



Albert Einstein College of Medicine taken from Hutchinson Metro Center

PROPOSED STATIONS

MORRIS PARK



MORRIS PARK

REGIONAL PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT CENTER



INTRODUCTION

SYNOPSIS

As the home to a number of large professional institutions and a site for significant additional planned development, Morris Park is a growing regional center for employment and education. The proposed Metro-North station site is located along Amtrak's Hell Gate Line, near the intersection of Morris Park Avenue and Basset Avenue. Access to subways and buses is limited in the area, and many employees drive to job centers as a result of these limited transit options and potentially long commutes. A new Metro-North station will help cement the area's status as an economic engine by providing access to employees, employers, students and the community to Manhattan, Westchester and Connecticut. In order to fully capitalize on this potential asset, modifications to current land use regulations and improvements to pedestrian accessibility will be necessary around the proposed station to successfully integrate it into the community.

AREA CHARACTERISTICS

The Morris Park neighborhood lies east of the Bronx Zoo in the eastern part of the Bronx, and is bounded by Pelham Parkway to the North, East Tremont Avenue to the south, and the Hutchinson River Parkway to the east. The area has a significantly higher per capita income than the Bronx overall, and a lower rate of unemployment. More than 16,000 people come into the area to work every day within the half-mile radius of the proposed station area. Morris Park has a high rate of home ownership compared with the city, and residents use vehicles more and public transportation less compared with the city averages. The area is also less dense than the Bronx

overall at about 18,000 people per square mile compared with more than 32,000 in the Bronx overall. This can be attributed to both the significant land occupied by office parks and institutional campuses as well as the primarily 1-3 story residential portion of the neighborhood.

LAND USE & ZONING

West of the proposed station area, low density residential uses make up the Morris Park neighborhood. Along Eastchester Road there is a high concentration of single story uses, generally consisting of light manufacturing. To the east and west of Basset Avenue are a number of medical and educational institutions, as well as office space. Calvary Hospital, Bronx Psychiatric Center, Mercy College and the Hutchinson Metro Center are to the east of the Amtrak Line and to the west are Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Jacobi Medical Center, Modell's Warehouse and Montefiore Medical Center. These institutions draw over 16,000 employees and students, and the medical centers have the capacity for over 2,700 hospital patients (see Figure 3).^{1,2}

There is no significant public open space in the area directly around the station. The Hutchinson River Greenway starts at the Bronx and Pelham Parkway and runs alongside Hutchinson River Parkway.

The zoning designation immediately east and west of the rail corridor is an M1-1 manufacturing district, which permits light manufacturing uses and is characterized by a low development potential and relatively high parking requirements. Large portions of the Hutchinson Metro Center, east of the rail line, including the Bronx Psychiatric site and institution-



FIGURE 1 | Proposed entrance area to Morris Park Station, located where Morris Park Avenue meets Amtrak’s Hell Gate Line at Basset Avenue. The station would provide east-west pedestrian access over the rail which currently does not exist.
 Source: © 2011 Pictometry International Corp.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS | Morris Park Study Area

NYC Subway Station Daily Ridership (2012)*

- 5 Pelham Bay Park: 6,516 weekday | 6,688 weekend
- 5 Morris Park: 2,083 weekday | 1,255 weekend

- 2 Pelham Parkway: 9,228 weekday | 10,246 weekend
- 6 Buhre Avenue: 3,418 weekday | 2,837 weekend

- The area has significantly higher per capita income and lower unemployment rate than the Bronx
- Morris Park has a high rate of homeownership compared to citywide; there is also a greater rate of car dependence, with less use of public transit

	STUDY AREA ^{1,2}	THE BRONX	NEW YORK CITY
Population Density (people/per sq. mile)	18,443.9	32,536.6	27,532
Per Capita Income	\$24,980	\$17,992	\$31,417
Renter Occupied Units	64%	79%	68%
Housing Units with No Access to a Vehicle	34%	59%	56%
With Access to One Vehicle	42%	30%	31%
Take Public Transit or Walk to Work	52%	64%	67%
Population Density (per square mile)	18,443	32,356	26,953
Unemployment Rate (2010)	9%	12%	11%
TOTAL POPULATION	27,445	1,365,725	8,336,697

