Chapter 17: Neighborhood Character

17.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the Proposed Action's potential effects on neighborhood character. As defined in the *2014 CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character is an amalgam of various elements that give a neighborhood its distinct "personality." These elements may include a neighborhood's land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, and/or noise conditions; however, not all of these elements contribute to neighborhood character in all cases. For a proposed project or action, a neighborhood character assessment under CEQR first identifies the defining features of the neighborhood and then evaluates whether the project or action has the potential to affect these defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the relevant technical analysis areas. Thus, to determine the effects of a proposed action on neighborhood character, the salient features of neighborhood character are considered together. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character impacts are rare, and it would be unusual that, in the absence of a significant adverse impact in any of the relevant technical areas, a combination of moderate effects to the neighborhood would result in an impact to neighborhood character. Moreover, a significant impact identified in one of the technical areas that contribute to a neighborhood's character is not automatically equivalent to a significant impact on neighborhood character, but rather serves as an indication that neighborhood character should be examined.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Action involves zoning map and zoning text amendments that would affect an approximately 78-block area in the East Midtown area of Manhattan Community Districts 5 and 6. The rezoning area is generally bounded by East 57th Street to the north, East 39th Street to the south, a line generally 200 feet easterly of Third Avenue, and a line 250 feet westerly of Madison Avenue. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to reinforce the performance of the Greater East Midtown area as an office district, and use the large public investment in transit infrastructure, including the East Side Access and Second Avenue subway projects, to generate its full potential of jobs and tax revenue for the city and region. In the Reasonable Worst-Case Development Scenario (RWCDS), 16 sites have been identified as Projected Development Sites that are expected to be developed by the 2036 analysis year, and 14 sites have been identified as Potential Development Sites, which are considered less likely to be developed over the same period.

This chapter includes a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character that was prepared in conformity with the *CEQR Technical Manual*. The chapter describes the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Action on these defining features. The assessment relies on technical analyses discussed in other chapters of this DEIS.

Principal Conclusions

The Proposed Action would not result in a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character. As discussed throughout this chapter, the East Midtown area has a varied neighborhood context, and its defining features are the dominance of commercial land uses; the interspersing of older, smaller

buildings with more modern high-rise office towers; high levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity and associated noise; and a primarily high-density built context, intermixed with iconic historic resources, including Grand Central Terminal, the Helmsley Building, the Chrysler Building, St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House, St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Seagram Building, and Lever House. In the future with the Proposed Action, the East Midtown area would continue to be defined by this combination of features.

Using methodologies outlined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the preliminary assessment evaluated the expected changes resulting from the Proposed Action in the following technical areas: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; shadows; transportation; and noise. The assessment used the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Action would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas, and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character.

Of the relevant technical areas specified in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the Proposed Action would not cause significant adverse impacts regarding land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; urban design and visual resources; or noise. The potential significant adverse impacts on open space would not alter neighborhood character, and while there would be a substantial increase in non-residential population with the Proposed Action, it was determined that most Projected Development Sites are proximate to open spaces that currently exhibit low utilization, and qualitative usage factors reduce the overall effects of the population increase. Similarly, the potential significant adverse impacts on transportation would not affect neighborhood character; while there would be increased activity, the resulting reductions in traffic levels-of-service conditions would not be out of character with the East Midtown area, and thus the incremental changes would not constitute significant impacts on neighborhood character.

Potential significant adverse impacts on historic resources also would not result in a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a significant impact identified in one of the technical areas that contributes to neighborhood character is not automatically equivalent to a significant impact on neighborhood character; while a neighborhood with a uniform and consistent context would typically be sensitive to change, a neighborhood that has a more varied context is typically better able to tolerate greater changes without experiencing significant impacts to its overall character. The identified significant adverse impact on historic resources stemming from the demolition of up to six eligible resources on Projected and Potential Development Sites would not alter the overall character of East Midtown as an area characterized by a varied context of older buildings interspersed with modern construction, and the continuing presence of defining landmarks that are hallmarks of this mixed commercial neighborhood's character—Grand Central Terminal, the Helmsley Building, St. Patrick's Cathedral, St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House, the Chrysler Building, the Seagram Building, and Lever House—would not be displaced. The potential significant adverse shadow impacts on stained glass windows at St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House would not affect the characteristics of those structures, including their architecture, setting and cultural significance, which make them defining features of neighborhood character.

Just as potential significant adverse impacts in the relevant technical areas would not affect any defining feature of neighborhood character, no moderate adverse effects that would affect such defining features—either singularly or in combination—have been identified.

Therefore, based on the results of the preliminary assessment, a detailed assessment is not warranted, and the Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse neighborhood character impact.

17.2 Methodology

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of neighborhood character is generally needed when a proposed action has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts in any of the following technical areas: land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, or noise. The *CEQR Technical Manual* states that even if a proposed action does not have the potential to result in a significant adverse impact in any specific technical area(s), an assessment of neighborhood character may be required if the project would result in a combination of moderate effects to several elements that may cumulatively affect neighborhood character. A "moderate" effect is generally defined as an effect considered reasonably close to the significant adverse impact threshold for a particular technical analysis area.

A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in other technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The preliminary assessment first identifies the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and then evaluates whether the proposed project or action has the potential to affect these defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the relevant technical areas. If there is no potential for the proposed project or action to affect the defining features of neighborhood character, a detailed assessment is not warranted.

