Chapter 5: Urban Design and Visual Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the potential of the proposed development at the Brooklyn Bay Center site (the "project site") to affect urban design and visual resources on the project site and in the study area. The project site is located on the west side of Shore Parkway South between the prolongations of 24th Avenue and of Bay 37th Street (Block 6491). The project site is currently occupied by a bus-storage company. The site contains one small one- and two-story (22-foot-tall) office building facing Shore Parkway South, a one-story (21-foot-tall) garage in the interior of the block, a pumping station, and an at-grade bus parking lot. With the proposed actions, a two-story, approximately 60-foot-tall (63.5 to the top of the parapet), 214,000-square-foot (sf) commercial building and three-level 30-foot-tall (33.5 to the top of the parapet) parking garage would be constructed on the project site. The remainder of the site would be developed with approximately 2.4 acres of publicly-accessible waterfront open space.

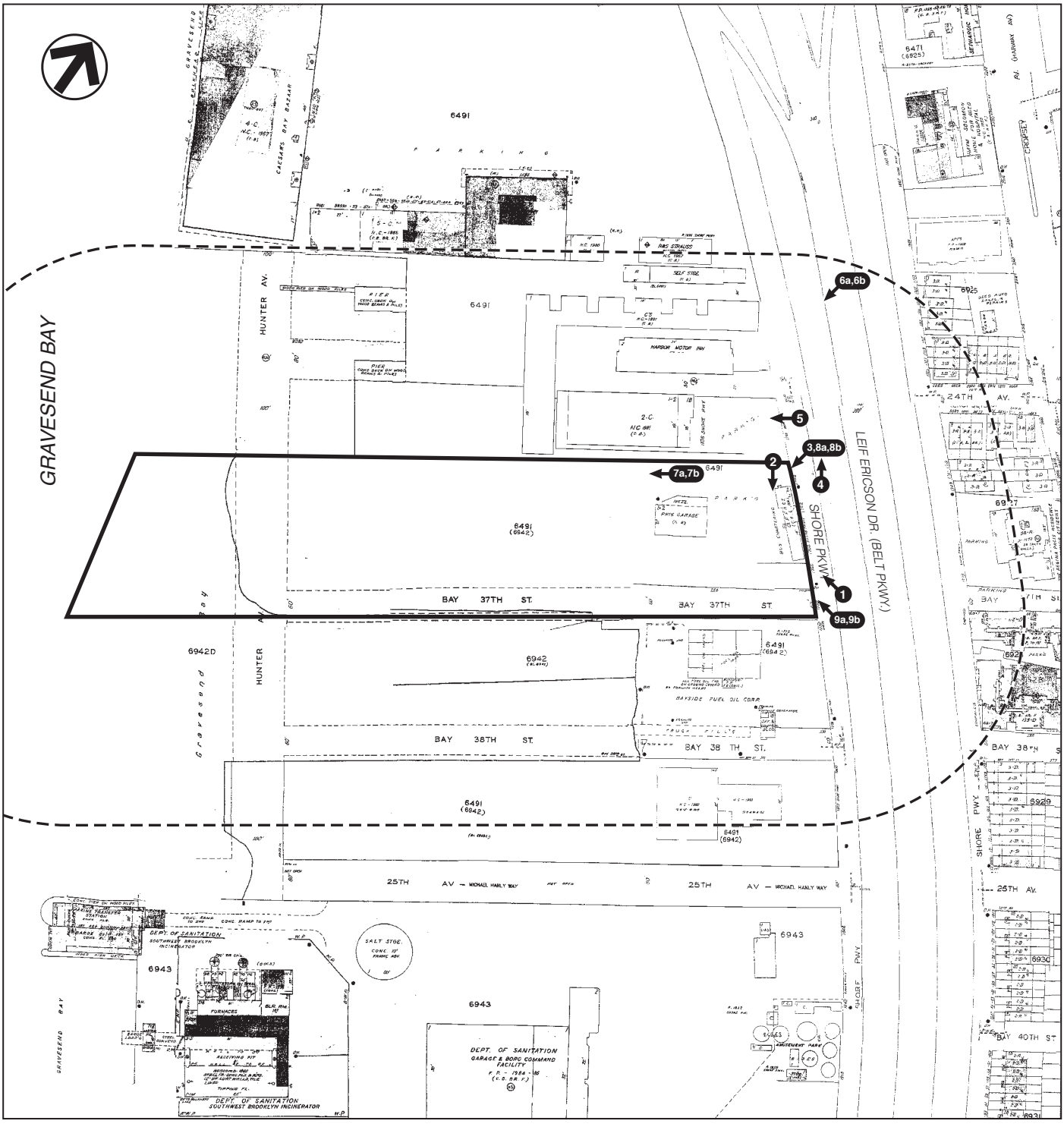
Following the guidelines of the 2010 *City Environmental Technical Review* (*CEQR) Manual*, the urban design and visual resources study area for this project has been defined as the area within 400 feet of the project site, an area roughly bounded by Bay Parkway to the north, the midblock between Shore Parkway West and Cropsey Avenue to the east, 25th Avenue to the south, and Gravesend Bay to the west (see **Figures 5-1a and 5-1b**). The study area is consistent with the study area for the land use, zoning, and public policy analysis. The following preliminary level analysis addresses urban design and visual resources for existing conditions, the future without the proposed project (the No Action scenario), and the probable impacts of the proposed project for the year 2013, when the proposed project is expected to be completed. As detailed below, the basis for comparison is the No Action condition in which it is assumed that the project site would continue to be occupied with the bus storage facility in the future without the proposed project.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