¹ The study area is based on select Census tracts within a 1/2 mile radius of the proposed Morris Park station

² United States Bureau of the Census, 1006-1010 American community Survey 5-Year Estimates

* MTA Subway Ridership, 2012. http://www.mta.info/nyct/facts/ridership/#chart_s



Land Uses

- One and Two Family Homes
- Multi-Family Walkups
- Multi-family Elevator buildings
- Mixed Com/Residential Buildings
- Commercial Buildings
- Institutional Buildings
- Manufacturing Buildings
- Transportation/Utility Buildings
- Park/Open Space
- Parking Lots
- Vacant Land

Transportation

- Amtrak Hell Gate Line
- B/D Subway Lines
- 4 Subway Line
- Bus Routes

Notable Land Uses Features:

- ① High concentration of small single story uses generally consisting of light manufacturing uses along Eastchester Road.
- ② Significant amount of institutions east and west of Bassett Avenue. This is generally medical/educational on the western side and medical/office space on the eastern side at Hutchinson Metro Center.
- ③ Low density residential in the neighborhoods north and west of the station area.
- ④ No significant commercial uses within the 1/4 mile radius of the proposed station.

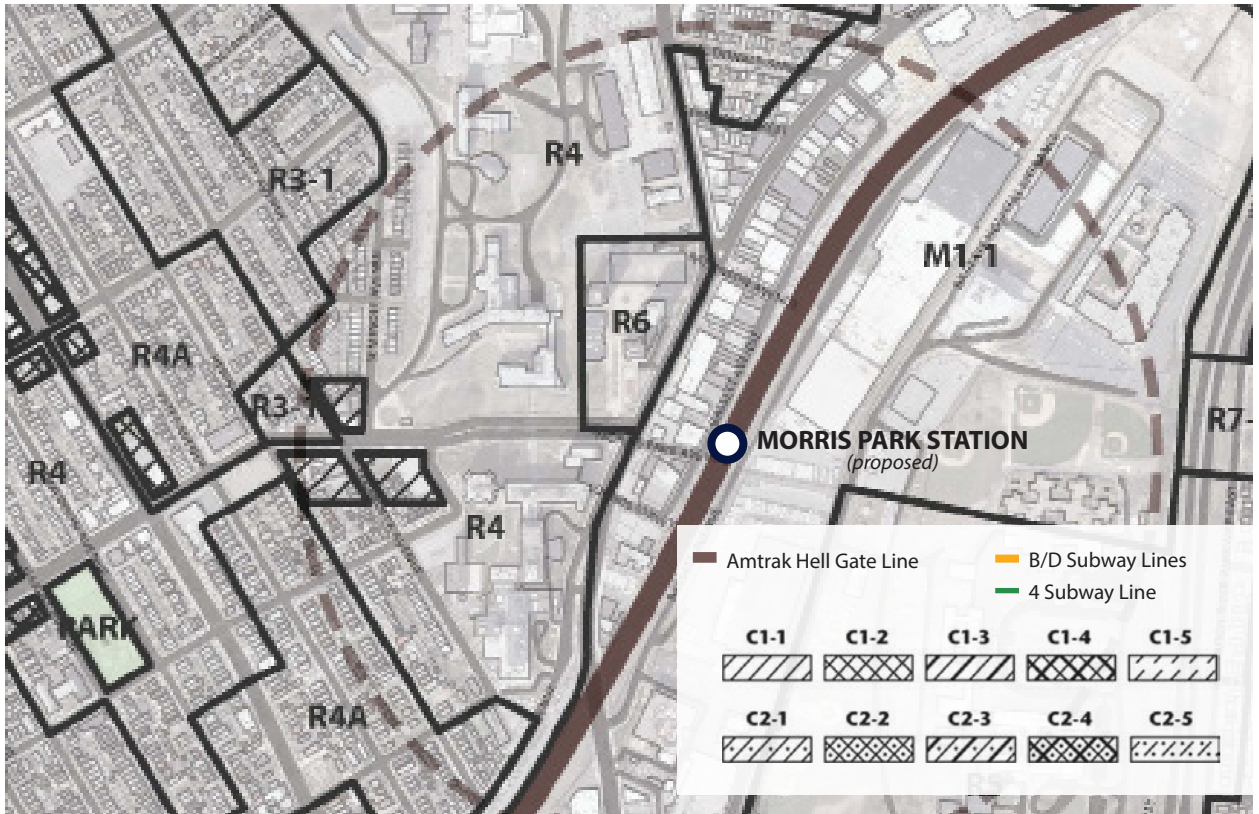


FIGURE 2 | Zoning map of the Morris Park neighborhood.

al uses west of the rail line are zoned as residential. The Morris Park neighborhood, west of the rail line and the medical institutional facilities, is comprised of zoning which permits low density residential uses. Parts of the neighborhood were rezoned in 2005 to preserve residential character.

CURRENT & PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

There is significant planned development in the area. The Hutchinson Metro Center Office Complex is a 42-acre suburban-style campus located between the Hutchinson River Parkway and the Hell Gate rail line. Currently home to office and commercial uses, the complex employs over 4,000 people and has future plans of including over 1.9 million square feet of office and commercial space with over 4,500 employees. There are 1,100 parking spaces located within the center. The future developments include Towers 2 and 3 to be located adjacent to existing Tower 1 and the Metro Center Atrium under construction on Marconi Street near Waters Place. Future development will consist of more than 600,000 square feet of office and medical space and includes a Marriott Hotel.^{3,4}

