Chapter 8 : Urban Design and Visual Resources

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the potential impact of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources. Urban design is the composite of elements that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. These elements include streets, buildings, visual resources, open space, natural features, and wind. As described in Chapter 10 of the 2014 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, the urban design and visual resources assessment evaluates whether the Proposed Actions may have effects on one or more elements of pedestrian experience.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Applicant is seeking a set of Proposed Actions in the form of discretionary approvals to include zoning map and text amendments, a large-scale general development (LSGD) special permit, a City Map Amendment to re-establish a portion of Beach 52nd Street south of Rockaway Beach Boulevard to reconnect with Rockaway Freeway, and public funding and/or financing from various City and New York State agencies and/or programs related to affordable housing development on the Project Site in Queens Community District 14 (CD 14). The Proposed Actions would facilitate an approximately 2,371,000 gross square feet (gsf) development on the Project Site, comprised of 11 buildings with approximately 2,200 income-restricted residential dwelling units (DUs), of which approximately 1,927 DUs would be income-restricted up to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) to include approximately 201 DUs set aside for Affordable Independent Residences for Seniors (AIRS) senior housing, with the remaining 273 DUs restricted to income levels not exceeding 130% of AMI. In addition to the residential DUs, the Proposed Project would include approximately 72,000 gsf of retail space, including a fitness center and a supermarket, approximately 77,000 gsf of community facility space, approximately 24,000 square feet (sf) of publicly-accessible open space, and approximately 973 accessory parking spaces.

The tallest structure of the Proposed Project would rise to a height which is greater than allowed under the currently mapped R5, R5/C1-2 and C8-1 zoning districts. The height and bulk of the Proposed Project would have the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. As such, a preliminary urban design assessment has been conducted and is discussed below.

II. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual resources.

The Proposed Actions would result in built forms and building types that are similar in height but of greater density than buildings that currently exist in the study area. The design of the Proposed Project would respond to the existing built environment, such that the heights of the buildings are scaled up towards the center of the Project Site, with a decrease in height and density along the periphery. The arrangement of lower buildings on the periphery of the Project Site would conform with the lower heights of buildings to the east, west, and south of the Project Site along Beach Channel Drive and Rockaway Beach Boulevard.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate the mapping of three new street segments on the Project Site bisecting the Project Site in both north-south and east-west directions. The internal street network would act to break up the existing superblock and connect to the surrounding neighborhood by extending the existing street grid into the Project Site. New sidewalks on the Project Site would incorporate street trees and landscaped islands. In addition, the Proposed Project would feature several publicly-accessible outdoor plazas.

As compared with the No-Action condition, the site design of the Proposed Project would allow greater pedestrian access through the Project Site by breaking up the superblock with interior roadways that would provide pedestrian access to a publicly-accessible plaza. Buildings in the Proposed Project would provide a more continuous street wall and a more active streetscape with accessible lobby and commercial entrances than with the No-Action condition.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) elevated train line south of the Project Site is a prominent manmade visual resource in the study area, views of which would be partially obstructed for a pedestrian standing immediately north of the Project Site due to the height of the proposed buildings. However, since the elevated train line has no or minimal unique visual characteristics, the Proposed Project impact on views of this visual resource would not be considered significant. The major natural visual resources in the study area include the dunes south of Rockaway Freeway, the Atlantic Ocean and associated Rockaway Beach and Boardwalk, Jamaica Bay, and the Rockaway Community Park. Views of these natural features would not be affected by the Proposed Project since views of these resources are currently obstructed by intervening buildings north and south of the Project Site and the elevated train line south of the Project Site.

III. METHODOLOGY

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, urban design is the totality of components that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. The following elements play an important role in that experience:

1. **Streets.** For many neighborhoods, streets are the primary component of public space. The arrangement and orientation of streets define the location and flow of activity in an area, set street views, and create the blocks on which buildings and open spaces are organized. The apportionment of street space between cars, bicycles, transit, and sidewalks and the careful design of street furniture, grade, materials used, and permanent fixtures, including plantings, street lights, fire hydrants, curb cuts, or newsstands are critical to achieving a successful streetscape.

2. **Buildings.** Buildings support streets. Street walls created by buildings adjacent to sidewalks and roadways are the most common backdrop in the city for public space. A building's size, shape, setbacks, lot coverage, and placement on the zoning lot and block; the orientation of active uses; and pedestrian and vehicular entrances all play major roles in the vitality of the streetscape. The public realm also extends to building façades and rooftops, offering more opportunity to enrich the visual character of an area.

3. **Visual Resources.** A visual resource is the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, or natural resources.

4. **Open Space.** For the assessment of urban design and visual resources, open space includes public and private areas such as parks, yards, cemeteries, parking lots, and privately-owned public spaces.

5. **Natural Features.** Natural features include vegetation and geologic, topographic, and aquatic features. Rock outcroppings, steep slopes or varied ground elevation, beaches, or wetlands may help define the overall visual character of an area.

6. **Wind.** The construction of projects involving multiple, tall buildings at or near waterfront sites may exacerbate wind conditions due to 'channelization' or 'downwash' effects that may affect pedestrian comfort and safety.

An urban design and visual resources assessment is necessary when a proposed project may have effects on one or more of the defined elements that contribute to the pedestrian experience. According to the

CEQR Technical Manual, a preliminary assessment for urban design is appropriate when there is potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning, including projects that:

1. Permit the modification of yard, height, and setback requirements;
2. Result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed "as-of-right" or in the future without a proposed project.

Study Area

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description", the Proposed Project would result in an approximately 2,371,000 gsf mixed-use affordable housing, retail, and community facility development on the Project Site. The 9.34-acre Project Site is located on Lot 1 of Block 15842, Lot 1 of Block 15843, (the "North Parcels") and Lot 1 of Block 15857 (the "South Parcel") in Queens CD 14. The Proposed Project would have the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. Consequently, a preliminary assessment was completed to evaluate the potential impact of the Proposed Project on urban design and visual resources. The preliminary assessment describes existing urban design features and visual resources in a 0.25-mile study area from the Project Site, the condition in the 2034 analysis year without the Proposed Actions (the "No-Action" condition), and the condition in the 2034 analysis year with the Proposed Actions (the "With-Action" condition). In conformance to *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines, the changes in urban design and visual resources are disclosed that would occur between the No-Action and With-Action conditions.

Pedestrian Wind Analysis

As described in Section 230 of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the construction of projects involving multiple, tall buildings at or near waterfront sites may result in exacerbation of wind conditions due to 'channelization' or 'downwash' effects that may affect pedestrian comfort and safety. Large buildings have the potential to intercept the flow of wind at high elevations along the building face and redirect wind down to ground level. These redirected ("downwashed") winds can cause accelerated wind speeds at pedestrian locations. When two or more buildings are situated parallel to each other, winds tend to accelerate in the intervening space between the buildings and cause accelerated ground level wind speeds. Both singularly and in combination, winds that have been either redirected downward along the face of a building and/or channelized through the intervening space between buildings have the potential to create ground level wind speeds that can present safety hazards to pedestrians, particularly at locations frequently subject to high wind speeds.

