RIVER RING
Chapter 17: Neighborhood Character

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the Proposed Actions' potential effects on neighborhood character. As defined in the 2020 *City Environmental Quality Review* (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; but not all of these elements contribute to neighborhood character in all cases. For a proposed project or action, a neighborhood character analysis under CEQR first identifies the defining features of the neighborhood and then evaluates whether the project or action has the potential to affect those defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in 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 adverse impact on neighborhood character, but rather serves as an indication that neighborhood character should be examined.

As discussed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Actions are a series of land use actions that would facilitate the redevelopment of two sites in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn (Applicant's Proposed Development Site and non-Applicant-owned Projected Development Site). The Project Area includes Block 2355, Lots 1 and 20; Block 2361, Lots 1, 20, and 21; Block 2376, Lot 50; a portion of Metropolitan Avenue, and Blocks 2356 and 2362 (see **Figure 17-1**). The Proposed Actions would result in an incremental (net) increase compared to No-Action conditions of approximately 1,250 dwelling units (DUs), of which 313 units would be affordable units, 56,741 gross square feet (gsf) of community facility space, 5,500 gsf of office space, and 2.9 acres of publicly accessible open space, and a net decrease of approximately 94,750 gsf of warehouse uses, 60,100 gsf of destination retail, 102,100 gsf of last-mile delivery center, 68,000 gsf of light manufacturing space, and 349 parking spaces. The Proposed Actions would not result in any change to the amount of local retail space in the Project Area. Construction of the Proposed Development is expected to begin in early 2023, with all components complete and operational by 2027.

This chapter includes a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character, which was prepared in conformance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*. This chapter describes the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Actions on these defining features. This assessment relies on the technical analyses presented in other chapters of this EIS.

B. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

A preliminary assessment was conducted based on the methodology set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, and determined that the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts related to neighborhood character. The Project Area is located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, an established residential neighborhood defined by its location along the East River waterfront, which is lined with publicly accessible open spaces, providing a plethora of public views of the East River, the Manhattan skyline, and the Williamsburg Bridge. The study area is also characterized by a variety of residential and mixed residential/commercial building types, ranging from low-rise, 19th century rowhouses along Grand Street, to recently developed mid-rise apartment buildings, to renovated former industrial warehouses, to high-rise, high-density residential towers along the East River waterfront. Most of these structures are built-out to the lot lines and contain lower-level commercial spaces, creating active, continuous streetwalls throughout the majority of the study area. The neighborhood surrounding the Project Area is known for its creative and lively atmosphere, vibrant social scene, culinary venues, and trendy boutique retail, as well as its accessibility to Manhattan.

The Proposed Actions would revitalize the Project Area, a currently inaccessible portion of the East River waterfront that would largely continue to be publicly inaccessible absent the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would facilitate the redevelopment of the Project Area with mixed-use buildings and innovative waterfront public spaces. The Proposed Development would consist of two mixed residential, commercial, and community facility towers. Approximately 2.9 acres of new waterfront public space will be created as part of the Proposed Development, establishing a continuous link of public waterfront open spaces on the East River running from Bushwick Inlet Park to the north to Domino Park to the south. In addition to the newly created public open space, the Proposed Development would establish a stable and resilient waterfront, and would create aquatic, upland, and wetland vegetative communities that would promote fish and wildlife habitat development in the East River. The Proposed Actions would thereby improve the character of the East River waterfront, a defining feature of the ¼-mile study area, and create additional public views of significant visual resources such as the East River, Manhattan skyline, and Williamsburg Bridge. The Proposed Actions, which would rezone the Proposed Development Site from M3-1 to C6-2 and rezone the two blocks to the east from M3-1 to M1-4, would also eliminate the possibility of future heavy industrial uses in a neighborhood with an increasingly residential and mixed-use character, and provide a transition/buffer zone between the Proposed Development Site and the mixed-use district mapped to the east.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of two mixed-use towers with 937 market-rate DUs and 313 affordable DUs, as well as local retail, office, and community facility uses in an area with a strong demand for these uses. Based on the increasingly residential character of the surrounding study area, the Proposed Development would constitute a substantial improvement with respect to land uses as compared to a No-Action development of commercial and light industrial uses, which wouldn't provide community facility space, affordable housing, or public open space and waterfront access to the surrounding neighborhood. Furthermore, the permanently affordable housing added by the Proposed Actions pursuant to the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) program would help to maintain a more diverse demographic composition within the study area than would otherwise exist. The Proposed Actions would also facilitate the development of lower-level commercial and community facility space in the Project Area, as opposed to the parking garages and loading berths that would comprise a majority of the buildings' streetscape under No-Action conditions. These proposed With-Action ground-floor commercial and community facility uses would extend the active streetscapes of the surrounding neighborhood into the Project Area.