The Public Safety Answering Center II (New York City Police Department), also known as PSAC II, is located at the intersection of the Hutchinson River and Pelham Parkways. It is situated just north of and adjacent to the Hutchinson Metro Center. The 8.9-acre site will be used as office/government space, and will employ an estimated 850 total employees working twenty four hours in three eight hour shifts. The 14-story building will have a total of 550,000 square feet, with 493,500 square feet of office space. An above-grade three-level parking garage will house 500 accessory parking spaces to serve the development. The development is targeted for completion in 2015.⁶

The Bronx Psychiatric Medical Center occupies 35 acres. The New York State Office of Mental Health's (OMH) plans to redevelop this site include the creation of six new buildings to replace the existing buildings. The new buildings are to be sited close to Waters Place (southern portion of site). The site will feature a total of 350,000 square feet of adult and children inpatient and outpatient mental health care facilities, including a Safe Horizon/Haven House, a transitional living residence, studio apartments and 590 parking spaces. This portion of the development

is targeted for completion in 2015-2016. The northern portion of the property is to be sold after reconstruction of the southern portion.

TRANSPORTATION & ACCESS

Morris Park is served by the BX21, BX31, BXM10 Express, and BX12 Select Bus Service at Pelham Parkway. Subway access is limited to the #5 train, accessible at Morris Park Avenue and Pelham Parkway, as well as the #6 train at Westchester Square and Middledtown Road. Each of these station stops are about a mile walk from the proposed station site. Several free shuttle buses operated by area institutions connect employees to these transit stops.

The Hutchinson River Parkway borders the eastern side of the Hutchinson Metro Center. The highway directly connects the Bronx to both Westchester

County and Queens, and crisscrosses and merges with several interstates, indirectly offering further connections to New England, the New York State Thruway, New Jersey and other NYC Boroughs.