While the Proposed Project would be located near the Atlantic Ocean and Jamaica Bay, it would not include multiple tall buildings oriented parallel to one another, nor would it create a uniform street wall that would result in "channelization" or "downwash" effects with the potential to affect pedestrian comfort or safety. Consequently, a pedestrian wind analysis is not warranted.

Assessment Methodology

In conformance to guidance in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the assessment of the impact of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources included the following steps:

- Based on field visits, the urban design and visual resources of the directly affected area and adjacent study area were described using text, photographs, and other graphic material, as necessary, to identify critical features, use, bulk, form, and scale.
- In coordination with Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, Public Policy," the changes expected in the urban design and visual character of the study area due to known development projects in the future No-Action condition were described.

- Potential changes that could occur in the urban design character of the study area from the Proposed Actions were described. For the Project Site, the analysis focused on the general massing assumed for the Proposed Project, as well as elements such as street wall height, setback, and building envelope. Photographs and/or other graphic material were utilized, where applicable, to assess the potential effects on urban design and visual resources, including views of/to resources of visual or historic significance and a three-dimensional representation of the future With-Action condition streetscape.

IV. EXISTING CONDITION

Project Site

The Project Site is in the Edgemere neighborhood of Queens and is comprised of three tax lots: Lot 1 of Block 15842, Lot 1 of Block 15843, and Lot 1 of Block 15857, with a total lot area of 406,928 square feet (sf) (approximately 9.34 acres). The northern portion of the Project Site is comprised of two contiguous tax lots (Lot 1 of Block 15842 and Lot 1 of Block 15843) and forms an "L"-shape bounded by Beach 50th Street to the east, Rockaway Beach Boulevard to the south, Beach 53rd Street to the west, and Beach Channel Drive to the north, **(Photos 1-3)**. The southern, much smaller, portion of the Project Site occupies Lot 1 of Block 15857, which is bound by Rockaway Beach Boulevard to the north, Lot 7 of Block 15857 to the east, Beach 52nd Street to the west, and Rockaway Freeway to the south, **(Figure 8-1: Aerial Map and Keyed Photos, Photos 4-5)**. Rockaway Beach Boulevard and Beach Channel Drive are both wide streets as defined in the Zoning Resolution (ZR) of the City of New York; Beach 53rd Street and Beach 52nd Street are both narrow streets, as defined in the ZR. The northern portion of the Project Site has recently been cleared of the vacant structures of the 173-bed Peninsula Hospital Center that once occupied the site. Founded in 1908, it closed operations in April 2012 after its lab failed a state examination and was shut down by the New York State Department of Health.[1]

The southern portion of the Project Site is vacant and surrounded by a perimeter fence.

[1] Nir, S. M. (2012, May 20). Down to One Hospital, Rockaway Braces for Summer Crowds. The New York Times. Retrieved January 25, 2017, from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/21/nyregion/closing-of-peninsula-hospital-in-rockaway-raises-fears.html

Study Area

Streets

The study area encompasses major east-west arterials and main thoroughfares including Beach Channel Drive, Rockaway Beach Boulevard, Rockaway Freeway, and Edgemere Avenue, **(Photo 6)**. The generally regular north-south street grid within the study area runs from Beach 58th Street to Beach 45th Street. Due to the "superblock" layout of the Project Site and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) parcels to the north and west, many of these north-south streets have wide rights-of-way and do not run continuously through all blocks. These include Beach 58th Street, Beach 54th Street, Beach 51st Street, Beach 50th Street, and Beach 49th Street. Areas east of Beach 49th Street are characterized by smaller blocks, narrower streets, and a smaller-scale urban form, **(Photos 7-9)**.

Sidewalk conditions vary greatly in the study area. Wide sidewalks with even surfaces are found on the roadways adjacent to Ocean Bay Apartments along Beach Channel Drive. In contrast, narrow, poorly-kempt walkways are generally found along Rockaway Freeway. Sidewalk conditions along Rockaway Beach Boulevard range from wide newly-poured concrete walkways, to unpaved sidewalks without a curb. Segments of the sidewalks are in poor condition with potholes, broken pavement, and overgrown vegetation. Wide concrete sidewalks in good condition are found along streets adjacent to "superblocks", such as adjacent to Beach 51st Street. Sidewalks along the perimeter of the Project Site are of average width (approximately 10 feet wide), with exception to Rockaway Beach Boulevard, which is characterized by sidewalks of varied width; sidewalks are completely absent at some locations **(Photos 10-17)**.

Other streetscape elements include standard street signs, lampposts, bus stop signs, fire hydrants, tree barrels, utility poles/wires, and trash bins, **(Photos 6, 9, 12, 16)**. Few street trees are found along major thoroughfares and along the perimeter of the cleared Project Site, **(Photos 8, 12, 15, 18)**. Dense tree growth is generally limited to vacant lots, such as on the southern portion of the Project Site, **(Photo 4)**. Many of the streets within the study area were observed to have motor vehicles parked perpendicular and diagonally to the street curb, **(Photos 7, 9, 18)**.

The area east of the Project Site is characterized by large surface parking lots and little landscaping. The Peninsula Nursing and Rehabilitation Center located immediately adjacent to and east of the Project Site includes large areas of surface parking on its perimeter and surrounded by chain-link fencing, **(Photo 19)**. Beach Channel Drive contains sporadic, widely-spaced commercial lots, such as the Papa John's pizzeria building at the intersection of Beach 49th Street and Beach Channel Drive, which is surrounded by a large surface parking lot, **(Photo 20)**. The remainder of the block contains a vacant lot and a surface parking lot for buses, located on Rockaway Beach Boulevard between Beach 50th Street and Beach 49th Street, **(Photo 21)**.

The pedestrian experience along sidewalks varies depending on the location in the study area. Most blocks are long in the north-south direction, including the block of the Project Site, which measures over 800 feet at its longest point. Long blocks limit the ease of circulation between various points in the study area. In addition, the wide range of sidewalk widths and conditions occasionally results in limited pedestrian route options between origins and destinations.

Buildings

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy," the study area is generally characterized by residential, community facility, institutional, and utility land uses, including single-family houses, lumber yards, utility facilities, and mid-rise public housing towers, **(Photos 7, 9, 22-25)**. Single-family and two-family homes tend to use vinyl or wooden siding, whereas multi-family and industrial buildings tend to have either brick or concrete façades. Public School 105 and the Peninsula Nursing and Rehabilitation Center are located nearby and have large footprints. The study area east of the Project Site has a few vacant lots or lots completely paved over, whereas many lots closer to Rockaway Beach are covered with dunes. Utility

power substations and other industrial/utility uses are located south and east of the Project Site. Building heights range from one story to 19 stories **(Figure 8-2: Existing Height Map)**, and the floor area ratio (FAR) ranges from 0.05 to 3.65, **(Figure 8-3: Existing Density Map)**.