As detailed below, the proposed actions would not be expected to result in any adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources on the project site or in the study area in comparison to the No Action condition. The proposed actions would not alter the topography, street pattern, block shapes, or natural features of the study area, and would be in keeping with building uses and forms found in the study area. The project would enhance the surrounding streetscape by removing fencing, adding a new sidewalk and street trees, screening loading dock uses, and providing direct access to the new waterfront open space. In comparison, in the No Action scenario the site would remain inaccessible to the public and would not enhance the surrounding streetscape or the pedestrian experience of the project site or study area.

The project would require one additional curb cut than currently exists and would continue to exist in the No Action scenario (for a total of three), but there are already a number of curb cuts for other commercial uses on the west side of Shore Parkway South. At its maximum height of

3.7.11



Project Site Boundary

Study Area Boundary (400-foot perimeter)

Photograph View Direction and Reference Number

0 500 FEET

SCALE

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photograph Locations

BROOKLYN BAY CENTER

Figure 5-1a

3.7.11



Project Site Boundary

Study Area Boundary (400-Foot Perimeter)

0 1000 FEET

SCALE

BROOKLYN BAY CENTER

Project Location Aerial Map

Figure 5-1b

approximately 60 feet (63.5 to the top of the parapet), the eastern portion of the proposed commercial structure would be taller than other commercial structures in the study area (which range from 18 to 30 feet in height), and—given the site's proposed zoning and waterfront location—would require a zoning waiver for height; however, this portion of the structure would be shorter than the larger residential buildings on the east side of the Belt Parkway, including the 18-story, 153-foot-tall residential building approximately 360 feet east of the project site, and shorter than would be allowed on adjoining properties. The height of the majority of the proposed development would be generally consistent with that of other commercial structures west of the Belt Parkway in the study area north and south of the project site. The proposed structures would be bulkier than the other commercial and residential structures in the study area and the project site buildings that would remain in the No Action scenario, but this bulk would be less readily perceived because of the screening effects of surrounding buildings, new trees on the project site, and the vegetative screening of the proposed parking garage, and because the building's main public façade is its narrow, eastern façade. The proposed actions would not block view corridors or views of any visual resources in the study area, but—unlike the No Action scenario—would create new public views and waterfront access to Gravesend Bay, a natural feature in the study area. The construction of the new waterfront open space would offer much-needed green space to shoppers, workers, and other users in the study area. Further, in comparison to the No Action scenario, the redevelopment of the project site with active uses and new waterfront open space would improve the walkability and vitality of the project site and enhance the pedestrian experience of the project site and study area.