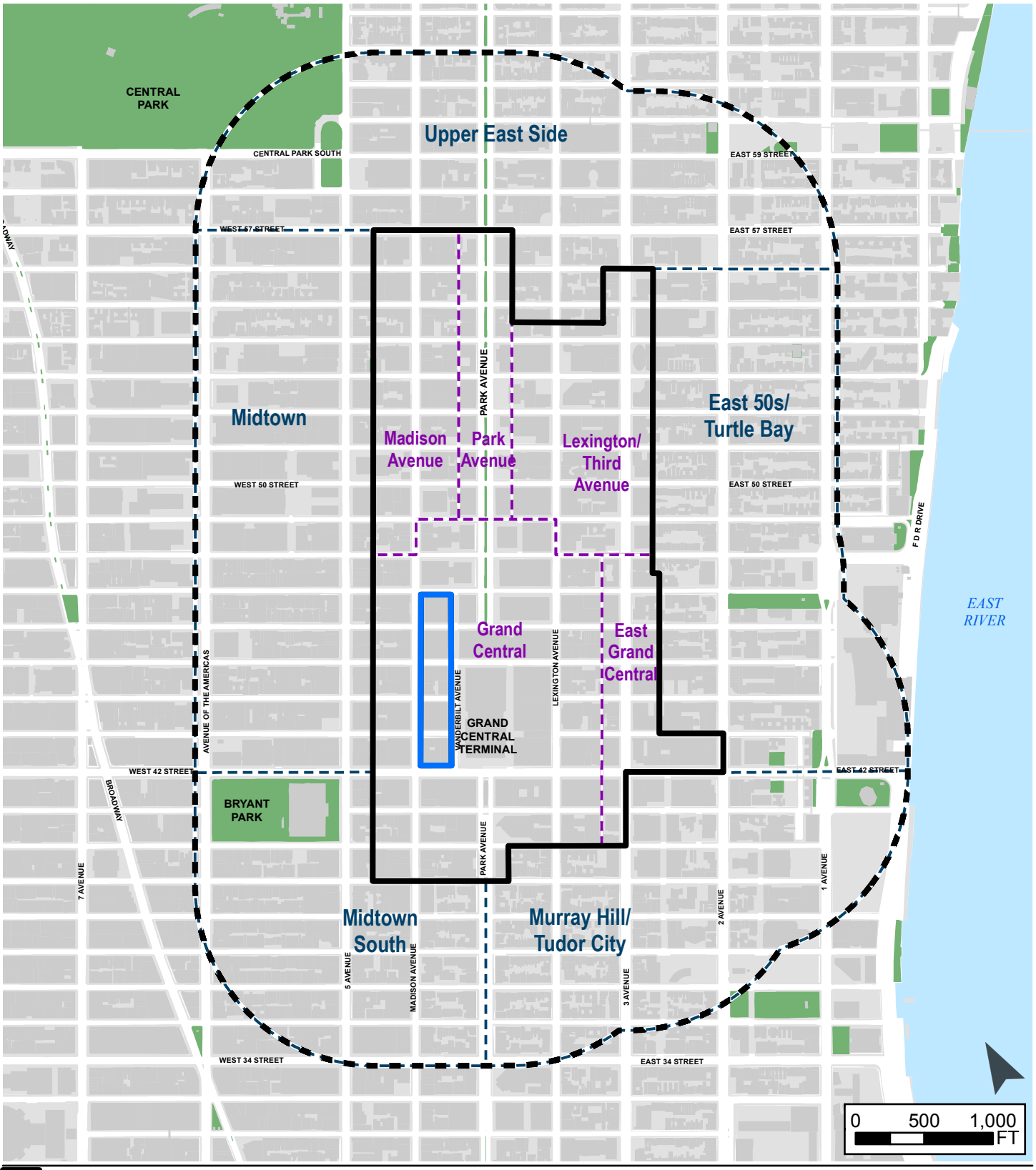
Study Area

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study area for a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character is typically consistent with the study areas in the relevant technical areas assessed under CEQR that contribute to the defining features of the neighborhood. In the context of an area-wide rezoning such as the Proposed Action, the study area boundaries for a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character are generally coterminous with those used in the analyses of land use and urban design. As shown on Figure 17-1, the study area for this assessment of neighborhood character comprises an area within a quarter-mile radius of the proposed rezoning area, and uses the same subarea definitions that were used for Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy," and Chapter 7, "Urban Design and Visual Resources."

17.3 Preliminary Assessment

Defining Features

The defining features of neighborhood character in the East Midtown study area are the dominance of commercial land uses, the interspersing of older buildings with modern high-rise construction, high levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity with associated mobile source noise, a primarily high-density built context, and a number of iconic historic structures, including Grand Central Terminal, the Helmsley Building, the Chrysler Building, St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House, St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Seagram Building, and Lever House. As shown on Figure 17-1, for the purposes of assessing neighborhood character, the study area is divided into 10 distinct analysis areas, five of which are located within the boundaries of the proposed rezoning area, and five of which collectively



Proposed Greater East Midtown Rezoning Boundary

Vanderbilt Corridor (Existing Regulations Apply)

Quarter-Mile Secondary Study Area

Primary Analysis Area Boundary (w/ Neighborhood Label)

Seconday Study Area Boundary (w/ Neighborhood Label)

Greater East Midtown Rezoning
Manhattan, New York

Study and Analysis Areas (Primary and Secondary)

Figure 17-1

vhb

encompass the surrounding quarter-mile area. Each of these analysis areas is discussed in the following sections.