Nearby multi-family housing developments, including the NYCHA Ocean Bay Apartments (Bayside and Oceanside), consist of multiple mid-rise buildings that are evenly distributed on superblocks. The buildings tend to be set back from the street and are separated by large lawns and pathways. Approximately half of the Ocean Bay Apartment (Oceanside) buildings are situated at an angle from the street, and the remainder are parallel to surrounding streets with small setbacks, including buildings along Beach 54th Street, Beach 56th Street, and Beach Channel Drive. The Arverne View apartment complex buildings vary in height and arrangement from short, four-story buildings with winding building floor plans, to long, rectangular, mid-rise buildings, and tall towers. All buildings are set back from the street and are buffered by surface lot parking on the perimeter of the superblock site.

Industrial buildings in the study area tend to fill most of the lot area and they are not typically set back from the street. Industrial buildings have a height of one or two stories and tend to create a more continuous street wall than multi-family developments in the study area. Institutional uses, including the Rockaway Care Center, the Peninsula Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and the Lawrence Nursing Care Center, are all large, single-structure buildings set back from the street and are surrounded by surface lot parking and landscaping.

Single-family and two-family residential buildings in the study area are typically bungalow-style, one and two-story housing with stoops and occasionally small front porches. Whereas other buildings in the study area have flat roofs, these buildings have peaked gable and hip-style roofs. It is common for each building to use a mix of façade materials, typically including wooden or vinyl siding and brick. These single-family and two-family buildings create a varied and small-scale street environment in the eastern part of the study area.

Natural Features

Natural features in the study area include the dunes south of Rockaway Freeway, the Atlantic Ocean and associated Rockaway Beach and Boardwalk, Jamaica Bay, and the Rockaway Community Park.

The Rockaway Beach and Boardwalk are located approximately 1,300 feet south of the center of the Project Site, while the Atlantic Ocean is located approximately 1,930 feet south of the center of the Project Site. To the north, Jamaica Bay is located approximately 1,325 feet from the center of the Project Site and the Rockaway Community Park is located approximately 1,400 feet from the center of the Project Site. These natural features are characteristic of the overall character of the surrounding area on the Rockaway Peninsula.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) online Environmental Resource Mapper identifies the Project Site as an area with the potential of having significant natural communities and rare plants or animals. The endangered slender crabgrass was documented in the Rockaway Neck in 1873, and other rare plants or animals have been identified near the Project Site. Jamaica Bay is a low salt marsh in a tidal wetland. In addition, Rockaway Beach between Beach 44th Street and Beach 57th Street is designated as the Arverne Shorebird Preserve, which is closed to human activity between May and September to allow for the breeding of the piping plover, which is a threatened species on the Atlantic Coast. Piping plovers breed on sandy beaches, where they build their nest in the sand, lay and hatch their eggs, and begin to raise their young by allowing them to run between the nest and water's edge to feed. Human activity leaves the nests vulnerable to inadvertent destruction and the young plovers to being crushed.[2]

[2] Rockaway Beach: Arverne Shorebird Preserve. NYC Parks. https://www.nycgovparks.org/greening/nature-preserves/site?FWID=27

While the Project Site is mapped as an area where these natural features may be present, the northern portion of the Project Site was disturbed during the construction of the former Peninsula Hospital and paved surface parking lot, and recently cleared. The southern portion of the Project Site was once the site of a paint and chemical company and is currently vacant with a cement foundation, overgrown vegetation, and debris. In addition, the study area north of Rockway Freeway is substantially developed. As such, natural features do not play an important part of a pedestrian's experience of the Project Site or study area.

Open Space

As described in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the study area contains several parks and playgrounds of varying sizes. Large parks include the Rockaway Beach and Boardwalk and the Rockaway Community Park, which provide both passive and active recreation for residents and visitors, **(Photos 26-27)**. Smaller playgrounds are located on nearby NYCHA properties and school sites. The Rockaway Beach and Boardwalk can be accessed from Edgemere Avenue through several connecting streets and ramps. Playgrounds at NYCHA properties can be accessed through passages within the NYCHA superblocks and from the street level along Beach Channel Drive and Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Visual Resources

Visual resources in the study area include the elevated MTA train line, the dunes south of Rockaway Freeway, Rockaway Boardwalk, Rockaway Beach, the Atlantic Ocean associated with the Rockaway Beach and Boardwalk, Jamaica Bay, and the Rockaway Community Park, **(Photos 26-28)**.

The elevated MTA train line, which is located south of the Project Site and runs parallel to Rockaway Freeway, has a distinctive design consisting of repetitive arches like the design of viaduct bridges and is visible from the Project Site.

Views of the Atlantic Ocean and associated beach and boardwalk from the Project Site are obstructed by the MTA train line viaduct and intervening vegetation and buildings south of the Project Site. These visual resources are visible from other nearby publicly-accessible locations. Pedestrians standing south of the elevated train line along one of the paths that provide access to Rockaway Beach can view dunes, the Rockaway Boardwalk, sandy beachfront, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south.

Views of Rockaway Community Park and Jamaica Bay from the Project Site are obstructed by existing intervening structures, including the multiple mid-rise buildings comprising the NYCHA Ocean Bay Apartments (Bayside and Oceanside) and PS 105 to the north of Project Site. These visual resources are visible from other nearby publicly-accessible locations.



Source: Nearmap, October 2018

EDGEMERE, QUEENS

Project Site

0.25-Mile Radius

Photograph Location

AERIAL MAP AND KEYED PHOTOS

Figure 8-1

Photograph 1: *View of the Project Site, looking southeast from the intersection of Beach Channel Drive and Beach 53rd Street*



Photograph 2: *View of the Project Site, looking north from Rockaway Beach Boulevard*



Note: Site photos taken August 2016 and November 2017

Figure 8-1: Aerial and Keyed Photographs

Photograph 3: *View of the Project Site, looking south from Beach Channel Drive*



Photograph 4: *View of the southern site of the Project Site, looking southwest from Rockaway Beach Boulevard*



Photograph 5: *View of the northern and southern portions of the Project Site, looking north from Beach 52nd Street*