While the majority of residents utilize public transportation in their commute to work, the percentage of people who drive alone to work is significant, almost 10% more than the Bronx overall. Additionally, commuting patterns around the proposed Morris Park Station area show that a higher percentage of the neighborhood population works either in the Bronx or in areas to the north than the Bronx average. The new station would be a convenient option for commuters in the area. Current commute times from Morris Park to Manhattan can be longer than an hour, with no direct service to employment centers outside the City.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN MORRIS PARK

Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University | 2,764 employees



Bronx Psychiatric Center | 590 employees



Calvary Hospital | 764 employees



Hutchinson Metro Center Office Complex | 4,500 employees



Jacobi Medical Center | 3,519 employees



Morris Park Alliance | 609 employees



Montefiore Medical Center - Albert Einstein College of Medicine | 2,000 employees



New York Westchester Square Medical Center | 552 employees



PSAC II (Projected 2015) | 850 total employees



FIGURE 3 | Major employers in the Morris Park area. The various medical and business institutions employ over 16,000 people.



FIGURE 4 | Montefiore Medical Center on Eastchester Road. Morris Park has a strong medical presence, with several hospitals, research centers, and doctors' offices clustered in the area.



FIGURE 5 | The Public Safety Answering Center II (PSAC II), currently under construction. When it opens its doors in 2015, it will house approximately 850 employees.

CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

The area around the proposed Morris Park station is a growing employment center and economic engine for the Bronx and the region. Its proximity to adjacent counties, specifically Westchester, makes it an attractive employment destination as indicated in Figure 3; however, transit access north of the Bronx is currently limited and many commuters are inclined to access the area by vehicle. Its location near the end of the subway system results in longer distances before connections to other lines, limited express opportunities, and therefore longer commutes to and from Manhattan and other boroughs.

Our outreach process around the proposed station included: a joint open house with Metro-North railroad and the Bronx Borough President's Office; individual stakeholder interviews; and targeted community meetings. Through this process we were able to identify challenges and opportunities related to transit-oriented development around the potential Morris Park Metro North station. The recommendations section discusses long term strategies to address these challenges and maximize opportunities. They are focused on identifying proactive solutions related to land use and walkability that will allow the area to maximize the benefits of a not only a potential rail station, but practical recommendations that support strengthening the area as a growing regional employment and educational center for the Bronx. For the purpose of this Section, the challenges and recommendations are discussed in **four focus areas: (1) the Station Area West** including Eastchester Road and the medical institutions, **(2) the Station Area East**, including the Hutchinson Metro Center, **(3) the Westchester Square area** and **(4) Area Wide** recommendations.

(1) STATION AREA WEST

Eastchester Road Area

Like many areas abutting railroads in the Bronx, the Morris Park neighborhood currently turns it back on the railroad (as it has no station or way to utilize it), and low-scale, manufacturing and warehousing uses are located along its edge. These mostly single-story buildings are an unrelated assortment of uses, and their inactivity and general lack of pedestrian infrastructure creates an empty and difficult walking environment. The current zoning designations mapped along Eastchester Road do not accommodate mixed use development that could support a mix of retail

and housing needs of the institution, the community, or other station users. However, with a new station area proposed, the neighborhood must face the task of re-orienting itself towards the rail. In this scenario, Eastchester Road between Pelham Parkway and East Tremont Avenue will become an important pedestrian pathway that links major corridors and has the potential to serve as a retail corridor for the surrounding institutions.

Recommendations:

- Explore establishing active ground floor use and transparency requirements, as part of a zoning study (see Figure 8).
- Create coordinated streetscape improvements which promote a consistent theme for the area.
- Explore zoning along Eastchester Road and Bassett Avenue between Pelham Parkway and Williamsbridge Road to support additional mid to high density mixed use development around the station (see Figure 11).
- Identify zoning appropriate for current institutional uses that will continue to support them and additional mixed use contextual growth. Explore contextual zoning districts that establish street wall requirements as well as minimum and maximum base requirements and building heights as part of a zoning study.

Bassett Avenue pedestrian improvements

Bassett Avenue runs parallel to the Hell Gate rail line and would be the gateway to the neighborhood from the proposed station area. As mentioned there is no pedestrian infrastructure and the uses on the west side of the street are the backs of low-intensity, non-active industrial and warehouse buildings along Eastchester Avenue. The side of Bassett Avenue abutting the rail line consists of lots varying from five to thirty feet in width that are generally used for: material storage, surface parking, or are vacant. Many of these lots collect trash and have unattractive fencing.