Grand Central Analysis Area

The largest analysis area in the primary study area is the Grand Central analysis area (Figure 17-1), which is centered on Grand Central Terminal, one of the City's major transportation hubs and most prominent civic spaces. High-density commercial uses dominate the analysis area, interspersed with some institutional uses and mixed commercial/residential uses. Along the avenue frontages, the analysis area is predominantly zoned C5-3, with C5-2.5 zoning designations at most midblocks. The entire analysis area is located within the Special Midtown District; the existing Grand Central Subdistrict extends from East 41st Street to East 49th Street.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy," the Grand Central analysis area is one of the most densely developed areas in the City and is predominantly characterized by a mix of office towers and mid-rise office buildings located around Grand Central Terminal, which is served by both subway and commuter train lines. This landmark building was completed in 1913 and occupies a portion of one of the two superblocks in the study area, situated between East 42nd Street and East 45th Street, Vanderbilt and Lexington Avenues. Grand Central Terminal, the hub of commuter rail and subway service in the area, breaks the rectilinear street grid that otherwise typifies the entire rezoning area; however, vehicular traffic continues north-south along an elevated viaduct that straddles the terminal and flows to Park Avenue. At the corner of East 42nd Street and Park Avenue, the clock and sculpture of Mercury flanked by Hercules and Minerva at the apex of the Grand Central Terminal building terminate the avenue's northward vista, with the MetLife Building towering above it.

Pershing Square, located directly south of Grand Central Terminal, includes a restaurant below the Grand Central Viaduct (an LPC-designated historic landmark), as well as a pedestrian plaza that the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) has developed to replace the roadway between East 41st Street and East 42nd Street. Much of the area surrounding Grand Central Terminal is built directly over the rail shed serving the Terminal.

North of Grand Central Terminal, the southerly end of Park Avenue is anchored by the iconic Helmsley Building with its grand pyramidal roof capped by an ornate cupola. The vehicular portals of the Grand Central Viaduct flow into Park Avenue in this subarea, where vehicular traffic is separated by the characteristic landscaped medians, known as the Park Avenue Malls, from East 46th to East 49th Street. There are few privately owned public spaces (POPS) in this subarea.

To the west of Grand Central Terminal is the Vanderbilt Corridor, and area was the subject of a 2015 zoning text amendment, City Map Amendment, and CPC special permits (CEQR No.: 14DCP188M). This corridor is characterized by commercial uses, including office and hotel uses. Two blocks are fully occupied by large, modern office towers; the other blocks contain buildings that date from the early 20th century, as well as a structure under construction for the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) East Side Access project. Most buildings within the Vanderbilt corridor have ground-floor retail. For the most part, streetwalls are consistent throughout the Vanderbilt Corridor, and buildings tend to rise flush from the sidewalk with setbacks at the upper floors. There are several historic resources within the Vanderbilt Corridor, including the Yale Club, Roosevelt Hotel, and Vanderbilt Concourse Building. The City Map Amendment approved as part of the Vanderbilt Corridor project designated a portion of Vanderbilt Avenue between East 42nd and East 43rd Streets as a "public place" to be known as Vanderbilt Place, dedicated to pedestrian use.

Further, the actions will facilitate several improvements in the area in and around One Vanderbilt building with:

- a building setback from East 42nd Street at the ground floor that will create a wider sidewalk along this frontage;
- an angled building façade along East 42nd Street that will open up views to Grand Central Terminal from the west;
- a setback from Madison Avenue that will create a wider sidewalk along this frontage;
- ground-floor and second-floor retail with glazing that will activate the adjacent sidewalks and provide visual interest to pedestrians; and
- a new public transit hall space within the building's northeast corner that will contribute to the pedestrian experience and will be an amenity accessible to the public.

The floor area of One Vanderbilt is projected to be comparable to that of other commercial office towers in the study area and its height would be generally consistent with the character of Midtown, which is famous for its tall buildings. One Vanderbilt and the associated improvements are expected to be complete and fully occupied by the end of 2021.

In addition to Grand Central Terminal, the dominance of high-density commercial uses in the analysis area is a principal defining feature of neighborhood character. This vibrant commercial district and transportation hub is also defined by high levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity. The above- and below-grade pedestrian network in the vicinity of Grand Central Terminal is one of the unique assets of East Midtown; sidewalks near subway entrances serve as nodes of pedestrian activity, although there are also areas of narrow sidewalk width and pedestrian congestion. There is relatively low building bulk in midblock locations compared to avenue frontages, and although there is slightly more variety in the use and scale of buildings along the side streets than along the avenues, the analysis area is predominantly characterized by mid- and high-rise commercial buildings.

As described in Chapter 2, most of the avenues and many of the cross streets in the surrounding Grand Central analysis area are enlivened with restaurants and other retail uses at the grade level of commercial buildings. Several of these commercial structures are built on large lots, and in some instances, occupy entire blocks. This is particularly evident along Park Avenue, north of Grand Central Terminal, which is distinguished by high-rise office buildings, many of which are large-footprint commercial buildings with public plazas. Mixed commercial/residential-use buildings within the Grand Central analysis area are generally located east of Lexington Avenue, providing a transition of use and form between Grand Central Terminal and the more residential neighborhoods to the east while still maintaining much of the commercial character that largely defines the analysis area. Institutional uses within this analysis area include diplomatic buildings.

For pedestrians, East 42nd Street has wide sidewalks while Lexington and Madison Avenues have narrower pedestrian ways. Third Avenue and Park Avenue both have wide sidewalks; all are typified by high volumes of foot traffic. Along the eastern and western sides of the analysis area, Lexington and Madison Avenues are lined with commercial buildings that generally have ground-floor retail and upper-level offices. Although there are some low-rise buildings along these corridors, many buildings are taller than 20 stories, with several exceeding 40 stories in height. Some of the high-rise buildings rise to their full height without setback, while others have multiple setbacks. Collectively, these high-

rise commercial buildings shape the East Midtown skyline, which is punctuated by the iconic spire of the 77-story brick and chrome Chrysler Building—a defining feature of this analysis area.