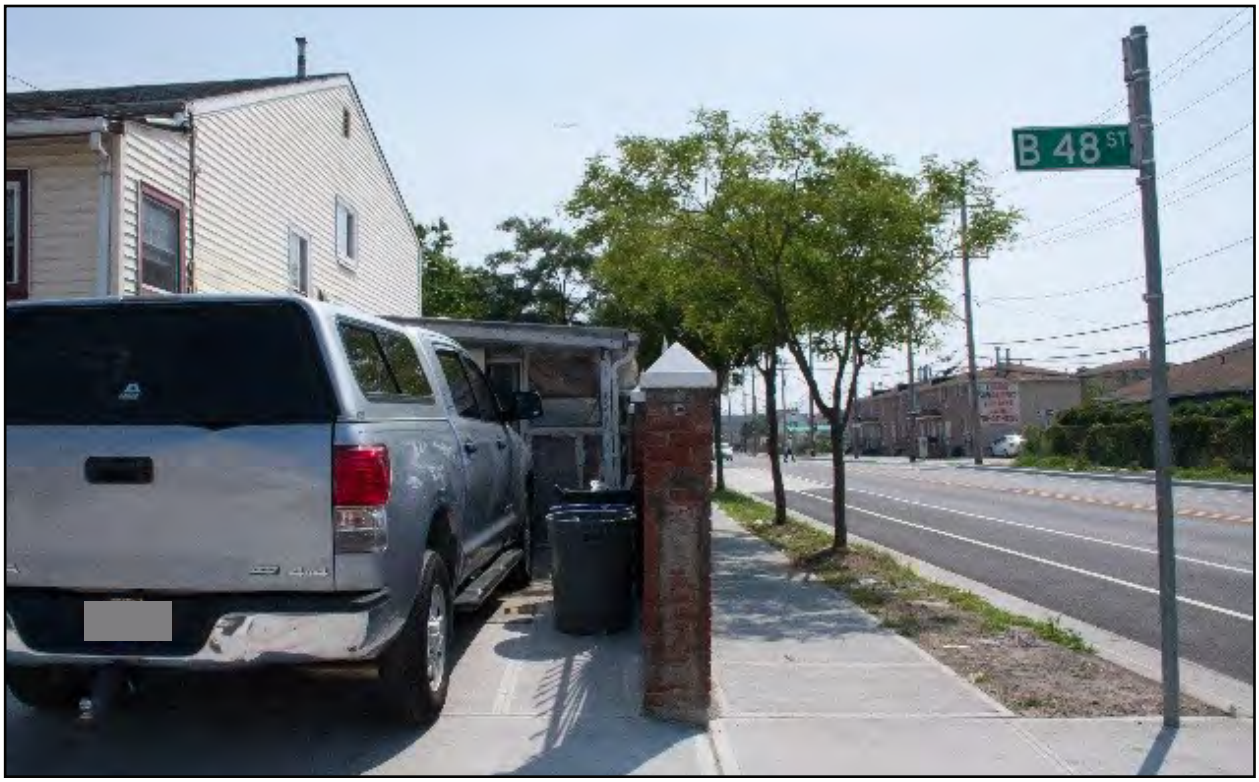
Photograph 6: *View of Beach Channel Drive, looking west from the intersection with Beach 50th Street*



Photograph 7: *View of typical side street, looking north from the intersection of Beach Channel Drive and Beach 47th Street*



Photograph 8: *View of side street access and street trees, looking east from the intersection of Beach Channel Drive and Beach 48th Street*



Photograph 9: *View of side street, looking north along Beach 46th Street*



Photograph 10: *View of wide, new sidewalks along Beach Channel Drive between Beach 49th Street and Beach 50th Street*



Figure 8-1: Aerial and Keyed Photographs

Photograph 11: *View of wide, older sidewalk along Arverne Avenue between Beach 56th Street and Beach 57th Street*



Photograph 12: *View of new, narrow sidewalk and street trees along Beach Channel Drive between Beach 45th Street and Beach 46th Street*



Photograph 13: *View of old, narrow sidewalk in poor condition along Edgemere Avenue between Beach 56th Street and Beach 56th Place*



Photograph 14: *View of old sidewalk without a curb along Edgemere Avenue between Beach 54th Street and Beach 55th Street*



Photograph 15: *View of new, wide sidewalk along Rockaway Beach Boulevard between Beach 56th Street and Beach 59th Street*



Photograph 16: *View of bus shelter at the intersection of Beach Channel Drive and Beach 50th Street*



Figure 8-1: Aerial and Keyed Photographs

Photograph 17: *View of narrow, old sidewalk in poor condition along Rockaway Freeway between Beach 56th Place and Beach 59th Street*



Photograph 18: *View of street trees and parked cars, looking south along Beach 54th Street*



Photograph 19: *View of the Peninsula Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, looking north along Beach 50th Street*



Photograph 20: *View of neighborhood commercial development, looking south from Beach Channel Drive between Beach 49th Street and Beach 50th Street*



Figure 8-1: Aerial and Keyed Photographs

Photograph 21: *View of MTA bus parking, looking east from Beach 51st Street*



Photograph 22: *View of NYCHA's mid-rise Ocean Bay Apartments, looking east along Beach Channel Drive and Beach 54th Street*



Figure 8-1: Aerial and Keyed Photographs

Photograph 23: *View of NYCHA's mid-rise Ocean Bay Apartments (Oceanside), looking west from the Project Site*



Photograph 24: *View of mid-rise Arverne by the Sea apartments, looking northwest from the Rockaway Boardwalk*



Photograph 25: *View of industrial building types, looking east along Rockaway Beach Boulevard from the intersection with Beach 50th Street*



Photograph 26: *View of Rockaway Beach dunes, looking south from the Rockaway Boardwalk*



Photograph 27: *View of the Rockaway Boardwalk, looking east*



Photograph 28: *View of the elevated MTA train line, looking northwest from the intersection of Rockaway Beach Boulevard and Beach 56th Street*