Recommendations:

- Develop the street network around the station area to include sidewalks and streetscape improvements (i.e. seating, lighting, street trees).
- Activate uses at the pedestrian level by encouraging ground floor retail through zoning district modifications. These could further be enhanced by facilitating mixed-use developments to generate more foot traffic around the clock.



FIGURE 6 | Eastchester Road. The area surrounding the proposed Morris Park station currently has few pedestrian amenities and limited east-west access across the railroad tracks.



FIGURE 7 | Bassett Avenue. Many of the lots adjacent to the railroad, varying from five to thirty feet in width, are used for material storage, surface parking, or have remained vacant.

- Pursue the continuation of Bassett Avenue as a through street to Pelham Parkway as pedestrian and/or vehicular access. This would allow for additional access from Pelham Parkway and transit stops as well as improve general circulation around the sites.
- Identify opportunities to develop or enhance lots to support the proposed Metro-North station and a walkable pedestrian environment along Bassett Avenue. As indicated, in *Section 1 Strategies: Rail Adjacent Lots*, there are a number of improvements that can be made to lots of varying sizes located along rail lines. The proposed station provides an opportunity re-examine the uses of these lots, many of which are adjacent to the site.

(2) STATION AREA EAST

Significant development is proposed within the current manufacturing and residential districts located in the station area. While the current M1-1 zoning designation has permitted significant as-of-right development, these districts limit density, and preclude the development of residential uses. The current zoning is not intended to support mixed-use development nor does it encourage the type of development that supports a walkable environment. Continued development under the current zoning will not allow the area to reach its potential as an employment center that provides the ability to live, work, shop and dine all within a close proximity to each other.

Vehicular access in and out of Hutchinson Metro Center is limited to southern end of the site. At current capacity, these access points often back up during peak times, causing delays for commuters and public/private buses. The rail line to the west, Hutchinson River Parkway to the east and security concerns with the new PSAC II call center on the northern end of the site create additional barriers to access solutions. Other than the proposed metro-north station, mass-transit to Hutchinson Metro Center is limited. As of this study, no other forms of public transit extend into the Hutchinson Metro Center site.

Recommendations:

- Explore potential short and long term solutions to provide additional access in and out of the Hutchinson Metro Center. These could involve studying: additional access points to the site on or along the Hutchinson River Parkway; opportunities on the north side which meet the secu-

Figure 8 Existing Conditions:

- 1 Low density single story uses along Eastchester Road approaching proposed station site
- 2 Lack of pedestrian amenities along Eastchester Road and Bassett Avenue
- 3 No pedestrian access over rail line to connect educational and medical uses to Hutchinson Metro
- 4 Ground floor uses do not support surrounding facilities or encourage pedestrian activity
- 5 Difficult crossings at Morris Park Avenue and Eastchester Road

Figure 8 Potential Improvements:

- 1 Develop contextual maximum base heights and, after setback, maximum building heights. Establish more prominent street wall with opportunities for articulation
- 2 Incorporate street lamps and street trees at regular intervals
- 3 Incorporate pedestrian overpass on Morris Park Avenue over Amtrak rail lines
- 4 Ensure ground floor establishments have active uses and ample transparency
- 5 Improve crosswalks and street network

EXISTING CONDITIONS



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS



FIGURE 8 | Morris Park Avenue at Eastchester Road. (Top) Current conditions; (bottom) potential improvements.

rity needs of PSAC II; and long term solutions where vehicular, public transit and pedestrian access could be created over/under rail line.

- Further study circulation within the Hutchinson Metro Center, potentially as part of a master plan, to explore improvements to pedestrian and vehicular circulation which will accommodate current use and future growth. This could include strategies to re-orient and better connect the station area with the existing and proposed development.
- Re-examine bus routes to extend into Hutchinson Metro Center and coordinate with potential Metro-North station (UPDATE: NYCTransit announced the extensions of Bx24 bus service into Hutchinson Metro Center to begin in mid-2014)
- DCP should study the zoning east of the station area around the station, which includes the Hutchinson Metro Center, to identify zoning appropriate for current uses and supportive of additional mixed use sustainable development.