Park Avenue Analysis Area

With a few notable exceptions, the Park Avenue analysis area generally consists of high-density commercial buildings that serve as defining features of neighborhood character. Exemplified by iconic structures, including the 38-story Seagram Building (375 Park Avenue) and the 24-story Lever House (390 Park Avenue), the eight-block corridor that encompasses this analysis area is characterized by several high-rise glass office towers, with a more limited amount of ground-floor retail. Most buildings in the analysis area are taller than 20 stories, and while some buildings rise to their full height without setback, others are massed with numerous setbacks. One noteworthy example of a building configured as a tower with multiple setbacks is the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, which occupies the entire block between Park and Lexington Avenues, and East 49th and East 50th Streets. The hotel, one of the most prominent buildings in the area, is a gray limestone and brick-clad building designed in the Art Deco style, with twin beacon-topped vertically massed towers rising to 47 stories. Recent filings at the Department of Buildings indicate this hotel is planned for an estimated $1 billion conversion to include 840 hotel rooms and 321 residential apartments.[1]

There are also several exclusively residential buildings within this analysis area, one at the corner of East 55th Street and Park Avenue, as well a few between East 56th and East 57th Streets. One mixed-use commercial/residential building is the 432 Park Avenue residential tower and associated commercial space at its base. The entire analysis area, which is located within the Special Midtown District, is zoned C5-3.

Sited in a terraced garden amid the office towers of Park Avenue, the iconic Byzantine-inspired St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House complex occupies the blockfront between East 50th and East 51st Streets. Its Park Avenue entrance consists of a single-story stone-clad structure with a triple-arched entry portal. The setting of the complex—designed with salmon-colored brick facades, large round-arched and rose stained-glass windows, and stone carvings—among the high density commercial buildings along Park Avenue is a defining feature of this analysis area.

Unique to Park Avenue is its wide sidewalks, the Park Avenue Malls from East 49th Street to East 57th Street, and some POPS along the street frontage of buildings in the corridor.

Madison Avenue Analysis Area

The Madison Avenue analysis area is situated in the northwestern section of the proposed rezoning area, is centered on a nine block-long stretch of Madison Avenue, and includes portions of the adjoining side streets. The Madison Avenue analysis area is composed almost entirely of commercial uses and is generally defined by its prestigious office building and retail space inventory, as well as such institutional uses as the landmarked St. Patrick's Cathedral on Madison Avenue between East 50th Street and 51st Street, the Republic of Venezuela building at 7 East 51st Street, and the Friar's Club at 57 East 55th Street. Along the avenue frontages, the analysis area is zoned C5-3, with C5-2.5 zoning

[1] NYC DOB Job No.: 121191245, filed on November 10, 2016. Accessed on DOB BIS on December 7, 2016. http://ny.curbed.com/2016/11/14/13626010/waldorf-astoria-condo-conversion-321-apartments, accessed December 20, 2016.

designations at the midblocks. The entire analysis area is located within the Special Midtown District, and there are POPS throughout the subarea.

Within this analysis area, there is great variation in building heights, ranging from less than five stories up to the 51-story New York Palace Hotel. As such, blocks with high-density office towers are interspersed with blocks defined by smaller-scale buildings located adjacent to and often surrounded by high-rise buildings that are characteristic of East Midtown. As with the Grand Central analysis area, there is relatively less building bulk in midblock locations compared to avenue frontages. With its primarily commercial character, Madison Avenue serves as a vibrant pedestrian corridor, in part because of the lively mix of storefront retail. Most buildings with frontage on Madison Avenue have high lot coverage and are built to the sidewalk, creating a consistent streetwall along much of the corridor, but the streetwall is broken in several instances by privately owned public spaces in the form of plazas and arcades, as well as by two notable historic resources on both sides of the avenue between East 50th and East 51st Streets. On the west side of the avenue, the streetwall is interrupted by a landscaped area in front of the rear façade of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Lexington/Third Avenue Analysis Area

The Lexington Avenue/Third Avenue analysis area is situated in the northeastern section of the proposed rezoning area and includes a five-and-a-half block segment of Lexington Avenue and an eight block-long stretch of Third Avenue, as well as portions of the adjoining side streets. The Lexington Avenue/Third Avenue analysis area is composed primarily of commercial uses, with ground-floor retail in most buildings, including those that are mixed-use commercial residential structures. There are also several exclusively residential buildings within this analysis area, located at 125 East 54th Street, the corner of East 53rd and Lexington Avenue, and along East 49th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues. There are also several hotels in the area, including Shelton Hotel (a 32-story hotel currently operating as Halloran House Hotel), The Beverley Hotel (a 25-story hotel currently operating as The Benjamin), and the Summit Hotel (a 15-story hotel currently operating as the Doubletree Hotel); these three hotels are NYC LPC-designated landmarks. However, the predominantly commercial character, combined with large building footprints, differentiates the analysis area from the more residential uses typical of the neighborhoods that border it to the east. Several hotels are located within this analysis area along Lexington Avenue and Third Avenue.

Along the avenue frontages, the analysis area is zoned C6-6, with C6-4.5 zoning designations at the midblocks between Third and Lexington Avenues and C5-2.5 districts between Lexington and Park Avenues. The entire analysis area is located within the Special Midtown District, and there are POPS throughout the subarea.

The character of this analysis area is also defined by high levels of pedestrian activity. Both Third and Lexington Avenues serve as important pedestrian corridors, particularly in the vicinity of storefront retail, bus stops, and subway stations. Within the analysis area, there are a number of access points to subway stations at East 51st Street (6 line) and East 53rd Street (E and M lines). The sidewalks along Third Avenue are wider than those on Lexington Avenue, and the narrower Lexington Avenue sidewalks exhibit several subway ventilation grates.