B. ANALYSIS THRESHOLDS

As defined in the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary assessment is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning, including the following:

1. Projects that permit the modification of yard, height, and setback requirements;
2. Projects that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed 'as-of-right' or in the future without the proposed project.

This preliminary assessment was prepared following the guidance of the checklist in Section 320 of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*.

As described in the analysis below, the proposed actions would not result in a change to the pedestrian experience that is sufficiently significant to require greater explanation and further study in the form of a detailed analysis. A detailed assessment may be warranted for projects that would result in substantial changes to the built environment, including those that significantly alter character defining features of a historic structure, obstruct a view corridor or a natural resource, or make substantial alterations to the streetscape of a neighborhood by noticeably changing the scale of buildings. The proposed project would not meet these thresholds.

C. METHODOLOGY

This preliminary level analysis follows the guidelines of the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*. As defined in the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*, urban design is the totality of components that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. These components include streets, buildings, visual resources, open space, natural features, and wind and sunlight conditions. These elements, as defined in the 2010 *CEQR Technical Manual*, are described below:

- *Streets*. 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 sidewalk is critical to making a successful streetscape, as is the careful design of street furniture, grade, materials used, and permanent fixtures, including plantings, street lights, fire hydrants, curb cuts, or newsstands.
- *Buildings*. Buildings support streets. A building's streetwalls form the most common backdrop in the city for public space. A building's size, shape, setbacks, lot coverage, 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.
- *Visual Resource*. 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.
- *Open Space*. For the purpose of urban design, open space includes public and private areas such as parks, yards, cemeteries, parking lots and privately owned public spaces.
- *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.
- *Wind*. Channelized wind pressure from between tall buildings and downwashed wind pressure from parallel tall buildings may cause winds that jeopardize pedestrian safety.
- *Sunlight*. Sunlight is essential to the maintenance of a vital streetscape. A successful urban design accounts for the optimization of direct and reflected sunlight.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

The project site, located at 1752 Shore Parkway, comprises all of Block 6491, which is located between Shore Parkway South to the east, Gravesend Bay (Lower New York Bay) to the west, the prolongation of 24th Avenue to the north, and the prolongation of Bay 37th Street to the south (see **Figure 5-1a** and **5-1b**). The western end of the project site is a headland, which juts out into Gravesend Bay, and contains a vegetated berm along its perimeter. The project site slopes upwards from east to west, toward the waterfront. Currently, the elevation of the western portion of the site ranges from +12 feet to approximately +30 feet while the elevation of the eastern portion is at approximately +7 feet.

The project site contains two buildings: a one- and two-story (22-foot-tall) brick commercial building along Shore Parkway South, and a one-story (21-foot-tall) brick and concrete storage building within the interior of the block. The remainder of the block is a paved parking lot used for bus storage. The building on Shore Parkway South is a long, rectangular structure with a peaked roof capped by a wooden cupola and chimney. Horizontal billboards are mounted on the building's roof and parkway façade. The one-story rectangular storage building has five loading docks on its south façade and a horizontal band of windows on its north façade (see Views 1

through 3 of **Figures 5-2** and **5-3**). The project site is zoned M3-1 with the existing development on the project site comprising less than the 2.0 FAR permitted in M3-1 zoning districts.

The vehicular entrances to the project site include a private driveway on the northern portion of the site from a demapped street (former Denyse's Lane) and a gated entry at the southern corner of the site along Shore Parkway South. A seven-foot-tall chain-link fence is located perpendicular to Shore Parkway South (see View 3 of **Figure 5-3**). South of the commercial building, the site's parkway frontage is enclosed by an eight-foot-tall corrugated metal wall topped with barbed wire. The mix of chain-link and corrugated metal fencing along the Shore Parkway South street frontage of the project site creates an unfriendly pedestrian environment.