East-West Pedestrian Access

Current east-west access over the Hell Gate rail line is limited. Pedestrians attempting to traverse from the intersection of Morris Park Avenue and Eastchester Road, near the entrance to Albert Einstein, to the main entrance of the Hutchinson Metro Center (1200 Waters Street) must walk a full mile.

Recommendations:

- The proposed station should incorporate east-west pedestrian access over the rail which currently does not exist. At railroad stations, a pedestrian bridge serves as a pathway from one side of the tracks to the other when crossing at grade is not possible. Here a pedestrian bridge can also be a vital crossing point for non-riders, as pedestrians and cyclists may need to access the other side of the tracks. This dual usage helps to create an activity node that can support additional amenities such as retail or public space and enhances overall safety. If it is perceived as inconvenient or unsafe it is likely



FIGURE 9 | Metro-North pedestrian bridge. In 2009, a Metro-North station opened at 153rd street to serve the new Yankees Stadium and the Highbridge neighborhood in the Bronx. The new station includes an enclosed pedestrian bridge that bypasses roadways and other pedestrian implements to ease pedestrian access from the station to the stadium and other destinations to the east. The sleek design and wide stairway entrances are inviting to pedestrians. The Arts for Transit mosaics which line the interior walls of the structure provide interest along the 450-foot corridor.

Source: WikiMedia

CASE STUDY | MetroTech Center

MetroTech Center, located in downtown Brooklyn is a 16-acre center for industry, innovation and education, and an exemplary model of how a cluster of strong institutions can partner together to build a cohesive economic center that is embedded within the larger neighborhood of downtown Brooklyn. The ten block area is home to Polytechnic Institute of NYU, as well as a range of organizations including: MakerBot Industries (producers of 3D printers), Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield, and JP Morgan Chase.

The idea for MetroTech was conceived in the late 1970s by the Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden and Polytechnic University President George Bugliarello, envisioning it as a research center akin to Silicon Valley in California. The Stanford Research Park in Palo Alto, California was an extremely successful model, where the dean of the electrical engineering school, Frederick Terman, sought to marry the institutional knowledge of the classroom with innovation in industrial technology. Hewlett Packard, formed by two of Terman's students, General Electric, Fairchild Semiconductor and Lockheed were among the early tenants to play a role in the transformation of the area into Silicon Valley.

In the 1980s, when large-scale development was occurring in downtown Brooklyn, the City's Public Development Corporation designated Polytechnic University as the urban renewal sponsor for the Metro-Tech urban renewal area, and together they picked Forest City Ratner as the developer to create a campus-like area for back office spaces. This was intended to create a place where graduates could live and start businesses as well as to be a catalyst for a larger revitalization of downtown Brooklyn.

The Downtown Brooklyn Partnership (DBP), a local development corporation was vital to the integration of MetroTech Center with downtown Brooklyn. DBP works with the three business improvement districts in the area including the MetroTech BID, the Fulton Mall improvement Association, and Court-Livingston-Schermerhorn BID. DBP's goals include attracting businesses to the area and maintaining and improving the public spaces and streetscape. Their comprehensive website promotes the attractions, services, and shopping in the area and provides up-to-date information on arts, cultural events, as well as new projects and initiatives coming to downtown Brooklyn. The DBP promotes the area as a college town, because of the 11 colleges and universities, and hosts events for all students in the area. They

also created a shared job database with Brooklyn businesses to connect students with jobs in Brooklyn. Additionally, the DBP keeps track of city-owned properties to use as arts spaces, and advocates for infrastructure improvements and long-term planning.