East Grand Central Analysis Area

The East Grand Central analysis area comprises the southeastern section of the proposed rezoning area, east of the Grand Central analysis area; it is centered on an eight block-long stretch of Third Avenue,

and includes portions of the adjoining side streets, as well as the entire block east of Third Avenue, between East 43rd Street and East 42nd Street. The East Grand Central analysis area is almost entirely commercial, where the only non-commercial land uses include a few mixed commercial/residential buildings and the Church of Saint Agnes, located on East 43rd Street, west of Third Avenue. There are few POPS in this area. The corridor along Third Avenue is zoned C5-3 and is included in the existing Special Midtown District. West of this corridor, the portion of the block between Second and Third Avenues and East 42nd Street and East 43rd Street is currently zoned C5-2 and is not included in the existing Special Midtown District.

It should also be noted that the Pfizer Headquarters are also anticipated to be sold before the end of the year. This site, located at the far eastern side of the rezoning area, is comprised of two buildings located at 219-235 East 42nd Street, to the northwest of the intersection between East 42nd Street and 2nd Avenue, and consists of approximately 70,00 SF of lot area and 1m SF of floor area.[2, 3]

Midtown Analysis Area

The Midtown analysis area comprises most of the western section of the secondary study area and includes 14 blocks between Sixth Avenue and Fifth Avenue, as well as the western ends of 14 blocks lining the east side of Fifth Avenue.

It is located west of the proposed rezoning area, and is characterized by many post-war, high-rise commercial buildings. The area also includes several pre-war, low-rise buildings that line the Fifth and Sixth Avenue corridors, as well as the side streets. There is great variation in building height and bulk throughout this analysis area, and there are several distinct neighborhoods or districts within the analysis area, including the Fifth Avenue shopping district, the West 47th Street Diamond District, and the West 46th Street Little Brazil neighborhood, as well as a few clusters of institutional uses, such as the university clubs along West 43rd and West 44th Streets. This contributes to a varied neighborhood context in this analysis area.

As noted in the discussion for the Madison Avenue analysis area, the iconic St. Patrick's Cathedral is a neighborhood-defining feature due a combination of features, including its presence on Fifth Avenue, its soaring architecture and cultural significance, and the public space and quietude it offers in the midst of a high-density commercial district. Another important defining feature of neighborhood character in this analysis area is Rockefeller Center, which is a major tourist destination. Located across from St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue, the 21 limestone-faced buildings that comprise Rockefeller Center surround the exterior of a superblock bounded by West 48th and West 51st Streets, from Fifth Avenue to Sixth Avenue. Rockefeller Center consists of a monumental 70-story central building (the General Electric Building, formerly the RCA Building) surrounded by smaller office towers, low-rise buildings on Fifth Avenue, strategically placed open spaces, and a sunken plaza; there are also few POPS in this subarea.

Upper East Side Analysis Area

The Upper East Side analysis area is located north of the proposed rezoning area boundary and comprises a small southern portion of the extensive Upper East Side neighborhood, which generally

[2] As per NYC DCP MapPLUTO 16v2 data, accessed December 7, 2016

[3] Wall Street Journal "Pfizer to Sell New York City Headquarters By End of Next Year", published October 6, 2016, accessed December 7, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizer-to-sell-new-york-city-headquarters-by-end-of-next-year-1475766972>

extends northward up to East 96th Street. The analysis area consists of a mix of residential and commercial uses, and there are late-nineteenth-century masonry, mixed commercial/residential buildings and apartment buildings.

There are several high-rise commercial buildings on large lots within the analysis area; the 55-story Bloomberg Tower (731 Lexington Avenue) and the 50-story General Motors Building (767 Fifth Avenue) occupy entire blocks. Several private clubs and hotels are located in the vicinity of Central Park and Grand Army Plaza, which creates a key defining feature of this analysis area. The southeastern portion of Central Park, which is a node between this subarea and the Midtown subarea, consists mainly of The Pond, the Hallett Nature Sanctuary, trees and planted areas with benches and walking paths, and part of East Drive that provides both vehicular access and a lane for horse-drawn cabs. There are several POPS, principally along side streets in this subarea.

Bloomingdale's department store, a prominent neighborhood fixture, occupies the entire block bounded by East 59th and 60th Streets, and Lexington and Third Avenues. The 140-foot-wide Park Avenue boulevard, with wide sidewalks, is a central spine in this neighborhood.

East 50s/Turtle Bay Analysis Area

The East 50s/Turtle Bay analysis area comprises most of the eastern section of the secondary study area; it is centered on Second Avenue, north of East 42nd Street, and includes most of each of the 13 blocks lining the west side of Second Avenue, the entirety of each of the 14 blocks to the east, between First Avenue and Second Avenue, as well as a substantial portion of the UN Headquarters complex east of First Avenue, south of East 48th Street.

This subarea, located east of the proposed rezoning area, is defined by a wide variety of uses and scales of buildings. As such, the neighborhood character is marked by the lack of uniformity in the built context, although certain development patterns can be identified. Large-scale residential buildings are also present in the analysis area, including the 72-story Trump World Plaza at First Avenue and East 48th Street. However, many of the midblocks, as well as stretches of the avenue corridors, also contain low-rise buildings on small lots. A prominent example is the Turtle Bay Gardens Historic District—located between Second and Third Avenues, and East 48th and East 49th Streets—which comprises 20 houses, each four stories in height, with a shared Italian Renaissance-inspired garden in the rear.

The United Nations Headquarters complex is located on a superblock on the east side of First Avenue between East 42nd and East 48th Streets, at the southeastern boundary of the analysis area. The complex includes four modernist buildings set back from the street, along with a park and paved courtyards. Additionally, a number of former mixed-use and residential buildings in the analysis area now serve as institutional uses for the United Nations. The 1.59-acre Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, located on the south side of East 47th Street between First and Second Avenues, provides a visual link to the United Nations Headquarters complex and is also the largest publicly accessible open space in this analysis area; there are other POPS and open spaces in the southerly portion of this subarea as well.

