- A. VEHICULAR ACCESS
- B. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS



PLANNING WORK IN PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has changed the world. The Bronx has been particularly affected, and our health and economy are suffering. As we continue to fight back COVID-19, we seek to make the City a hub for public health research, create high-quality jobs, and make New York the fairest city in America. New Metro North service in the Bronx can support economic recovery of the borough and the city in the wake of the pandemic, and station-area planning can bring much needed amenities and services to the neighborhoods of the East and South Bronx.

However, as the City and MTA face extreme financial challenges, stakeholders of all kinds – elected officials, community residents, businesses, institutions - must continue to advocate for the regional rail stations and service to support New York City's recovery. The new stations can be critical to kickstarting the recovery of the borough and city's economy by thoughtfully and pro-actively planning for job growth, supporting existing commercial corridors, and working to get New Yorkers back to work in the Bronx, the city, or the wider region.

The draft recommendations shared in this remote open house are a first attempt at understanding how we move forward amidst the current health, social, and financial crises. Your guidance and feedback on the recommendations in the coming weeks will be fundamental to the plan's success as we seek to understand and respond to changing priorities during COVID.

Through the public planning process, you and your neighbors have already helped develop planning objectives that have only grown in importance as we confront COVID. These include:

- Create new or expanded open spaces where people can relax, play, and enjoy the outdoors.
- Help residents of the Bronx access opportunities for jobs in the borough, the city, and the region.
- Ensure affordable homes are available across the East and South Bronx.
- Help address longstanding health inequities, which have exacerbated the pandemic's impact on Bronxites, by working to reduce systemic barriers to good health. To address this we must plan for:
 - Access to transit that reduces reliance on automobile use and the pollution that comes with it.
 - Expanded healthy food options.
 - Convenient mixed-use neighborhoods that allow residents to accomplish their daily tasks within walking distance from home.

After you have viewed the recommendations, we encourage you to join the conversation, share your priorities, and provide your own guidance as a member of the community.



Photo: Restaurant outdoor dining, Bronx



Photo: Food distribution center, Bronx

HOW TO READ THE RECOMMENDATION BOARDS ?

1. NAVIGATION BAR:

This text tells you where you are.
For instance, this is the "Land Use and Placemaking: Neighborhood Center" category of the Vibrant Communities section.

2. ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY:

This text explains the issue or opportunity to be addressed by each set of objectives and recommendations. These came out of conversations with the community.

3. OBJECTIVE:

The objectives state what we are trying to accomplish with each set of recommendations and are a response to the issue/opportunity identified.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS:

These are the recommendations for how to carry out the objective identified above

5. IMPLEMENTATION:

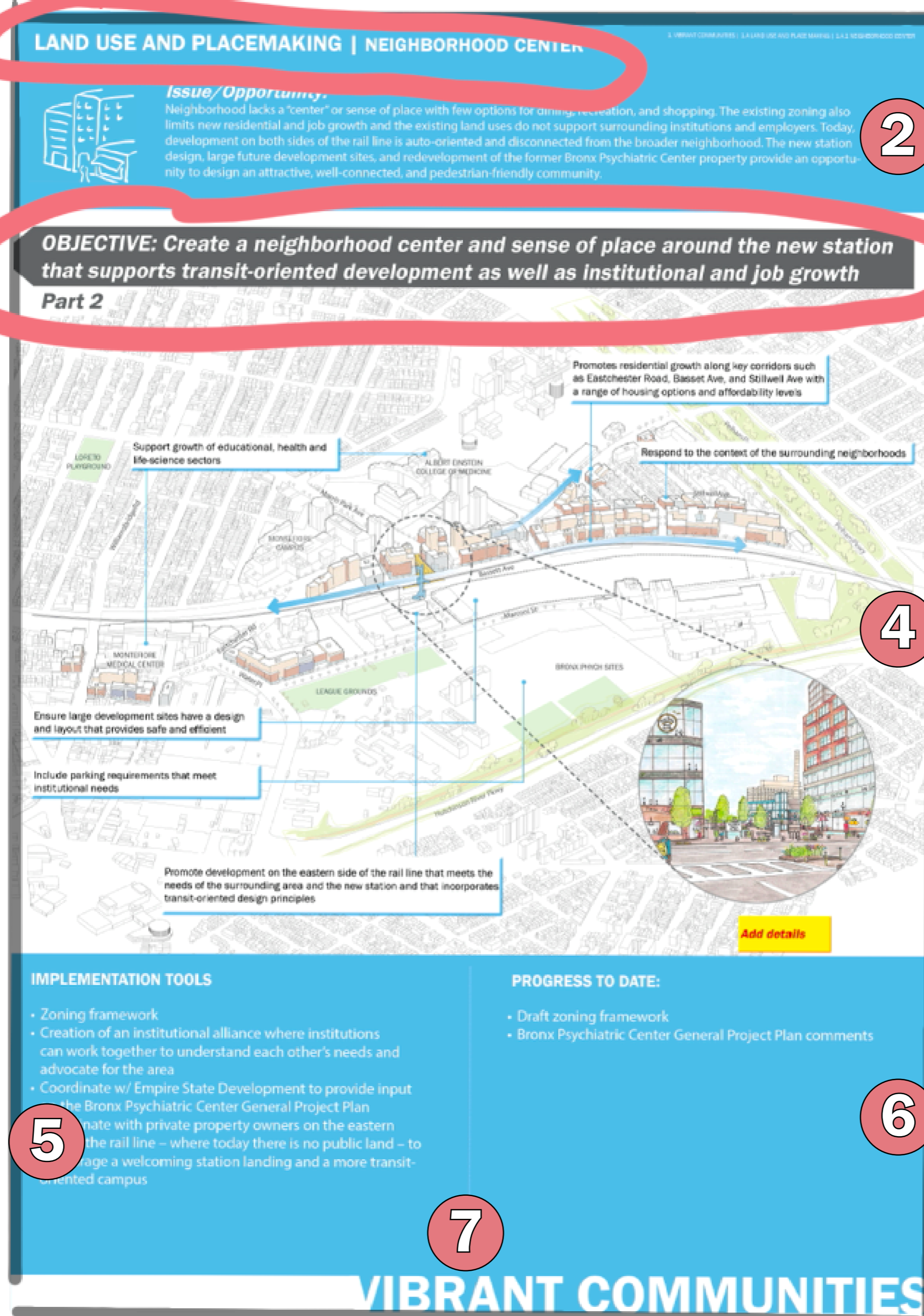
This section identifies how and by whom the above recommendations might be addressed