There are no noteworthy natural features on the project site. The project site was field surveyed in the fall and winter and no notable pedestrian wind conditions were experienced at that time. Buildings in the study area range in height from are one to 18 stories in height, with lower rise buildings located west of Shore Parkway South and Belt Parkway and taller buildings located to east of the parkway. Shore Parkway South and Belt Parkway which extend along the east side of the project site is a total of 300 feet wide. Narrower, 60-foot-wide east-west streets extend east from Shore Parkway South, east of the project site. In general, these conditions allow sunlight to reach the project site throughout the day.

VISUAL RESOURCES

There are no visual resources on the project site, or any that can be seen from the publicly accessible sidewalk adjacent to the project site on Shore Parkway South. Although the project site juts out into Gravesend Bay, it is currently inaccessible to the public and, therefore, provides no public views of the bay. The project site's vegetated berm and upward slope from east to west also limit westward views.

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

Streets

The street pattern in the study area does not follow a typical street grid. Leif Ericson Drive (also known as the Belt Parkway), a major east-west highway that runs along the Brooklyn waterfront and through the eastern portion of the study area, is at-grade in this location and has three lanes of traffic in each direction separated by a concrete median with a low metal barrier (see View 4 of **Figure 5-4**). Wide vegetated areas separate the highway from Shore Parkway North and South, which are one-lane service roads with parallel parking on each side of the Belt Parkway. East of the highway, Shore Parkway North terminates just north of the study area at roughly Bay 34th Street. The local cross streets in the study area have both one and two lanes of traffic going in one direction or two directions with parallel parking. On the east side of the Belt Parkway, the cross streets terminate at Shore Parkway North.

The blocks to the west of the Belt Parkway are irregularly shaped due to the varying landscape along the Gravesend Bay waterfront, while in the eastern portion of the study area the blocks are generally smaller and more regularly shaped. East of Belt Parkway, the blocks are shortened due to the close proximity of Shore Parkway North to Cropsey Avenue. These blocks are rectangular in shape and contain a mix of small, attached residential buildings with narrow footprints and larger, free-standing residential buildings with larger footprints.



View along eastern boundary of the project site on Shore Parkway **1**



View of the bus parking lot and former pumping station on project site **2**

Views of Project Site
Urban Design and Visual Resources



View west on Shore Parkway of private entrance to the project site **3**

View of Project Site
Urban Design and Visual Resources



View north on Shore Parkway from project site **4**



View west of commercial building at 1736 Shore Parkway located directly north of the project site **5**

Views of Study Area
Urban Design and Visual Resources

West of Belt Parkway, the study area's streetscape is characterized by fencing with little street furniture. A sidewalk and metered parking extend along the western side of Shore Parkway South, and both sides of the street have standard cobra-head street lights. Shorter fencing lines the west side of the road, physically separating the sidewalk from the at-grade parking lots of big-box commercial stores, while taller fencing lines the east side of the road, separating it from the Belt Parkway (see View 5 of **Figure 5-4**). There is no continuous streetwall in this portion of the study area, as the free-standing buildings are generally set back from the street line and each other. There are a number of curb cuts on the west side of Shore Parkway South for the various entrances and exits to the commercial stores. Neon signage, billboards, and awnings are attached to the sides and roofs of the commercial buildings.

East of Belt Parkway, the streetscape is more urban and residential in character. Street furniture is more common in this portion of the study area and includes standard cobra-head street lights, bus stops, mail boxes, and street trees. The streetwall is broken in several places for loading docks for the larger free-standing residential buildings, but a consistent streetwall is found with the smaller, attached two- and three-story residential buildings. Many of these residential buildings have metal canopies over their front entrances and balconies.

Buildings

Buildings in the western portion of the study area—including the Caesar's Bay Shopping Center—are mostly low-rise (one and two stories, approximately 18 to 30 feet tall), free-standing commercial buildings with large footprints. They are set far back from the street line and separated from one another. Most of the buildings are unornamented, faced in brick and concrete, and occupied by large-scale retail uses (see View 6 of **Figure 5-4**).