Another notable building that contributes to the Neighborhood Character is the Ford Foundation Building, which is a LPC-designated Kevin Roche building that was constructed between 1963 and 1967. According to the LPC-designation report, the architects, in an approach unusual for modern movement buildings in the 1960s, carefully considered the context of the surrounding neighborhood in planning the building's design. The building's twelve-story height matches the set-back line of the office buildings directly to the west. By placing the main entrance with its driveway on East 43rd Street,

the designers deliberately created a grand scenic approach road for the building due to local one-way street patterns.[4]

Murray Hill/Tudor City Analysis Area

The Murray Hill/Tudor City analysis area comprises the southeastern section of the secondary study area and includes the twelve blocks on either side of Lexington Avenue south of East 40th Street; seven full blocks east of Third Avenue, south of East 42nd Street; all or part of seven blocks east of Second Avenue, south of East 42nd Street; and the area east of First Avenue developed as Tudor City (the portion south of East 42nd Street).

The character of this analysis area, located southeast of the proposed rezoning area, is largely defined by a variety of residential uses. North of East 39th Street, there is more of a commercial presence, but south of East 39th Street, avenues are lined mostly with post-war, high-rise residential buildings with ground-floor retail, while pre-war, low-rise residential brownstones and row houses are found along cross streets. Several large residential buildings with public plazas are located in this analysis area, including the 53-story Corinthian Apartments (330 East 38th Street). While there are a variety of uses within this analysis area—including commercial, institutional, transportation/utility, and parking, in addition to the presence of vacant land—the analysis area maintains a largely residential character. Most POPS are west of Second Avenue and east of Third Avenue; there are no POPS or other open spaces between just west of Third Avenue and Fifth Avenue, other than the Park Avenue Malls.

The varied residential character is reflected in the presence of three historic districts within this analysis area. The Murray Hill Historic District—located between East 34th and East 39th Streets, and Park and Lexington Avenues—consists primarily of mid-nineteenth-century row houses along tree-lined blocks; the brownstone-fronted buildings have low stoops with Italianate details. East of the Murray Hill Historic District is the Sniffen Court Historic District, which consists of 10 two-story brick buildings erected on a small court and set perpendicular to East 36th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues. The Tudor City Historic District is located at the northeastern edge of the analysis area, north of East 40th Street between First and Second Avenues. Tudor City is a complex of apartment houses and apartment hotels with Tudor details, ranging in height from 10 to 32 stories and collectively comprising 3,000 apartments and 600 hotel rooms. The complex has a unique character due to its location on a bluff set apart from its surroundings, the absence of through streets, and the presence of two small parks.

In addition to the predominantly residential land use that defines neighborhood character in this analysis area, another contributing feature is the Queens-Midtown Tunnel ramp network. The entrance and exit to the tunnel are located between East 36th and East 37th Streets, from First Avenue to Third Avenue, with dedicated north-south side streets providing one-way access to the tunnel. As such, the rectilinear street grid in this analysis area is interspersed with the tunnel ramp network.

[4] NYC LPC Ford Foundation Building Designation Report. Published October 21, 1997. Accessed December 7, 2016. <http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/lp/1969.pdf>

Midtown South Analysis Area

The Midtown South analysis area comprises most of the western section of the secondary study area and includes 14 blocks between Sixth Avenue and Fifth Avenue, as well as the western ends of 14 blocks lining the east side of Fifth Avenue.

The Midtown South analysis area—located southwest of the proposed rezoning area—today has a more varied commercial context that defines the neighborhood character. Limited industrial/manufacturing uses remain along the midblocks in this analysis area, but many buildings that formerly housed these uses have been recently converted into ground-floor retail with offices in the upper levels. Lord and Taylor's New York City flagship store is notable because it occupies an entire block along Fifth Avenue between West 38th and West 39th Streets. There has also been a recent and continuing influx of hotels in the area, on 36th, 37th, and 38th Streets. The area also includes several institutional uses.

A significant defining feature of neighborhood character in this analysis area is the presence of the New York Public Library-Stephen A. Schwarzman Building and Bryant Park, which collectively occupy a superblock from West 40th to West 42nd Streets between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. The Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, which is the main branch of the New York Public Library, is a historic resource constructed in the Beaux-Arts style of architecture, and the broad front stairs and projecting central pavilion draw the public into the majestic building. The 4.58-acre Bryant Park, located immediately west of the iconic Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, is characterized by a large central lawn (300 feet long by 215 feet wide), formal pathways, stone balustrades, allées of London Plane trees, and many monuments, including several bronze statues as well as classical ornaments. There are few POPS in this subarea.

Assessment of the Potential to Affect the Defining Features of the Neighborhood

The sections below discuss potential changes resulting from the Proposed Action in the following technical areas that are considered in a neighborhood character assessment under CEQR: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; shadows; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Action would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas, and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character. As described below, defining features of East Midtown's constituent neighborhoods would not be affected either through the potential of any significant adverse impact or combination of moderate effects in these technical areas.

Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Action on land use, zoning, and public policy, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. Commercial land uses, a principal defining feature of East Midtown, would be reinforced by the proposed new commercial development in the future with the Proposed Action.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," no significant adverse impacts related to land use, zoning, or public policy would occur. The Proposed Action would not directly displace any land use, nor would it generate new land uses that would either be incompatible with surrounding land uses or conflict with existing zoning or public policy. The Proposed Action would facilitate the construction of new commercial buildings in East Midtown to protect and strengthen the area's preeminence as one of the city's premier business districts. The creation of a new East Midtown Subdistrict within the Special Midtown District would encourage new, as-of-right commercial development, through a series of zoning mechanisms available to sites that meet specific size and locational requirements. The proposed Zoning Map Amendment would change zoning designations to encourage new commercial development in the proposed rezoning area, consistent with its existing character and development history. The predominantly commercial character of East Midtown is its principal defining feature, which would be reinforced by new office development in the future with the Proposed Action.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Action on socioeconomic conditions, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. The Proposed Action would result in a net increase of an estimated 26,261 employees, which would add to the customer base of existing businesses.