6. PROGRESS TO DATE:

This section identifies the progress to date the city has made, over the course of study, to advance certain recommendations.

7. SECTION TITLE:

This bar identifies which of the three major categories or recommendations (Vibrant Communities, Working Communities, or Connected Communities) you're in. Each of these categories is also associated with its own color (blue, purple, and orange, respectively)



ACRONYMS

HPD - Housing Preservation and Development
DPR - Department of Parks and Recreation
DOT - Department of Transportation
MIH - Mandatory Inclusionary Housing
TOD - Transit Oriented Development
BID - Business Improvement District

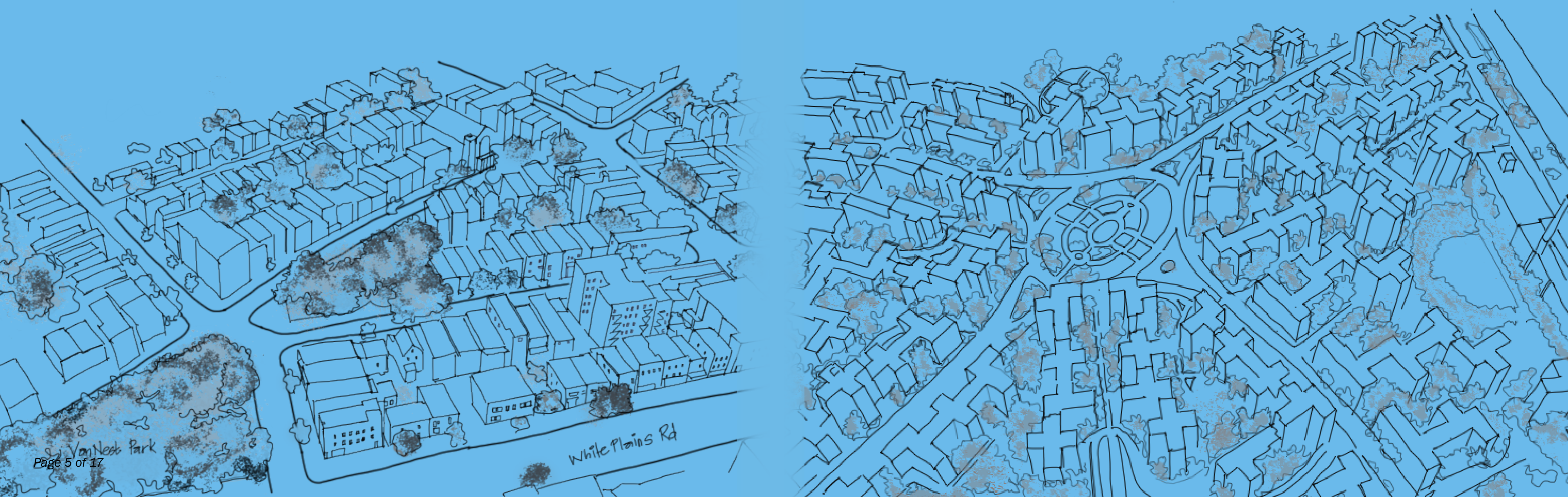
FDNY - Fire Department
NYPD - Police Department
DCLA - Department of Cultural Affairs
MTA - Metropolitan Transportation Authority
FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency
ZCFR - Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

PARKCHESTER / VAN NEST

OBJECTIVES:

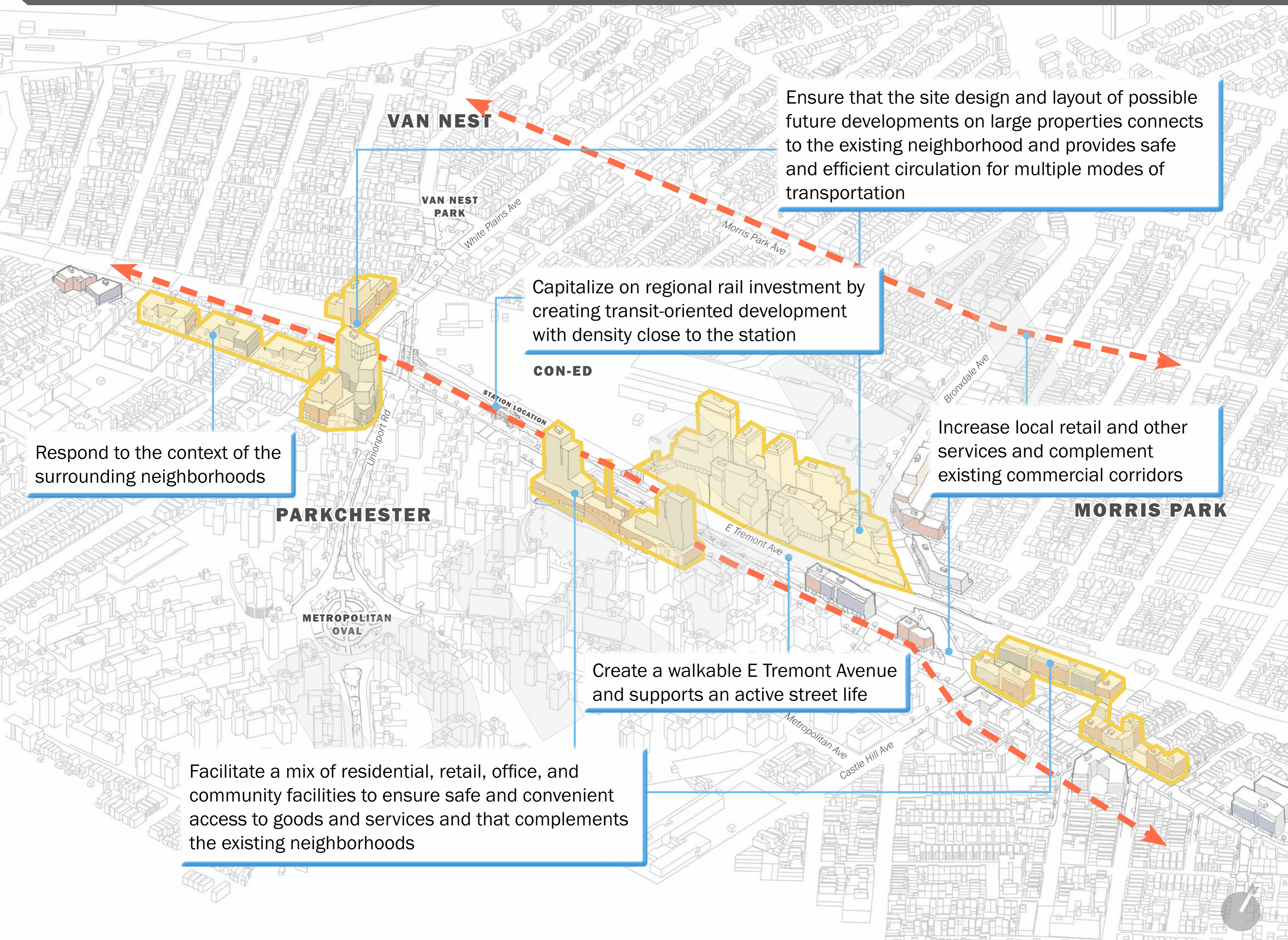
1. Encourage the development of a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly district around the future station
2. Encourage welcoming public connections throughout the neighborhood
3. Make new stations a part of the neighborhood
4. Create new open spaces and improve and better connect to existing ones
5. Preserve existing housing and allow for new housing for a range of incomes and housing types
6. Promote fair transit-oriented development that benefits all residents
7. Support the area's diverse and growing immigrant communities
8. Make healthy food options available
9. Honor the area's history and promote public art
10. Plan for added demand for schools, police, fire service, and other basic services
11. Support aging in place



Issue/Opportunity:

E Tremont Avenue at Parkchester is today a busy auto corridor that is uninviting to pedestrians and serves as a barrier between the Parkchester and Van Nest communities. New train service offers an opportunity to rethink existing land uses and zoning to support a more vibrant, mixed-use residential and pedestrian-oriented transit corridor.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the development of a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly district around the future station



IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Zoning Framework(a tool that determines where and how much housing, retail space, and office space can be built)
- Special Zoning rules