DBP has been integral in facilitating improvements to the area which have created a connected downtown that leverages the potential for future investment. The cluster of medical and educational institutions in Morris Park, similarly, can come together to create a strong identity that would promote the area and spur local investment. Currently, however, the organizations in the area are disconnected from one another and the neighborhood lacks a unified vision. While the Hutchinson Metro Center Office Complex is set to add new commercial, office, hotel and fitness facilities, this campus is also disconnected from the other institutions in the area. The Downtown Brooklyn Partnership and MetroTech is an example of ways to create partnerships between organizations, promote an area, and make improvements.

Source: Downtown Brooklyn Partnership. <http://downtownbrooklyn.com/>



FIGURE 10 | MetroTech Center in Downtown Brooklyn. The area provides a successful model for integrating industry, innovation and education.

Source: Jim.henderson / CC-BY-SA-3.0, via Wikimedia Commons from Wikimedia Commons

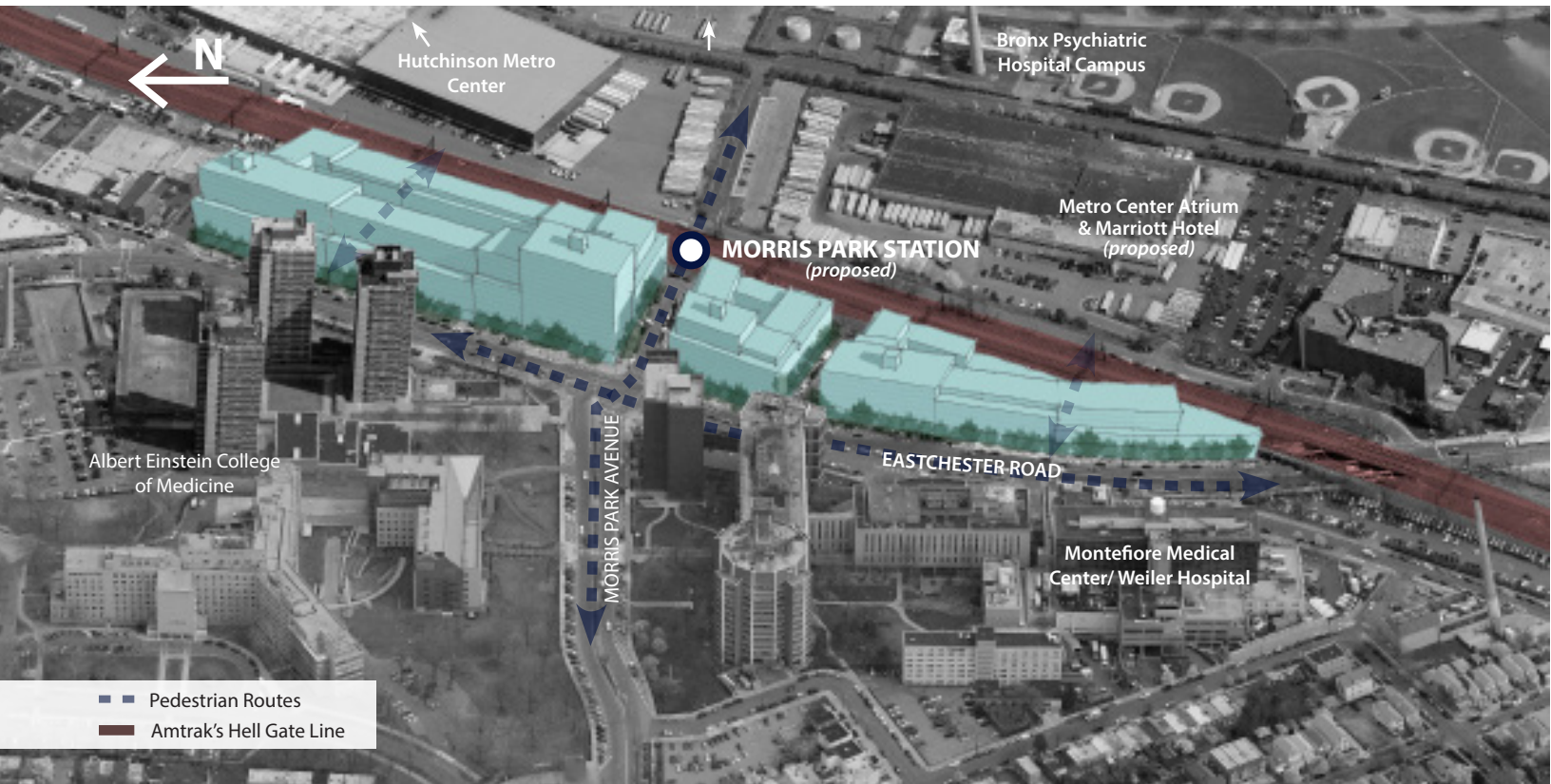


FIGURE 11 | Potential Mixed Use Density Massing. By taking advantage of the many institutions and business already present, this scale of development would encourage more pedestrian use and provide greater connection to the entire area.
Source: © 2011 Pictometry International Corp.

to go unused. The placement of the pedestrian bridge, entrance locations and signage are necessary to ensure that non-riders know they can take advantage of this feature. Other considerations should include:

- o An open and airy feel through the use of transparent materials
- o Unconfined passageway
- o Gradual ascent and descent
- o A unique design which shows investment and thoughtful consideration
- Additionally, Morris Park Avenue should continue as a vehicular and pedestrian connection from Basset Road to Marconi Street on the west side of the tracks. It is not currently mapped as a city street, but is scheduled to re-open after completion of the Metro Center Atrium.

(3) WESTCHESTER SQUARE AREA

Williamsbridge Road between Eastchester Road and East Tremont Avenue is an important retail corridor connecting the station area to Westchester Square.

Current zoning permits low density residential and commercial uses. The area along Blondell Avenue between Eastchester Road and Fink Avenue is a connection between Morris Park and Westchester Square. Currently it is zoned as Manufacturing; however, there has been significant interest in additional mixed-use development which is currently not permitted.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen this section of Williamsbridge Road as a contextual mixed use retail corridor and pedestrian pathway connecting the proposed station area to Westchester Square.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen the pedestrian environment along Blondell Avenue to create additional connectivity to the area.