Source: 2018 PLUTO, DCP

EDGEMERE, QUEENS

Project Site

0.25-Mile Radius

0 - 1.75 floors

2 - 3 floors

4 - 6 floors

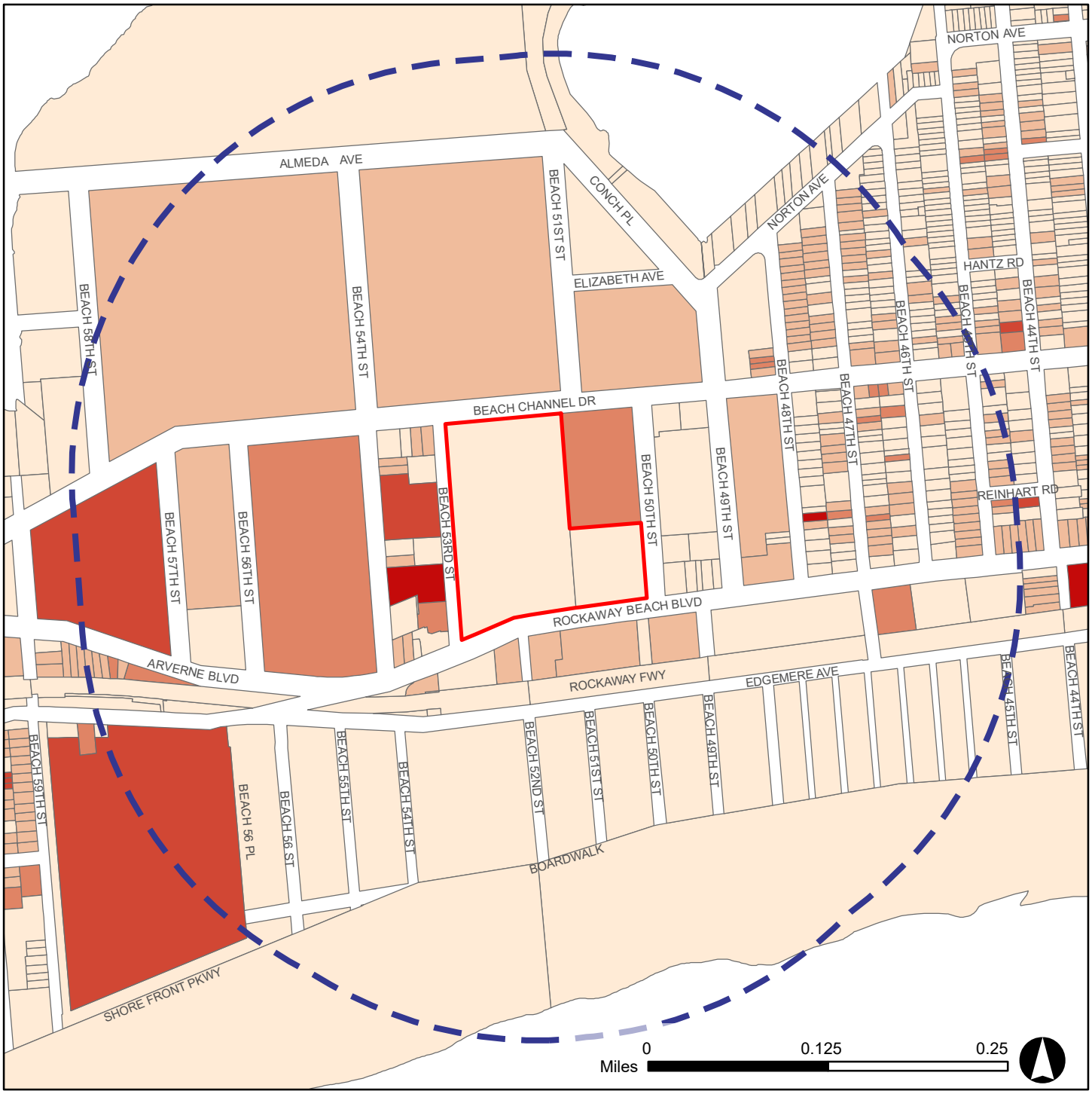
7 - 13 floors

19 floors

EXISTING HEIGHT MAP

Figure 8-2

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment



Source: 2018 PLUTO, DCP

EDGEMERE, QUEENS

Project Site

0.25-Mile Radius

0 - 0.5 FAR

0.51 - 1.00 FAR

1.01 - 1.50 FAR

1.51 - 2.00 FAR

2.10 - 3.65 FAR

EXISTING DENSITY MAP

Figure 8-3

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

V. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS (NO-ACTION CONDITION)

Project Site

In the future absent the Proposed Actions (the "No-Action" condition), the Project Site would remain under the existing zoning designations that would permit the as-of-right creation of market-rate, residential development, along with supporting retail space on the Project Site. The existing zoning of R5/C1-2 and C8-1 on the Project Site would allow a maximum residential FAR of 1.25, and a maximum commercial FAR of 1.0. The maximum FAR for all community facility uses on the Project Site would be 2.0. As such, the total maximum FAR for mixed-use would be 1.25 for the Project Site, which would yield a total maximum floor area of 508,385 zoning square feet (zsf).

Absent the Proposed Actions, development on the Project Site would result in approximately 504,982 gsf within 12 buildings, including approximately 482,523 gsf of residential space (providing 568 DUs), 21,659 gsf of local retail space, 800 gsf of community facility space, and 557 accessory parking spaces **(Figure 8-4: No-Action Condition Site Plan)**. Four-story buildings, 40 feet in height, would be created on the North Parcels, while a single one-story 20-foot high building would be created on the South Parcel. Of the 557 accessory parking spaces provided in the No-Action condition, 457 would be provided as on surface parking lots and the additional 100 would be provided in an underground parking garage located in the center of the northern portion of the Project Site. The parking garage would consist of a cellar level and a ground floor level up to a maximum height of 14 feet above grade. Buildings and surface parking areas would alternate along the street frontage of Beach 53rd Street and Rockaway Beach Drive. Buildings would provide a more continuous frontage along Beach Channel Drive and Beach 50th Street. Each building would have separate building entrances from the street, and the Project Site would have five vehicular entrances for parking. These buildings would be lower in height than surrounding buildings. Since the site design would not break up the superblock of the North Parcels and no publicly-accessible open space would be provided, pedestrians would not be encouraged to enter the Project Site. Trees would be planted along sidewalks and parking islands.

Study Area

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the No-Action condition would include approved or planned development projects within the study area that are likely to be completed by the 2034 analysis year. Based on coordination with the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) Queens Borough Office, a review of recent building permits available from the Department of Buildings, and coordination with Housing Preservation & Development, planned developments that would potentially be fully occupied by the 2034 analysis year include development in the Arverne and Edgemere Urban Renewal Areas (URAs) and the Ocean Bay Retail project, located at 53-05 Beach Channel Drive. In addition, while not located in the study area, the City of New York designated and approved an Urban Renewal Plan within a URA for redevelopment of an approximately 23-block area of the Downtown Far Rockaway neighborhood located in CD 14 (the "Downtown Far Rockaway Project") (see Chapter 1, "Project Description").

As under the Existing Condition, the elevated MTA train line, which is located south of the Project Site and runs parallel to Rockaway Freeway would be visible from the Project Site, while views of the Atlantic Ocean and associated beach and boardwalk from the Project Site are obstructed by the MTA train line viaduct and intervening vegetation and buildings south of the Project Site. Also, as under the Existing Condition, views of Rockaway Community Park and Jamaica Bay from the Project Site would be obstructed by existing intervening structures, including the multiple mid-rise buildings comprising the NYCHA Ocean Bay Apartments (Bayside and Oceanside) and PS 105 north of Project Site.



Source: Aufgang Architects
Note: For illustrative purposes only

EDGEMERE, QUEENS

NO-ACTION CONDITION SITE PLAN

Figure 8-4

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

VI. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTIONS (WITH-ACTION CONDITION)

Project Site and Study Area

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Applicant is seeking a set of Proposed Actions in the form of discretionary approvals to include zoning map and text amendments, a LSGD special permit, a City Map Amendment to re-establish a portion of Beach 52nd Street south of Rockaway Beach Boulevard to reconnect with Rockaway Freeway, and public funding and/or financing from various City and New York State agencies and/or programs related to affordable housing development on the Project Site in Queens CD 14. The Proposed Actions would facilitate an approximately 2,371,000 gsf development on the Project Site, comprised of 11 buildings with approximately 2,200 income-restricted residential DUs, of which approximately 1,927 DUs would be income-restricted up to 80% of AMI to include approximately 201 DUs set aside for senior housing, with the remaining 273 DUs restricted to income levels not exceeding 130% of AMI. In addition to the residential DUs, the Proposed Project would include approximately 72,000 gsf of retail space, including a fitness center and a supermarket, approximately 77,000 gsf of community facility space, approximately 24,000 square feet (sf) of publicly-accessible open space, and approximately 973 accessory parking spaces, **(Figure 8-5: Proposed Project Site Plan)**.