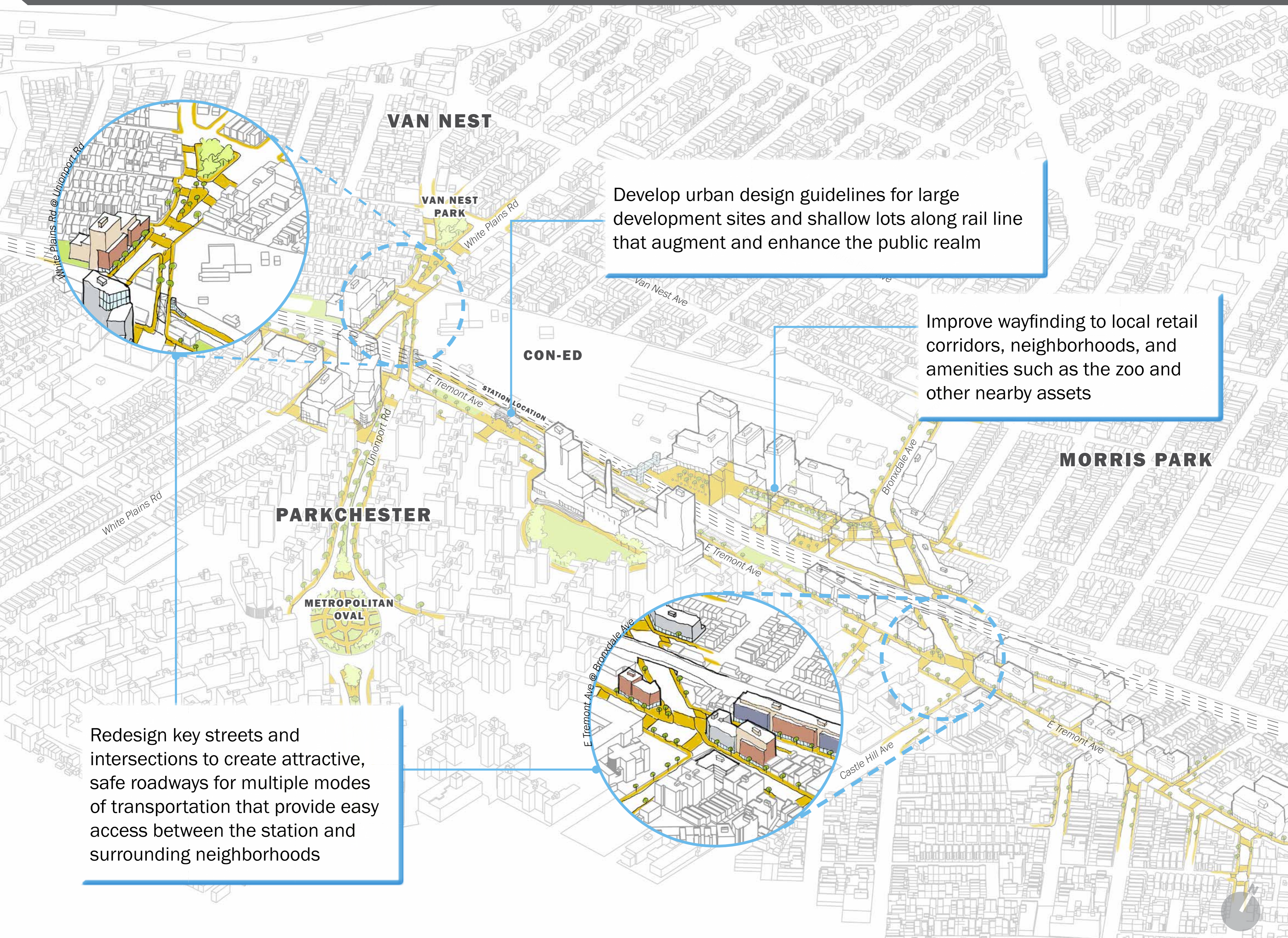
PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Over two years, held series of interactive public meetings to seek input on land use needs
- Drafted a Zoning Framework to meet planning goals
- Engaged private property owners to create vision for large sites that is beneficial to larger community
- Coordinated with MTA on station design to identify and facilitate additional access points to station

Issue/Opportunity:

The station area lacks the basic features of a quality public realm, such as good sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting, needed to integrate the station into the neighborhood, serve increased pedestrians and visitors, and capitalize on regional rail service. New development, new station design, and general planning work offer an opportunity to improve the public realm.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage welcoming public connections throughout the neighborhood



IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Urban Design Guidelines
- Zoning framework
- Special Zoning rules
- DOT Street Design Manual
- City street mapping

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Drafted zoning framework to meet planning goals
- Engaged private property owners to create vision for large sites including public realm improvements
- Drafted zoning special permit to provide additional public review and design controls for development on large sites to enhance circulation, create public open space, and better overall design
- Held series of public meetings that included interactive exercises around transportation and access to develop circulation plan

Issue/Opportunity:

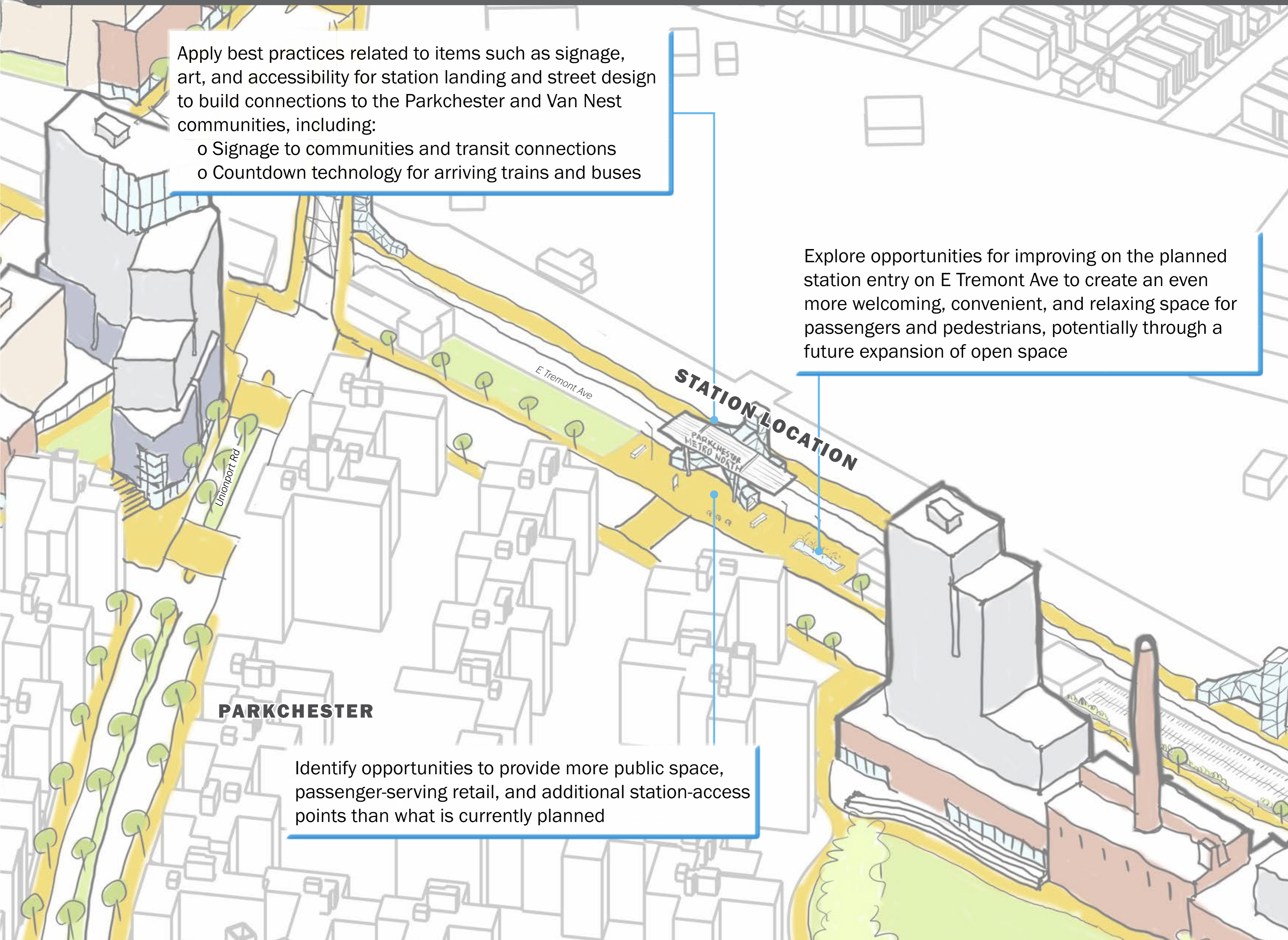
Properties adjacent to the proposed station are constrained, but both the design of the new station and new developments provide an opportunity to better connect the station to surrounding neighborhoods and provide comfortable waiting and efficient pick-up and drop-off for passengers.

OBJECTIVE: Make new stations a part of the neighborhood

Apply best practices related to items such as signage, art, and accessibility for station landing and street design to build connections to the Parkchester and Van Nest communities, including:

- o Signage to communities and transit connections
- o Countdown technology for arriving trains and buses

Explore opportunities for improving on the planned station entry on E Tremont Ave to create an even more welcoming, convenient, and relaxing space for passengers and pedestrians, potentially through a future expansion of open space



PARKCHESTER

Identify opportunities to provide more public space, passenger-serving retail, and additional station-access points than what is currently planned

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Coordination of MTA station design and City station-area planning
- MTA design work and guidelines
- DOT Street Design Manual and toolkit
- City street mapping on private sites
- Special zoning rules