As described in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts in this technical area. No direct residential displacement would occur under the Proposed Action, and therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts due to direct residential displacement. An assessment of indirect residential displacement was not warranted because the Proposed Action, under which there would be less conversion of office to residential space, would not induce a trend that could potentially result in changing socioeconomic conditions for the existing residents within the proposed rezoning area.

According to the Socioeconomic Conditions analysis, the Proposed Action would potentially directly displace 1,238 existing businesses from the 16 Projected Development Sites. However, these businesses do not provide products or services that would no longer be available to local residents or businesses, nor are they the subject of regulations or publicly adopted plans aimed at preserving, enhancing, or otherwise protecting them in their current location. Moreover, the potentially displaced businesses are not unique to the quarter-mile study area, nor do they serve a user base that is dependent upon their location within the study area, and it is expected that they would likely be able to find comparable space within the study area or elsewhere within the City. Therefore, the direct business displacement resulting from the Proposed Action would not adversely alter socioeconomic conditions in East Midtown to a significant or moderate degree, and no adverse changes to neighborhood character would occur.

Furthermore, the Proposed Action would also not result in significant adverse impacts due to indirect business/institutional displacement. None of the potentially displaced businesses provide substantial direct support to other businesses in the study area, nor do they bring substantial numbers of people to the area that form a customer base for local businesses such that indirect business displacement would result. Although the employees of the directly displaced businesses form a portion of the customer base of neighborhood service establishments (e.g., food and drink establishments, retail), the Proposed Action would increase the overall employment in the rezoning area compared to the No-

Action Condition. It is anticipated that the Proposed Action would result in a net increase of an estimated 26,261 employees on the Projected Development Sites compared to the No-Action Condition, and thus the influx of employees to the study area would add to the customer base of existing study area businesses. Additionally, the Proposed Action would not significantly affect business conditions in any specific industry or any category of business, nor would it indirectly reduce employment or impair the economic viability of any specific industry or category of business. As such, there are no anticipated significant or moderate adverse impacts due to indirect business/institutional displacement or adverse effects on specific industries.

Open Space

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Action on publicly accessible open space, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. The Proposed Action also provides for funding of additional public realm improvements preliminarily outlined in the Concept Plan (see Chapter 1, "Project Description," Figure 1-3) through the transfer of development rights from landmarks, which conservatively was not considered in the open space quantitative assessment. When these improvements are more fully defined, they will be assessed in the Neighborhood Character chapter, as they can include additions to the public realm including sidewalk widenings, bus bulb outs and similar improvements to support pedestrians, and could include pedestrian plazas, shared streets and more opportunities to refine and enjoy the character of the proposed rezoning area.

As described in Chapter 4, "Open Space," the Proposed Action would not result in a direct significant adverse impact on open space. Construction and operation of the Projected Development Sites under the Proposed Action would not cause the physical loss of public open space; would not change the use of any open space so that it no longer serves the same user population; and would not limit public access to any open space. Incremental shadows on open space resources would not be significant, and the Proposed Action would not cause increased noise that would significantly affect the usefulness of any study area open spaces, whether on a permanent or temporary basis. As such, the Proposed Action would not have a direct effect on open space resources.

The Proposed Action would result in an indirect significant adverse impact on open space. The indirect effects analysis demonstrated that the Proposed Action, which would introduce additional workers to the area and thus place demands on passive open space resources, would decrease passive open space ratios by 4.45 percent for the non-residential population and 3.97 percent for the combined non-residential and residential population within the open space study area (i.e., an approximate quarter-mile radius around the proposed rezoning area). Although the study area's existing conditions are characterized by a low open space ratio (i.e., below the citywide average of 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 non-residential users), CEQR guidelines recognize that the goals for open space ratios are not feasible for areas such as Midtown Manhattan, and therefore do not constitute an impact threshold. Based on maps in the Open Space Appendix of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the open space study area is neither well served nor underserved by open space resources, and for no analysis condition would the open space ratios meet the City's guidelines for open space ratios in a commercial district. The analysis of the areas comprising the proposed rezoning area shows that there are more POPS outside of the proposed rezoning area than are within it, but these POPS are convenient to the Projected Development Sites that would be expected to be fully developed by the 2036 full build-out year.

Further, as discussed in Chapter 4, "Open Space," the existing pattern of POPS demonstrates that the less-used POPS are more proximate to the Projected Development Sites. Consequently, it is projected that while there is an indirect impact to open space with respect to neighborhood character, the physical location of open spaces compared to the affected user population is not expected to result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential impacts of the Proposed Action on historic and cultural resources, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

The Proposed Action would not result in any significant adverse impacts to archaeological resources, historic districts, or individually designated historic resources, but has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts to six eligible historic resources, which due to their location on Projected or Potential Development Sites, could be demolished, either partially or entirely, as a consequence of the Proposed Action:

- The NYCL-eligible building at 22-24 East 41st Street on Projected Development Site 2;
- The NYCL-eligible Title Guarantee and Trust Company Building at 6 East 45th Street and the S/NR-eligible 346 Madison Avenue (Brooks Brothers Store) on Projected Development Site 4;
- The NYCL- and SN/R-eligible building at 250 Park Avenue (Postum Building) within Projected Development Site 6;
- The S/NR-eligible building at 111 East 48th Street (Barclay Hotel/Hotel Inter-Continental) within Projected Development Site 10; and
- The NYCL-eligible Girl Scouts of the USA Building at 830 Third Avenue located on Potential Site J.