The incremental difference between the No-Action condition and With-Action condition consists of approximately 1,826,018 gsf of development comprised of the following uses: approximately 1,375,477 gsf residential floor area (or approximately 1,632 DUs), approximately 50,341 gsf of retail space, approximately 76,200 gsf of community facility uses, 324,000 gsf of parking space, and 416 accessory parking spaces, **(Table 8-1: Incremental Development Between No-Action and With-Action Conditions)**.

Table 8-1: Incremental Development Between No-Action and With-Action Conditions

RWCDS	No-Action Condition	With-Action Condition	Increment
Residential gsf	**482,523**	**1,858,000**	**1,375,477**
Total DUs	568	2,200	1,632
Income-Restricted DUs above 80% AMI, not to exceed 130% AMI	568	273	-295
Income-Restricted DUs up to 80% AMI	0	1,927	1,927
Commercial gsf	**21,659**	**72,000**	**50,341**
Community Facility gsf	**800**	**77,000**	**76,200**
Parking gsf	**40,000**	**364,000**	**324,000**
Parking Spaces	557	973	416
Total gsf	**544,982**	**2,371,000**	**1,826,018**
Mechanical gsf	**0**	**52,000**	**52,000**
Open Space gsf	**0**	**24,000**	**24,000**
Residential Population[3]	**1,568**	**5,819**	**4,251**
Worker Population [4]	**88**	**365**	**277**

[3] Calculated as: 2.76 persons per household (for the Hammels-Arverne-Edgemere Neighborhood Tabulation Area, 2010-2014 ACS Profile) x number of units and 201 senior DUs x 1.5 persons per household
[4] Calculated as: 1 employee per 250 sf retail; 1 employee per 1,000 sf medical offices (DCP)



Source: Aufgang Architects

EDGEMERE, QUEENS

PROPOSED PROJECT SITE PLAN

Figure 8-5

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

Streets

The Proposed Actions would facilitate creation of three street segments: Peninsula Way, a narrow, two-way, and east-west street bisecting the Project Site between Beach 50th Street and Beach 53rd Street; Beach 52nd Street, a narrow, two-way, and north-south street cutting through the Project Site between Beach Channel Drive and Rockaway Beach Boulevard; and Beach 51st Plaza, a north-south pedestrian plaza street between Rockaway Beach Boulevard and Peninsula Way. New sidewalks on the Project Site would include tree pits and street trees along all streets, including on the southern end of the existing Peninsula Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Landscaped islands would be embedded in the new sidewalks along Beach 52nd Street and the pedestrian plaza along Beach 51st Plaza. In addition, the pedestrian plaza would provide passive open space elements including benches.

The Proposed Project streetscape would incorporate unique forms, derived from coastal phenomenon, ecologically appropriate planting, clear and open site lines, and curb extensions to foster a safe and distinct experience. Continuous tree pits would create a buffer between vehicular and pedestrian space throughout the development. Along the new Beach 52nd Street, organic form planters would create social seating pockets while introducing native, coastal plants that would thrive near Rockaway Beach and Jamaica Bay. The streetscape design would be unique within New York City designed to create a memorable experience for visitors and to foster a sense of pride for residents. The sidewalk would rise in elevation along with the ground floor of adjacent buildings to create a seamless streetscape experience. From the high point intersection, likely the highest point on the Rockaway Peninsula, pedestrians will have unobstructed views down Beach 52nd and Peninsula Way. With 170 proposed street trees and new retail, these streets would be green, active, and responsive to the existing community and context of the Rockaway Peninsula.

In addition, the site design would connect to the surrounding neighborhood by extending the existing street grid into the Project Site. Two publicly-accessible streets would intersect at the center of the Project Site and would slope gradually from the existing street elevations at a raised elevation of four feet above the 10-foot DFE, or the height of the Base Flood Elevation, towards the internal intersection. This site design would raise the elevation at the center of the Project Site eight feet above the existing elevation to provide flood resiliency on the Project Site. Furthermore, the elevated internal street network acts to break up the existing superblock and reorient pedestrians towards the water.

Based on this assessment, the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact on a pedestrian's experience of urban design.

Buildings

The Proposed Actions would not have a direct effect on buildings outside of the Project Site.

The Proposed Actions would result in built forms and building types that are greater in height and density than buildings that currently exist in the study area. The LSGD special permit allows for the design of the Proposed Project to respond to the existing built environment, such that the heights of the buildings are scaled up towards the center of the Project Site, with a decrease in height and density along the periphery (i.e. along Beach Channel Drive and Rockaway Beach Boulevard). The maximum height of the buildings that would be created as part of the Proposed Project would be 200 feet, which would be taller than the maximum height of approximately 175 feet of buildings at the Arverne by the Sea apartment complex.[5] However, the 25-foot difference in height between these two developments would be viewed similarly from a pedestrian at the street level. The 11-building, approximately 2,371,000 gsf Proposed Project would have greater density than other similar multi-family and mixed-use housing developments in the study area. The proposed zoning districts, along with the proposed designation of the Project Site as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area, would increase the maximum FAR on the North Parcels to 4.6 for residential use, 5.01 for AIRS, 3.4 for commercial uses, and 6.5 for community facility uses. It would also increase the

[5] NearMap 2018.

maximum FAR to 3.6 for residential use,3.9 for AIRS, 3.0 for commercial uses and 6.5 for community facility uses on the South Parcel. In contrast, NYCHA developments in the study area range in FAR between 0.5 and 1.5, and the Arverne by the Sea apartment complex has an approximate FAR of 1.92, (see **Figure 8-2** and **Figure 8-3**). The increase in density with the Proposed Actions would be concentrated towards the center of the Project Site, or the intersection of Peninsula Way and Beach 52nd Street, to create a focal point to which the tallest buildings would rise to a maximum height of 19 stories. In particular, buildings A and D would be featured prominently at this intersection due to their distinctive angular and curvilinear articulation. The increase in building heights focused towards the center of the Project Site would create a stepped down effect with the building heights of the Proposed Project scaled down along the periphery of the Project Site. As a result, the redevelopment would conform with the low-rise surrounding neighborhood to the east, west, and south of the Project Site, while maintaining the overall proposed density of the Proposed Project.

In addition, two of the buildings at the raised center of the Project Site would be stepped back from the corner and allow more natural light and publicly-accessible open spaces on the Project Site. Residential space and all critical maintenance systems for the buildings would be located above the DFE at a base elevation of 21 feet. In addition to the flood barriers, emergency flood egress stairs are anticipated to be located in all dry flood proof areas, which would rise to a level above the one percent annual chance flood elevation. These stairs would provide access to a landing that would drop back down to the sidewalk elevation, which would provide residential access during a storm event. Lobbies and storefronts would not have access stairs or ramps, such that residents would have direct and accessible routes into the buildings. **(Figure 8-6: Proposed Project Views)**.

Based on this assessment, the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact on a pedestrian's experience of urban design.