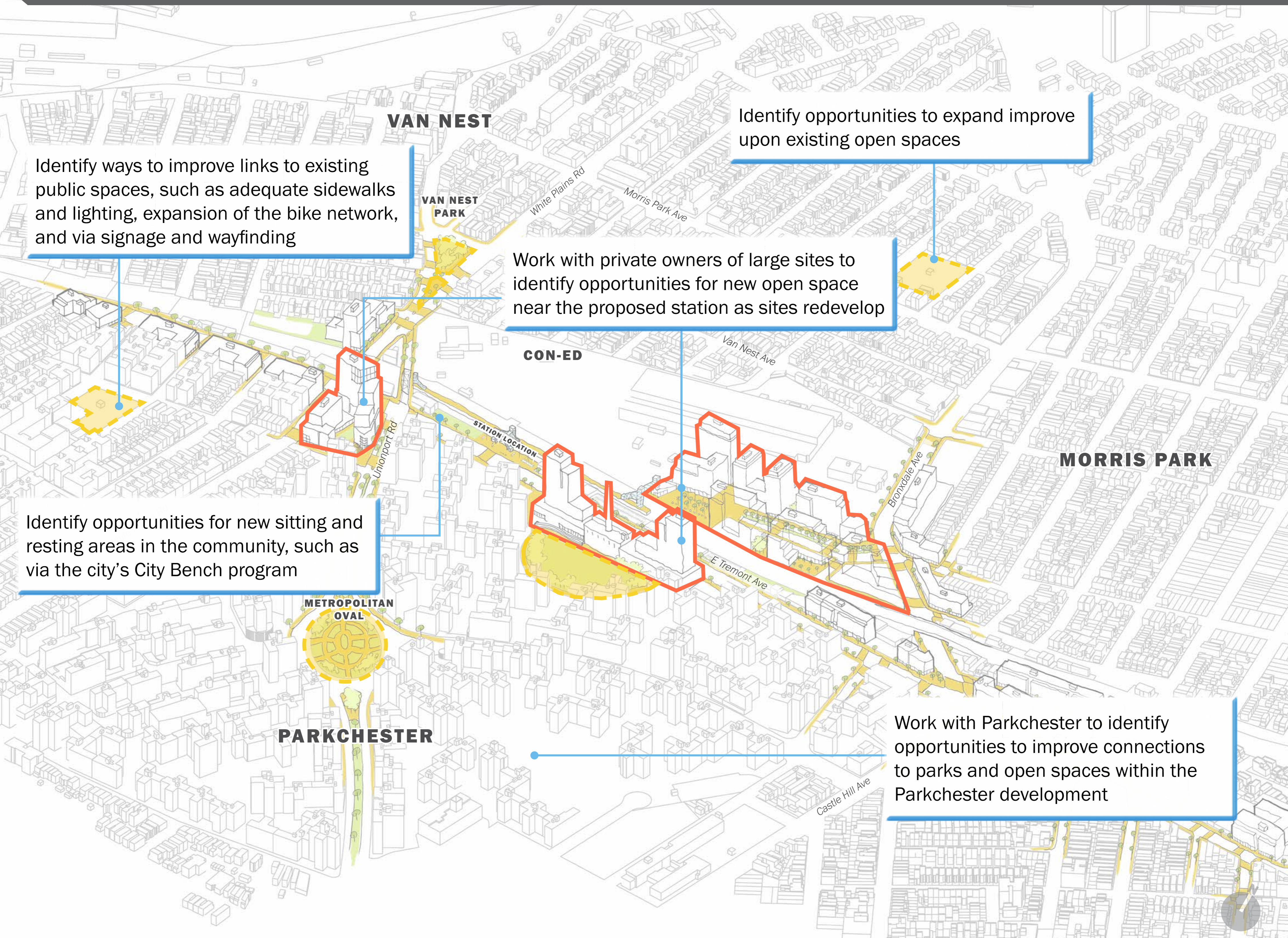
PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Coordinated MTA, DOT and large development sites to identify potential open space improvements and additional connections to and from the station
- Influence preliminary stations design by MTA which included feedback from planning process
- Drafted zoning Special Permit to provide additional public review and design controls for development on large sites to enhance circulation, create public open space, and provide better overall design

Issue/Opportunity:

There are few open spaces around E Tremont Avenue, and existing open spaces could be better connected. Additionally, large sites could create opportunities for new open spaces that enhance the new station.

OBJECTIVE: Create new open spaces and improve and better connect to existing ones



Identify ways to improve links to existing public spaces, such as adequate sidewalks and lighting, expansion of the bike network, and via signage and wayfinding

Identify opportunities to expand improve upon existing open spaces

Work with private owners of large sites to identify opportunities for new open space near the proposed station as sites redevelop

Identify opportunities for new sitting and resting areas in the community, such as via the city's City Bench program

Work with Parkchester to identify opportunities to improve connections to parks and open spaces within the Parkchester development

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- DOT Street Design Manual and toolkit
- Bike network and facilities improvements
- WalkNYC and other wayfinding signage
- Pedestrian-level lighting in new developments
- Zoning Special District and Special Permit for large private sites to provide design controls for development on large site to enhance circulation, create public open space, and provide better overall design

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Engaged private property owners to identify opportunities for large sites to meet open space needs
- Coordinated with city agencies, including the Department of Transportation and Department of Parks and Recreation

Issue/Opportunity:

The Parkchester and Van Nest neighborhoods each have a unique existing affordable housing stock that should be preserved as new train service begins and the area continues to grow. At the same time, the area has had little new housing growth in recent years, and new train service offers an opportunity to encourage new residential growth in areas closest to the new station and develop varied housing options for a wide range of incomes and households.