- Enhance pedestrian crossings along East Tremont near Westchester Square #6 subway stop to identify improvements.

(4) AREA-WIDE

The area is a locus of economic development and existing organizations have major expansion plans underway. The institutions and offices alone account for more than 16,000 employees and 3,500 hospital beds. The ability to attract employees, tenants and residents to the area is an important element in the success of a proposed station and the continued growth of the area as an economic center. However, the area is rarely referred to as a singular place such as “Morris Park Professional Employment and Medical Center,” which is recognized for its significance in the Bronx economy similar to Hunt’s Point. Several institutions operate private shuttle service which connects employees and visitors to public transit, but it is not sufficient and lacks centralized organization.

Recommendations:

- Identify opportunities for area branding to promote to developers, employees and commercial retailers as indicated in the MetroTech Case Study.
- Centralize private shuttle service to efficiently service gaps in public transit. Service could coordinate with commercial centers such as Westchester Square BID.

CONCLUSION

In using this opportunity to take an early look at the proposed station area, there are a number of initiatives that can begin now that will benefit residents, employers, employees and visitors to this area. Identifying areas where zoning solutions can provide supportive commercial uses and additional residential density can dovetail with enhancements to pedestrian infrastructure. Looking at the area holistically as a major regional professional employment center will make it a more attractive place for employers, employees, tenants and investors. Leveraging stakeholder support to work with Metro-North as the proposed project progresses can ensure that the station is integrated into the fabric of the area in a way that both promotes ridership and benefits stakeholders.

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- ⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2011).

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- Re-examine zoning to permit mixed use development on both sides of the rail which gives more flexibility to existing uses and encourages transit-oriented additional growth.
- Identify long-term improvements to pedestrian and vehicular access which promote circulation between development centers and both sides of rail line.
- Explore opportunities to brand the area through increased partnerships between institutions; encouraging additional residential, office and retail uses as well as research and development; and promotion as an easily accessible professional employment center in a complete community.