As described elsewhere in this EIS, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts in the areas of land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; shadows; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; or noise. Although the Proposed Actions would result in significant impacts to crosswalks and pedestrian safety, those impacts are expected to be fully mitigated, and would therefore not adversely affect neighborhood character. Moreover, the Proposed Actions' combined effects in all technical areas that contribute to neighborhood character would not result in any significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character.

C. METHODOLOGY

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of neighborhood character is generally needed when a project or 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.

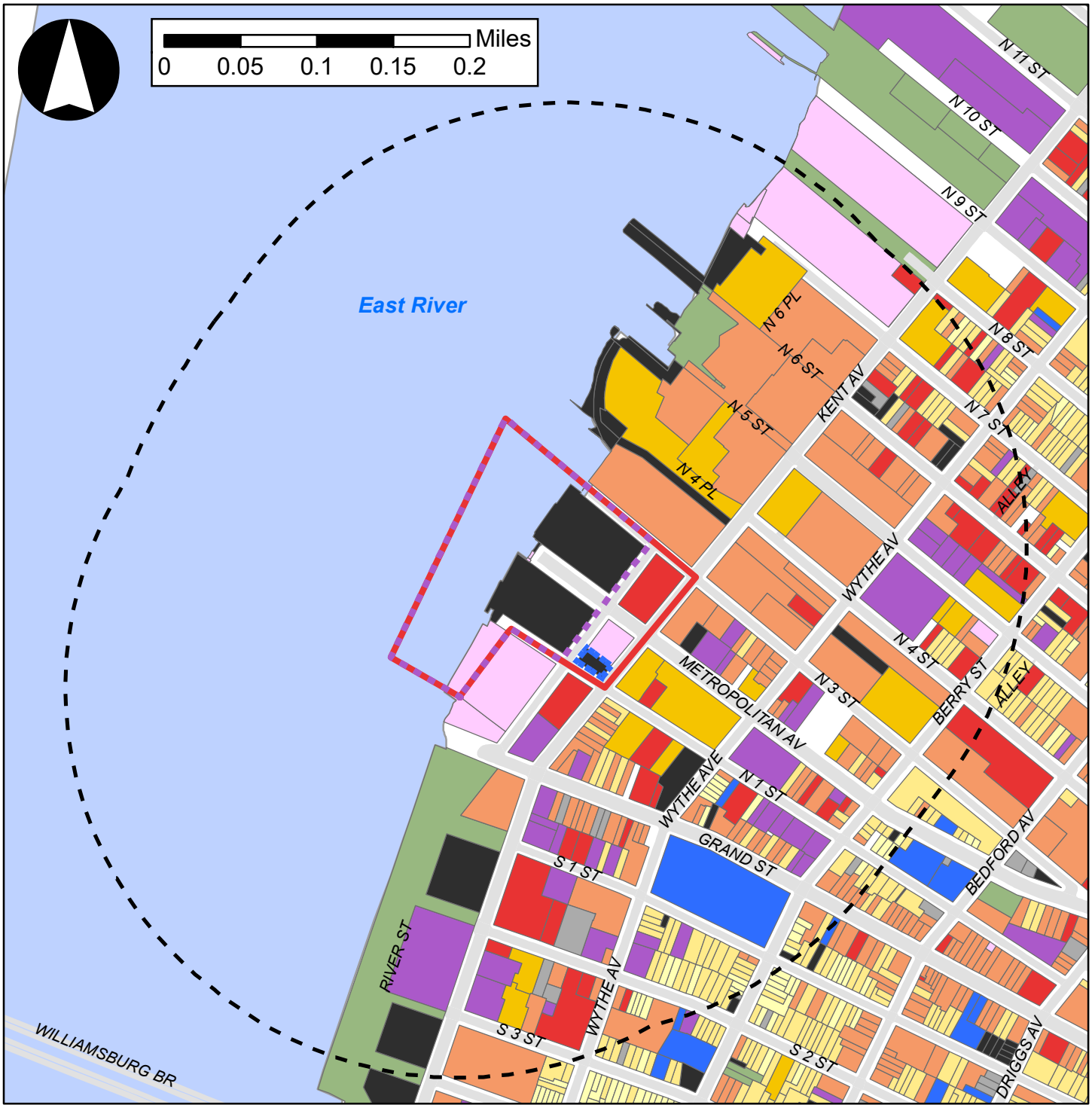
A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in other technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The key elements that define neighborhood character, and their relationships to one another, form the basis of determining impact significance; in general, the more uniform and consistent the existing neighborhood context, the more sensitive it is to change. A neighborhood that has a more varied context is typically able to tolerate greater change without experiencing significant adverse impacts. If there is no potential for a proposed project to affect the defining features of neighborhood character, a detailed assessment is not warranted. Pursuant to the 2020 *CEQR Technical Manual*, the preliminary assessment evaluates the expected changes resulting from the Proposed Actions in the above technical areas using the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Actions 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.