Natural Features

The Proposed Project would continue a site condition that is substantially devoid of natural features on the Project Site. However, native, coastal plants would be introduced on the Project Site in landscaped areas. Consequently, the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse impact on natural features.

Open Space

As described in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on open space resources. As described in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the Proposed Project would result in a decrease in the overall residential open space ratio (OSR) from 1.76 in the No-Action condition to 1.51 in the With-Action condition, a decrease of 14.09%. The residential OSR in the With-Action condition of 1.51 would be below the CEQR benchmark OSR of 2.50 but above the City median community district OSR of 1.50. The active OSR in the residential study area would decrease from 0.80 in the No-Action condition to 0.70 in the With-Action condition, a decrease of 12.78%, which would represent a significant adverse impact.

The Proposed Project would feature several publicly-accessible outdoor plazas with passive features, including the Beach 51st Plaza between Building D and Building E and two plazas at the northwest and southeast corners of Beach 52nd Street and Peninsula Way. The pedestrian plazas would feature landscaping, benches, and circuits for strolling and child play. The Beach 51st Plaza would also include a raised timber deck to promote intergenerational interaction as groups share the space for picnicking, people watching, and playing. Other features of the pedestrian plaza would include lighting to promote safety, waste and recycling containers, pavers, bicycle racks, and a rain garden planter.

Visual Resources

As with the No Action condition, views of the major natural visual resources in the study area, including the dunes south of Rockaway Freeway, Rockaway Boardwalk, Rockaway Beach, the Atlantic Ocean, Jamaica Bay, and the Rockaway Community Park would be obstructed by the MTA elevated train line, vegetation, and buildings south of the Project Site, and by the multiple mid-rise buildings comprising the NYCHA Ocean Bay Apartments (Bayside and Oceanside) and PS 105 north of Project Site. A pedestrian standing immediately north of the Project Site would have partially obstructed views of the MTA elevated train line, resulting from the height of buildings with the Proposed Project. However, the MTA elevated train line is neither listed on or eligible for listing on the Nation Register of Historic Places, and views of the elevated train line would be available from other publicly-available locations. Consequently, the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact on views of the elevated train line.

View 1: *View looking southeast from the intersection of Beach Channel Drive and Beach 53rd Street.*

No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Source: Aufgang Architects

PROPOSED PROJECT VIEWS

Figure 8-6

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

View 2: *View looking southwest from the intersection of Beach Channel Drive and Beach 50th Street.*

No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Source: Aufgang Architects

PROPOSED PROJECT VIEWS

Figure 8-6

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

View 3: *View looking southwest from the intersection of Beach Channel Drive and Beach 51st Street.*

No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Source: Aufgang Architects

PROPOSED PROJECT VIEWS

Figure 8-6

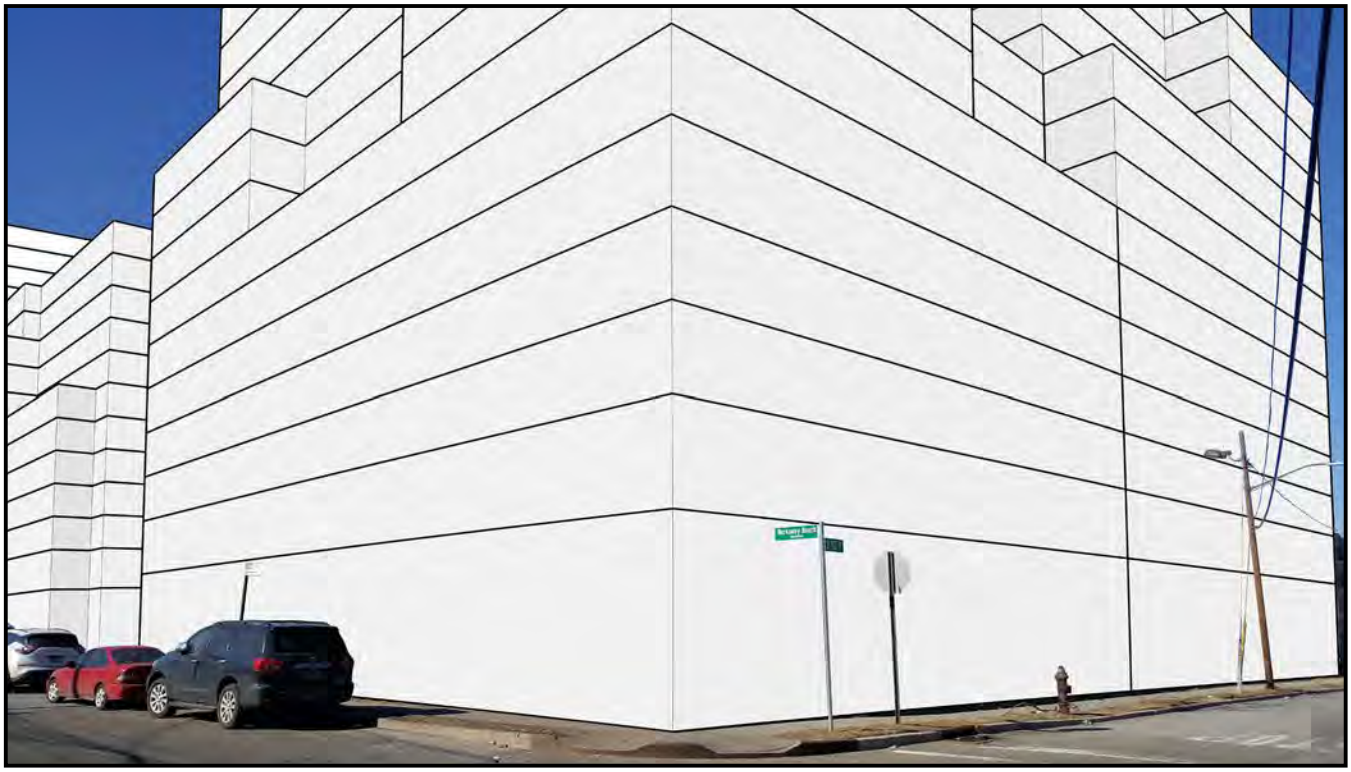
Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

View 4: *View looking northwest from the intersection of Rockaway Beach Blvd and Beach 50th Street.*

No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Source: Aufgang Architects

PROPOSED PROJECT VIEWS

Figure 8-6

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

View 5: *View looking northeast from the intersection of Rockaway Beach Blvd and Beach 53rd Street.*

No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Source: Aufgang Architects