However, this impact would not alter the overall character of East Midtown as an area characterized by a varied context of older buildings interspersed with modern buildings. In addition, the individual iconic historic structures that are the defining features of East Midtown's neighborhood character—Grand Central Terminal, the Chrysler Building the Helmsley Building, St. Patrick's Cathedral, St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House, the Seagram Building, and Lever House—would not be displaced. Shadows-related impacts on the stained glass windows of St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House are discussed in "Shadows," below.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

The Proposed Action would not result in any significant adverse impacts to urban design or visual resources. As described in Chapter 7, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," the Proposed Action would respect the established urban design and visual features of the proposed rezoning area. The height of the new buildings would be generally consistent with that of existing high-rise buildings within the primary study area and those projected in the No-Action Condition. The introduction of these additional buildings would not affect a pedestrian's experience of public space, and the visual character of buildings in the With-Action Condition would not be significantly different from that in the No-Action Condition. Uses, build bulks, heights and pedestrian experience would be unaffected in

the With-Action Condition. Some building arrangements would become more uniform in the With-Action Condition since many of the new developments would comprise an assemblage of individual lots that would collectively establish full avenue frontage; further, many of the buildings within the analysis area would be built to the sidewalk and would rise to its maximum height above a base that fills an entire block face, thereby maintaining a uniform streetwall from the perspective of a pedestrian and matching the massing of many other buildings in the primary study area. The changes resulting from the Proposed Action would also improve the open space component of urban design within the primary study area, specifically through an integrated plan of public realm improvements.

With respect to visual resources, most such resources included in the assessment are landmark structures whose important views are confined to a 1- to 2-block radius of their sites. These views would not be significantly affected by the Projected and Potential Development Sites in the With-Action Condition, as the streetwalls of the existing high-rise buildings in the area generally limit visibility of each resource beyond the block on which it is located.

Shadows

Defining features of neighborhood character would not be adversely affected due to potential shadows-related effects of the Proposed Action, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

As discussed in Chapter 5, "Shadows," the incremental shadows from Projected Development Site 7 identified in the RWCDS would result in significant adverse impacts on the stained glass of St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House, adversely affecting the appreciation of stained glass windows from interior spaces. A significant adverse shadows impact would not diminish the St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House complex's unique setting on Park Avenue among high density commercial buildings, with its Byzantine architecture and cultural significance, or the public space and quietude it offers in the midst of a high-density commercial and residential district. Therefore, potential shadows impacts would not result in a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

Transportation

Defining features of neighborhood character would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Action on transportation, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

Traffic would increase in the future with the Proposed Action. As described in detail in Chapter 12, "Transportation," the traffic impact analysis indicated the potential for significant adverse impacts at 116 intersections during one or more analyzed peak hours. Potential mitigation measures are discussed in Chapter 19, "Mitigation." However, even with mitigation measures in place, there would still be some significant adverse impacts to traffic. Even with these unmitigatable impacts, the overall effects of traffic would not be out of character with the East Midtown area, which is already defined by high levels of vehicular activity, and thus the incremental changes would not constitute a significant impact on neighborhood character.

The Proposed Action would also generate additional demand for parking. The parking analysis has determined that the surplus demand could be readily accommodated at off-street public parking facilities within a quarter-mile radius of the proposed rezoning area, and there would be no parking

shortfall. In addition, the Proposed Action would not affect on-street public parking utilization; refer to Chapter 12, "Transportation." As such, the additional demand for parking would not create a significant adverse neighborhood character impact.

With respect to transit in the With-Action Condition, the assessment identified no significant adverse impacts to local bus service. Overall, the changes to transit service conditions resulting with the Proposed Action would not be out of character with the East Midtown area, and would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character.

With respect to pedestrians, the assessment identified 57 pedestrian elements—comprising 9 sidewalks, 26 crosswalks, and 22 corner areas—that would experience significant adverse impacts during one or more peak hours in the future with the Proposed Action. Potential mitigation measures are discussed in Chapter 19, "Mitigation." However, the Proposed Action would result in improvements to the pedestrian network. New zoning regulations associated with the Proposed Action would mandate sidewalk widening on Madison and Lexington Avenues, as well as on certain side streets, which would further enhance the pedestrian network within the proposed rezoning area. Overall, although it is expected that there would be an increase in the level of pedestrian activity in the future with the Proposed Action, the resulting conditions would not be out of character with the East Midtown area, and thus the incremental changes would not constitute significant impacts on neighborhood character.

As part of the Proposed Action, a Public Realm Improvement Fund would provide the ability to finance improvements to the area, including above-grade public realm improvements identified by DOT (see Chapter 1, "Project Description.") These contemplated improvements include pedestrian plazas, shared streets, widening of the Park Avenue median, and thoroughfare improvements. As these public realm improvements have not been defined in terms of area, amenity or location, and in order to ensure a conservative analysis, they have not been added into the DEIS analysis although it is anticipated that some of these above-grade public realm improvements could result in improved pedestrian conditions at some locations. With or without these above-grade improvements to the pedestrian realm, with standard mitigation measures, there would be no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

Noise

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise-related effects of the Proposed Action, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

The Proposed Action would not result in any significant adverse noise impacts. As described in Chapter 15, "Noise," the traffic generated by the anticipated new development would not have the potential to produce significant increases to noise levels at any sensitive receptors within the study area. It is anticipated that there would be little or no change in With-Action noise levels, compared to existing noise levels, throughout the proposed rezoning area, with noise levels remaining within the CEQR "marginally unacceptable" limits. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not generate sufficient new noise to cause a significant adverse impact. Overall, the noise that is generated by the anticipated new development and the resulting traffic would not be out of character with the East Midtown area, and thus the incremental changes would not constitute significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character.