Buildings in the eastern portion of the study area include attached two- and three-story two-family homes clad in brick. These residential buildings tend to be set back from the street line to provide space for a private garage in front of the building. Entrances to the residential buildings are generally located on the second floor and accessed by iron staircases. There are also a few larger residential buildings in the study area; these are detached, have large footprints, and range in height from 7 to 18 stories (roughly 65 feet to 153 feet). The 18-story (153-foot-tall) building on the east side of Shore Parkway North between 24th Avenue and Bay 37th Street is the tallest building in the study area. It is clad in yellow brick and concrete and has the form of a bulky tower rising from a wide one-story base.

Open Space, Natural Features, Wind, and Sunlight

The study area is relatively flat. A major natural feature in the study area is Gravesend Bay, which forms the western boundary of the project site. Gravesend Bay is a small cup-shaped embayment along the eastern edge of Lower New York Bay (the widening bay that begins south of the Verrazano Bridge).

No notable pedestrian wind conditions were experienced when the primary study area was field surveyed. Building heights and street widths in the primary study area vary; these conditions generally allow sunlight to reach the much of the primary study area throughout the day.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

There are no visual resources or visually interesting view corridors in the study area. Gravesend Bay is not considered to be a visual resource, because there are no public views of the bay from any of the streets in the study area. Commercial buildings located along the west side of Shore

Parkway South block any potential views to this natural feature. Cross streets in the study area provide limited views as they largely terminate at the east side of the Belt Parkway. North-south views along Shore Parkway North and South and the Belt Parkway, although long, do not provide any interesting view corridors. East-west views along the Belt Parkway are of the buildings facing the roadway, and do not include significant views to Gravesend Bay.

E. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT SITE

Absent the proposed actions, in the No Action scenario, it is assumed that the buildings on the project site will remain occupied with a bus storage operator. It is anticipated that the project site will be maintained in its current condition, and the site will remain inaccessible to the public.

STUDY AREA

There are no known developments in the study area expected to be completed by 2013. Therefore, no significant changes are expected to occur in the study area in the future without the proposed project.

F. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

Under the proposed actions, the existing buildings on the site would be removed and a commercial building and attached parking garage would be constructed on the project site (see Figures 1-1 through 1-3 and 1-5 of Chapter 1, "Project Description," and **Figures 5-5** through **5-8**). The commercial retail building would be approximately 214,000 sf in size. With the proposed project, the project site would be rezoned from M3-1 to M1-1 and the project site would be redeveloped to an FAR of 0.45.

The eastern portion of the proposed building would be approximately two stories and 60 feet tall (63.5 feet to the top of the parapet). Therefore, at its highest point the proposed commercial building would be 41.5 to 42.5 feet taller than the existing buildings (which would be maintained in the No Action scenario). This portion of the proposed structure is anticipated to be clad in masonry and metal panels, with narrow bands of windows on its north and east façades. Facing the roof level parking on the western portion of the building, there would also be large-scale fenestration. The proposed building would be set back approximately 63 feet from the east lot line along Shore Parkway South. The primary commercial entrance would be located on the building's west façade and would be emphasized by a wide column of windows set within the metal panel cladding. The area in front of the building's east façade would be used as a service area and would contain approximately eight loading docks. A 14-foot-tall screen would line the site's Shore Parkway street frontage. The screen would be clad in masonry, as a continuation of the building's masonry corner elements, with sliding gates for the vehicular entrances.