OBJECTIVE: Preserve existing housing and provide opportunities for new housing for a range of incomes and housing types



Photo: Parkchester



Photo: Street view showing low-rise residential developments

Implement Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) to require that all new residential development include permanently affordable homes

Ensure that new housing options meet local needs and serve a wide range of incomes, including new affordable housing and senior housing

Understand vulnerable populations living in the area who may be at risk – such as seniors and those in need of supportive housing – and explore opportunities for the preservation of existing affordable units, including within the Parkchester community and for small homeowners

Build partnerships with local housing advocacy organizations that serve the area to ensure they are aware of the coming stations and improvements and can work to proactively advocate and assist existing residents

Host tenant resource fairs and explore ways to provide information to residents about tenants' rights, legal services, rental assistance programs, preservation efforts, and more.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Rezoning that implements the goals of the Zoning Framework to provide strategic new opportunities for new residential development and require Mandatory Inclusionary Housing
- HPD financing programs to promote homes at a range of incomes and homeownership, such as HPD's Open Door Program
- Engage with housing organizations to understand local needs
- HPD tools outlined in the 2020 Where We Live NYC plan including the Landlord and Housing Ambassador programs
- Landlord, tenant, homeowner, and resident resource fairs

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Drafted Zoning framework that will facilitate implementation of housing goals
- Coordinated with HPD to understand existing housing needs and programs
- Held series of public meetings to understand housing needs in community

Issue/Opportunity:

Currently, the East Bronx lacks regional rail transit, limiting access to important job centers and employment opportunities north of the Bronx and in the region. Recent studies show that households in areas with new transit-oriented development (TOD) projects had access to almost 2X times more jobs than households in areas with no TOD activity. When centered on racial inclusion and community wealth building, TOD can be a driver of positive transformation for more vibrant, prosperous, and resilient neighborhoods connected to opportunities throughout the city and region.

OBJECTIVE: Promote equitable transit-oriented development that benefits all residents, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, age, gender, immigration status, and ability



Photo: Metropolitan Ave



Photo: Street view showing multiple transit options

Allow for a mix of housing types and uses and require that development in rezoned areas around the station provides permanently affordable homes through the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program

Promote the creation of quality jobs close to new planned transit service and create a pipeline connecting residents to local and regional jobs centers

Work with area institutions on identifying ways they might subsidize transportation costs as a means of promoting transit equity and reducing vehicular traffic

Inventory current sidewalk infrastructure to prioritize needed improvements in pedestrian infrastructure around new stations

Improve visibility and accessibility of transit signage and wayfinding, especially for people with disabilities or for whom English is not their first language

Increase access to alternative forms of transportation for community members, including bike-share, e-bikes, and e-scooters

Work with elected official and local stakeholders to advocate for prioritization of MTA funding to make area subway stations fully accessible to people with disabilities

Work with NYC Transit to optimize bus service to and from new Metro-North stations and along major corridors

Prioritize high-quality bicycle infrastructure, such as protected bike lanes, connecting people to each other, resources, opportunities, and assets, including the stations

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- MTA station design guidelines
- NYC Transit bus redesign
- Zoning framework
- Public realm design guidelines

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Drafted zoning framework, which would require permanently affordable housing
- The new MTA Stations as part of Penn Station Access will be fully ADA accessible
- Work with DOT and adjacent property owners to secure additional points of entry to stations
- Ongoing work with City agencies to develop plan for connecting Bronxites to jobs

Issue/Opportunity:

Parkchester is home to many seniors and is a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), but new senior housing, pedestrian and public realm improvements, and affordable housing protections are needed to help people remain in their same community as they age and their needs change (i.e., “age in place”).

OBJECTIVE: Support aging in place



Photo: Street view near Parkchester park



Photo: Parkchester Residential developments

Identify barriers to aging in place in Parkchester and Van Nest

Create a walkable and accessible community for all by applying universal design standards to streets and the station area with an eye to the needs of vulnerable populations, including the elderly

Work with Parkchester management to identify opportunities for improving accessibility throughout the development

Identify opportunities for new senior housing

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Zoning framework to support new housing, including senior housing
- HPD financing programs to support affordable senior residences for seniors (AIRS)
- HPD design guidelines to support accessible residences and quality senior housing
- Support developments such as planned new senior residences on Purdy St.
- Work with the Parkchester community on improving accessibility

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Drafted zoning framework that will permit more senior housing
- Supported new planned senior residences on Purdy St

Issue/Opportunity:

The Parkchester and Van Nest communities are home to diverse and growing immigrant communities, such as the Bengali community whose commercial core is centered along Starling Ave or the Yemeni communities centered along Morris Park Ave and White Plains Rd, but these communities are not always aware of or able to access city services

OBJECTIVE: Support the area's diverse and growing immigrant communities



Photo: Storefront showing Yameni store



Photo: Streets with diverse commercial facilities



IDNYC, city identity card

Conduct outreach to understand the specific needs of different populations, such as the area's Spanish-speaking, Bengali, and Yemeni communities

Share information on relevant programs

Identify and connect nonprofits serving immigrant communities, promoting referral networks and coordinated service delivery

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) support tools
- Engage local organizations to understand needs of emerging immigrant populations
- Ongoing engagement with local communities, including targeted outreach to Spanish-speakers and the Bengali, Yemeni and Albanian populations in the area
- Dissemination of outreach materials, including study overview materials in Spanish, and provision of language services for communities wishing to learn more

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Creation of materials in English and Spanish, including project overview video released in December 2020
- Ongoing engagement with local communities, including targeted outreach to Spanish-speakers and the Bengali, Yemeni and Albanian populations in the area

Issue/Opportunity:

The study offers an opportunity to work with local retail corridors and future developers to promote the inclusion of healthy restaurant and grocery options. This expands options for local residents, preventing the need for them to spend more for necessities, compromise on quality, or leave the neighborhood to get what they need.