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 utilized in the relevant technical areas assessed under CEQR that contribute to the defining features of the neighborhood. Therefore, the study area for this analysis is the same as those used in land use and urban design assessments. As shown in **Figure 17-1**, the ¼-mile study area for the assessment of the Proposed Actions on neighborhood character is generally bounded by lots fronting North 8th Street to the north, lots approximately 100 feet west of Bedford Avenue to the east, South 4th Street to the south, and lots fronting the East River to the west.

Figure 17-1

Neighborhood Character Study Area & Land Uses



Legend

- Applicant's Proposed Development Site
- Projected Development Site
- Project Area
- 1/4-Mile Radius

Land Use

- One & Two Family Buildings
- Multi-Family Walkup Buildings
- Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
- Mixed Commercial/Residential Buildings
- Commecial/Office Buildings
- Industrial/Manufacturing
- Transportation/Utility
- Public Facilites & Institutions
- Open Space
- Parking Facilities
- Vacant Land
- All Others or No Data

D. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

Defining Features

Project Area

The Project Area is located in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn Community District 1. As shown in **Figure 17-1**, the Project Area is bounded to the north by North 3rd Street, to the east by Kent Avenue and property owned by New York Power Authority (NYPA), to the south partially by North 1st Street and partially by Grand Ferry Park, and to the west by the US Pierhead Line in the East River. The Applicant's Proposed Development Site is currently vacant, with the upland portion covered in compacted sand and gravel. The existing shoreline protection of the Project Area consists of a 265-foot-long by 25-foot-wide wharf, a 65-foot-long riprap revetment, a 205-foot-long bulkhead, and a 285-foot-long cobble slope. A 230-foot-long pile supported apron walkway is waterward of and parallel to the existing bulkhead. The southern portion of the apron walkway is 12 feet wide; the northern portion is six feet wide. A pile-supported fuel service pier extends from the middle of the apron walkway to a pile-supported fuel service platform, about 200 feet from the bulkhead. The North 1st Street Pier extends about 195 feet and is about five feet wide; however, the segment that connected the pier to the shore is no longer present. The North 3rd Street Pier once extended about 245 feet from the former bulkhead, but the deck of the near shore portion no longer exists; only the piles that once supported the deck remain. A pile-supported timber platform (about 38,000 sf) at the end of the former North 3rd Street Pier still exists. About 200 feet waterward of the shoreline are four cellular caissons, ranging in diameter from about 28 to 47 feet. The southern three caissons and the fuel service platform are connected by pile-supported catwalks about five feet wide. The North 1st Street Pier terminates at this catwalk. A 20-foot-wide catwalk extends from the former North 3rd Street platform to the northernmost caisson.