The western portion of the commercial building would be approximately one story (30 feet or up to 33.5 feet to the top of the parapet) tall, and would have rooftop parking. This portion of the building also would be clad in masonry, with large, vertically oriented image panels located at



Existing Conditions/No Action Scenario **6a**



Illustrative Rendering of Aerial Perspective **6b**

Comparison of No Action Scenario
and Proposed Project



Existing Conditions/No Action Scenario **7a**



Illustrative Rendering of Parking Facility and Esplanade, North Side of Project Site **7b**

Comparison of No Action Scenario
and Proposed Project



Existing Conditions/No Action Scenario **8a**



Illustrative Rendering of Proposed Buildings, North and East Facades **8b**

Comparison of No Action Scenario
and Proposed Project



Existing Conditions/No Action Scenario **9a**



Illustrative Rendering of Proposed Building, East Facade **9b**

Comparison of No Action Scenario
and Proposed Project

the roofline to provide visual breaks. A line of new trees would be planted along the edges of the commercial retail building, providing natural screening. A tree-lined sidewalk also would run along this area to provide pedestrian access from Shore Parkway South to the retail and parking uses, as well as to the new esplanade and waterfront open space. These project components would enhance the project site views and the pedestrian experience of the project site.

The proposed accessory parking garage would be located at the rear of the commercial retail building and would be physically attached to that structure. The garage would have three levels and would slope up to approximately 30 feet tall (up to 33.5 feet to the top of the parapet). At its highest point the proposed parking garage would be 12.5 to 13.5 feet taller than the existing buildings (which would be maintained in the No Action scenario). Overall, the height of the parking garage would remain within the rezoned M1-1 district's maximum permitted height limit, and the garage structure would comply with the site's bulk regulations. The vehicular entrance/exit to the parking garage from Shore Parkway South would be located on the north side of the proposed building and would be visually identifiable by its use of metal panel cladding. The parking garage would be open and naturally ventilated, with masonry piers separated by a "green screen" of bracketed cables covered by vegetation. A set of interconnected stormwater swales would be located at the base of the garage to detain runoff from the site. These areas would be planted with shrubs, trees, and herbaceous wetland species.

This parking garage would be adjacent to the new, approximately 2.4 acre public waterfront open space. The waterfront open space would feature a pedestrian walkway with pervious pavement lined with deciduous canopy trees, understory shrubs, grasses, perennials, lighting, benches, and seating areas that would extend along the perimeter of the western half of the block, facing Gravesend Bay. Two metal trellises would be erected above the pedestrian walkway adjacent to the northeast and southeast corners of the parking garage to signal the beginning and end of the pedestrian path. The pedestrian path would be surrounded by a large stone rip rap edge as a buffer between the path and Gravesend Bay. A large landform at the southernmost edge of the parking garage would include a concession area and terrace that would enhance the visual character and pedestrian experience of the westernmost end of the new public open space. This project component would help to minimize the perceived height of the parking garage from nearby vantage points and would provide an opportunity for sunbathing or informal picnicking. As described below in "Visual Resources and View Corridors," the proposed open space would create public views to the waterfront where none currently exist, thereby improving the pedestrian experience of the project site.

In all, the new open space would include an approximately 50,029 square foot public walkway, approximately 26,466 sf of public access areas, and approximately 25,204 sf of upland connection. Nearly 1/5 of the western plateau (25,000 sf) would be converted from paving and other hard surfaces to grasses, landscaping, and other permeable surfaces. In contrast to the No Action scenario in which the project site will remain in its current conditions with no open space or waterfront access, with the proposed actions, the proposed project would result in the construction of a new waterfront open space that would provide much-needed green space to shoppers, workers, and other users in the study area. It would also provide new public access to ¼-mile of the Gravesend Bay shoreline.

As described above, the project site currently slopes upwards from east to west, ranging from an elevation of approximately +7 feet at the east to between +12 and +30 feet at the western portion of the site. As part of the proposed actions, the project site would be re-graded to level the site to an elevation of approximately +13 feet, and the existing berm along the shoreline would be

removed. Therefore, in comparison to the No Action scenario, with the proposed actions the elevation of the western portion of the site would be lowered, and the elevation of the eastern portion of the site would be elevated by approximately 6 feet. This re-grading would greatly improve views toward Gravesend Bay.