OBJECTIVE: Make healthy food options available



Photo: Local fresh produce market



Photo: Commercial streets

Promote inclusion of healthy food choices on menus

Encourage local food retailers to prominently display healthy offerings

Promote existing programs aimed at increasing access to healthy food

Require that any zoning changes allow for and encourage grocery stores and supermarkets

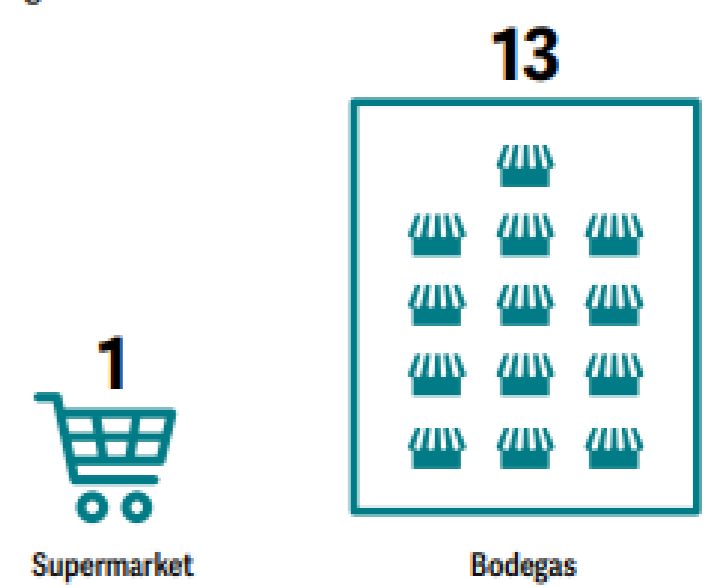
Food environment

Bodegas are less likely to have healthy food options than supermarkets. The lowest ratio among NYC community districts is one supermarket for every three bodegas (healthier); the highest is one supermarket for every 57 bodegas (less healthy). **Parkchester and Soundview** is home to two of NYC's farmers markets, another source of healthy food.

It is easier to make healthy choices when healthy, affordable food is readily available.

SUPERMARKET TO BODEGA RATIO

For every one supermarket in **Parkchester and Soundview**, there are 13 bodegas.



Source: Farmers Markets: NYC DOHMH Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control, 2017; Supermarket to Bodega Ratio: New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, October 2016

BRONX RATIO IS 1:15
CITY WIDE RATIO IS 1:13

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS :

- Inter-agency coordination, including with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Coordination with business improvement districts, merchant associations, and project developers
- Work with residents, food retailers and food suppliers and distributors
- Zoning framework
- Conversations with large development sites to ensure they are aware of community needs

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Drafted zoning framework that will permit healthy food options
- Engaged private property owners to understand how these needs can be met on their sites

Issue/Opportunity:

Parkchester/Van Nest has a unique history, and public art celebrating its history should be incorporated into the station, surrounding streets, and new developments

OBJECTIVE: Honor the area’s history and promote public art



Photo: Terracotta figures in Parkchester



Photo: Parkchester Park

Work with local community organizations, such as the Van Nest Neighborhood Association or the East Bronx History Forum, to identify opportunities for historical markers, murals, or public art elements that pay homage to the area’s history

Incorporate the area’s history into parks and public spaces, including public spaces created near the new Metro-North station or as part of the station plaza

Incorporate the area’s history into area wayfinding

Identify and cultivate open space and art maintenance partners

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS :

- MTA Arts for Transit
- DOT Art and Event Programming
- DPR Art in the Parks Program (e.g., Young Park)
- Collaboration with DCLA

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Engaged private property owners to understand how history can be incorporated into site plans
- Engaged the community during public workshops to understand the history of the area

Issue/Opportunity:

Additional growth may create increased demand for schools, daycare, police, and fire service, among other basic services, but redevelopment provides an opportunity to meet these needs.

OBJECTIVE: Plan for added demand for schools, police and fire service, and other basic services



Photo: Students crossing road



Photo: School-Van Nest Academy

Analyze the potential impacts of the proposed land use changes on the community, including an analysis of community facilities, services, parks, transportation

Analyze existing and future school needs and explore opportunities for capital and programming improvements to local schools

Assess existing police and fire facilities and potential impacts of additional community growth

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Conduct an environmental review of growth expected from rezoning actions per City Environmental Quality Review standards when considering implementing zoning changes
- Engage the School Construction Authority (SCA) and private development sites to identify opportunities for new schools, capital, and programmatic improvements
- Work with NYPD and FDNY

PLANNING TEAM PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Engaged the School Construction Authority in conversations about needs in the area
- Engaged private property owners to understand how needs can be met on their sites

To voice your opinion on these recommendations, [click here](#)

To see how the study seeks to make Parkchester Van Nest a :

***Working Community*, [click here: \[links to pdf\]](#)
Connected Community, [click here: \[links to pdf\]](#)**

To return to the Remote Open House, [click here](#)