PROPOSED PROJECT VIEWS

Figure 8-6

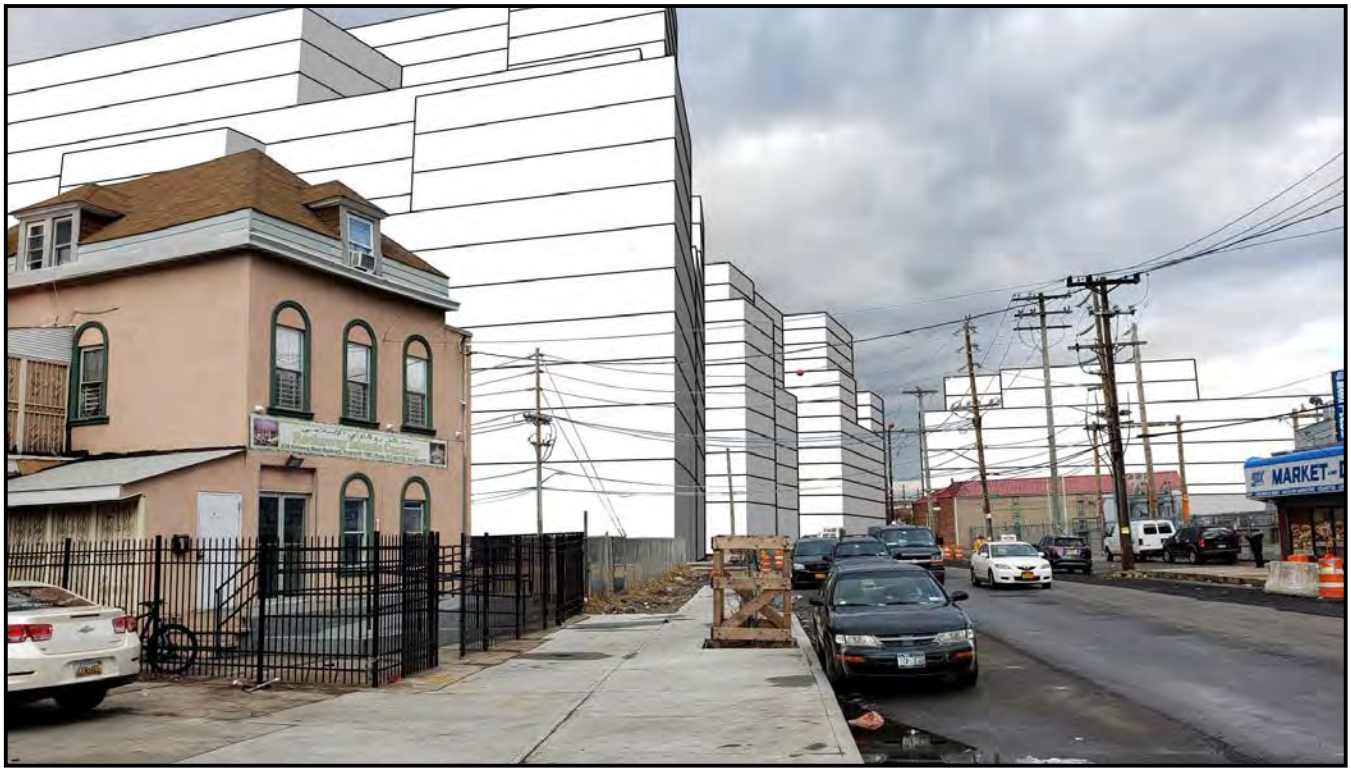
Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

View 6: *View looking east from the intersection of Rockaway Beach Blvd and Beach 54th Street.*

No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Source: Aufgang Architects

PROPOSED PROJECT VIEWS

Figure 8-6

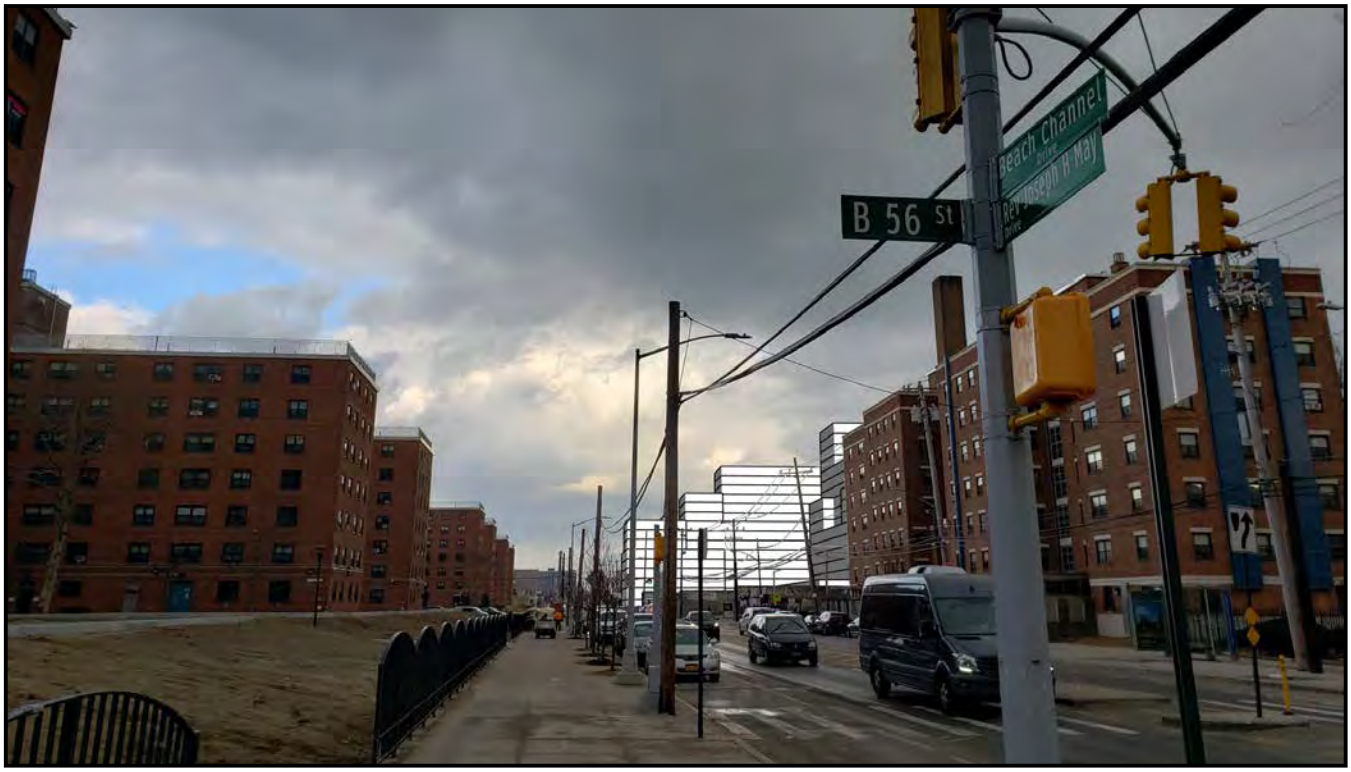
Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

View 7: *View looking east from the intersection of Beach Channel Drive and Beach 56th Street.*

No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Source: Aufgang Architects

PROPOSED PROJECT VIEWS

Figure 8-6

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment

View 8: *View looking north from the intersection of the proposed Peninsula Way and Beach 52nd Street.*

No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Source: Aufgang Architects

PROPOSED PROJECT VIEWS

Figure 8-6

Peninsula Hospital Site Redevelopment