The proposed changes to open space and natural features on the project site, as described above, would not be expected to adversely affect these urban design components. Rather these changes would be considered improvements in comparison to the No Action scenario. Wind conditions on the project site would not be significantly altered with the proposed actions. Sunlight conditions would be somewhat altered with the redevelopment of the project site with new structures with bulk and massing that would be different from the No Action condition. However, these changes would not be expected to adversely affect the pedestrian experience of the project site.

The proposed development would include both illuminated and non-illuminated signage. Illuminated signage would be located on the north and south sides of a sign tower element located at the northeast corner of the proposed building. There also would be illuminated signage on the northwest corner of the proposed building before entering the garage. This signage would maximize the visibility of the retail complex from Shore Parkway and to provide a clear identity for the vehicular entry to the retail complex. Locating the sign clusters near the top of the tower element and illuminating the signs would contribute to the visual presence for the retail building and draw attention to the retailers and the overall development, including the public waterfront open space. Further, the placement of the signs near the top of the tower element would eliminate the need for a freestanding pylon sign, and thus would provide better integration of the signs within the overall site plan.

In comparison with the No Action condition, the new commercial building and garage would enliven the streetscape and enhance the pedestrian experience of the project site from the immediately adjacent sidewalk and the study area. Further, the waterfront open space would create a new visual amenity on the project site and would provide public views to the waterfront where none currently exist.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

In comparison to the No Action scenario, the proposed actions would create new public views of and waterfront access to Gravesend Bay. Views of this natural feature would be visible from all points along the newly-constructed publicly accessible waterfront open space. Unlike in the No Action scenario, the new open space that would be created with the proposed project would provide a new visual amenity on the project site.

Overall, compared to the No Action scenario, with the proposed actions the proposed project would enliven the project site by introducing new pedestrian activity to the project site and study area. While the proposed project would not comply with certain aspects of the zoning regulations, these modifications would allow for the redevelopment of the project site with new, active uses and waterfront access in an area where such access is lacking. The building form, height, and style of the proposed building would be consistent with varied forms, height, and styles of nearby buildings in the study area. It is anticipated that the proposed project would enhance the vitality, walkability, and visual character of the project site and study area by positively contributing to the pedestrian experience of public space. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse urban design impacts.

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

Streets

In contrast to the No Action scenario in which the project site would remain in its current condition, with the proposed actions, the proposed project would alter the street pattern of the study area by creating new public pedestrian and vehicular access to the project site, which is currently enclosed by fencing. Therefore, in comparison to the No Action scenario, the proposed actions would enhance the streetscape of the study area by removing the existing chain link fencing, adding a new sidewalk, and providing direct access to a new publicly accessible waterfront open space. The service/loading dock area in front of the proposed building's east façade would be screened from nearby study area views by the 14-foot high screen. As described above, the screen would be clad in masonry, as a continuation of the building's masonry corner elements, with sliding gates for the vehicular entrances. New street trees also would be planted along the site's eastern edge. These project components would enhance the visual character of the project site from pedestrian vantage points in the nearby study area, thereby improving the pedestrian experience of the project site.

As with the No Action scenario, the proposed project would not alter any block forms in the study area. The arrangement of the proposed structures—which would be set back from the east property line at a distance of 63 feet—would be similar to the arrangement of existing retail buildings found in the western portion of the study area, which are free-standing buildings with medium and large footprints that are generally set far back from the lot line. The proposed actions would replace the existing one- and two-story, small footprint buildings on the project site with one two-story building and a three-level parking structure. Both of the structures would have larger footprints than other buildings in the study area. Further, the vegetative screening adjacent to the proposed parking garage on the project site would help to screen its bulk from public pedestrian views in the study area.

In comparison to the No Action scenario, the proposed project would enhance the streetscape of the study area by removing much of the chain link fencing that currently lines the Shore Parkway South street frontage adjacent to the project site. The site's Shore Parkway South street frontage would instead be lined with new street trees and a 14-foot tall masonry screen, to conceal the service/loading dock from public view. As described above, there also would be two lines of trees along the building's north façade, providing visual relief to the pedestrians utilizing the new sidewalk to access the retail building, parking garage, and publicly accessible waterfront open space. These changes to the streetscape would positively contribute to the vitality and walkability of the nearby study area and would contribute to the pedestrian experience of public space. The project would also provide new vehicular and pedestrian access to the site, requiring one additional curb cut than currently exists; however, as discussed above, there are already a number of curb cuts for other commercial uses on the west side of Shore Parkway South. These changes to curb cuts would not be expected to adversely affect the pedestrian experience of the study area near the project site.

Buildings

The bulk and use of the proposed commercial structure on the project site would be similar to other existing buildings located in the study area west of the Belt Parkway. As described above, there are free-standing, medium- and large-scale retail stores to the north of the project site, including those in the Caesar's Bay Shopping Center. Although the density of the proposed

structure on the project site would be somewhat greater than that of existing study area commercial buildings, it would not be substantially different. The eastern portion of the proposed commercial structure would be somewhat taller than the other commercial structures in this area, and—given the site's proposed zoning and waterfront location—would require a zoning waiver for height; however, this portion of the structure would be shorter than the large residential buildings on the east side of the Belt Parkway. The height of the majority of the proposed development—the western portion of the commercial structure, and the parking garage—would be consistent with that of other commercial structures west of the Belt Parkway. The proposed structures would be bulkier than the other commercial and residential structures in the study area and the existing project site buildings to remain in the No Action scenario, however, this bulk would be less readily perceived because of the screening effects of surrounding buildings, new trees on the project site, and the vegetative screening of the proposed parking garage, and because the building's main streetside façade is its narrow, eastern façade.

Open Space, Natural Features, Wind, and Sunlight

The proposed project would not adversely affect the pedestrian experience of open space, natural features, wind, or sunlight conditions in the study area. Neither the No Action scenario nor the proposed actions would alter the topography or natural features in the study area. In comparison to the No Action scenario, the proposed actions would, however, provide new public access to ¼-mile of the Gravesend Bay shoreline, with the construction of a new 2.4-acre waterfront open space that would offer waterfront access to much-needed green space for shoppers, workers, and other users in the study area. Unlike in the No Action scenario in which the project site will remain in its existing condition without natural features or open space, the proposed project would provide new such amenities on the project site that would enhance the pedestrian experience of the area near the project site. Further, the proposed new landscaping on the project site would improve natural features which would also contribute to a positive pedestrian experience of the project site from nearby locations in the study area. Sunlight conditions would be somewhat affected by changes to building massing on the project site, however, these changes would not be considered adverse.

VISUAL RESOURCE AND VIEW CORRIDORS

There are no existing visual resources in the study area; therefore, the proposed actions would not adversely affect visual resources. Further, in comparison to the No Action scenario, the proposed actions would enhance views in the study area by providing public access to ¼-mile of the Gravesend Bay shoreline on a site that is currently inaccessible to the public and that would remain inaccessible in the No Action scenario. The proposed new waterfront open space would provide new, unobstructed views of Gravesend Bay, improve the visual character of the study area, and positively contribute to the pedestrian experience of public space.

Overall, in contrast to the No Action scenario, with the proposed actions, the proposed project would enliven the project site by introducing new pedestrian activity to the project site and study area. With the proposed actions, the proposed project would improve the urban design of the project site by redeveloping the project site with new, active uses and publicly accessible waterfront open space. The proposed project would contribute new urban design and visual amenities to the project site and study area and would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual resources. While the proposed project would not comply with certain aspects of the zoning regulations, the required modifications would allow for the redevelopment of the project site and the creation of new publicly accessible open space. The new project site buildings

would be consistent with the building heights, forms, and styles already located in the study area. It is anticipated that the proposed project would enhance the vitality, walkability, and visual character of the project site and study area by positively contributing to the pedestrian experience of public space. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to urban design or visual resources. ✷