The remainder of the Project Area includes Block 2356; Lot 1 and Block 2363; Lots 1 and 3. Block 2362; Lot 1 is considered a Projected Development Site for CEQR analysis purposes. The Projected Development Site (Block 2362; Lot 1) is a 5,862 sf lot that was previously occupied by a 1-story building that had full lot coverage. Demolition permits were filed in February 2019. Subsequent permits have been filed for excavation, bracing and shoring, but no New Building permits are on file at the Department of Buildings (DOB). The Projected Development Site is currently vacant. Block 2356; Lot 1 (200 Kent Avenue) is a 22,640 sf lot that is currently occupied by a recently constructed six-story (83-foot-tall) mixed commercial building with approximately 24,000 gsf of office space on the 4th-6th floors, 22,000 gsf of destination retail (Trader Joe's) below grade, 21,000 gsf of ground floor retail, approximately 176 accessory attended parking spaces (34,370 gsf), and 1,600 gsf for roof garden on the third floor. The development on this lot maximizes the 2.0 allowable commercial/manufacturing FAR under the existing M3-1 zoning.

¼-Mile Secondary Study Area

The ¼-mile study area surrounding the Project Area is defined by its location along the East River waterfront, which is lined with publicly accessible open spaces, providing a plethora of public views of the East River, the Manhattan skyline, and the Williamsburg Bridge. The study area is also characterized by a variety of residential and mixed residential/commercial building types, ranging from low-rise, 19th century rowhouses along Grand Street, to recently developed mid-rise apartment buildings, to renovated former industrial warehouses, to high-rise, high-density residential towers along the East River waterfront. Most of these structures are built-out to the lot lines and contain lower-level commercial spaces, creating active, continuous streetwalls throughout the majority of the study area. The neighborhood surrounding

the Project Area is known for its creative and lively atmosphere, vibrant social scene, culinary venues, and trendy boutique retail, as well as its accessibility to Manhattan.

In 2005, much of the study area was rezoned as part of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg Rezoning, which facilitated a considerable amount of new development in the neighborhood, most pronounced in areas along and near the waterfront. The rezoning spurred the conversion of former industrial factories to loft-style housing and contemporary new construction, as well as the development of high-rise apartment towers, transforming the formerly industrial area into a predominately residential neighborhood. As a result, and given the neighborhood's proximity to Manhattan, residential rental rates and sales prices in Williamsburg have increased considerably with fairly limited inventory.

Examples of recently constructed residential towers on the East River waterfront to the north of the Project Area include Level, a 40-story building at 2 North 6th Street completed in 2017; Two Northside Piers, a 30-story building at 164 Kent Avenue built in 2010; and One North Fourth, a 41-story building at 1 North 4th Place completed in 2016. To the south of the Project Area is the Domino Sugar Refinery redevelopment project, which was approved in 2010-2014 to facilitate the development of multiple mixed-use, high-rise buildings that will consist of nearly 2,300 DUs, including 700 affordable units, approximately 0.5-million sf of office space, 114,600 gsf of retail space, and 42,200 gsf of community facility space. The first of the Domino Sugar buildings, a 16-story donut-shaped residential building at 325 Kent Avenue, opened in 2017, and contains 522 DUs, including 104 affordable DUs. Another of Domino Sugar's buildings, a 42-story tower containing residential use with ground floor retail at One South First/Ten Grand (or 260 Kent Avenue), was completed in 2019, and contains 332 DUs, including 66 affordable units for low-income households; this building also contains approximately 161,239 sf of commercial office space, with an address of Ten Grand Street.

The ¼-mile study area is also defined by its waterfront open spaces that provide unobstructed public views of the East River, Manhattan skyline, and Williamsburg Bridge. These open spaces include the 4.15-acre Bushwick Inlet Park, the seven-acre East River State Park; the 0.85-acre North 5th Street Pier and Park immediately north of the Project Area; the 1.8-acre Grand Ferry Park immediately south of the Project Area; and the six-acre Domino Park to the south. It should be noted that Bushwick Inlet Park and the adjacent 1.8-acre Bushwick Inlet Pop-Up Park are the initial phases of the anticipated 35.53-acre Bushwick Inlet Park which, once completed, will span 5.5 blocks along the East River waterfront between North 9th Street and Quay Street, further enhancing the public waterfront open spaces that define the East River waterfront in Williamsburg.

In addition to the East River and its waterfront detailed above, there are also a number of significant visual resources in the upland portion of the study area. The State/National Register of Historic Places (S/NR)-listed and New York City Landmark (NYCL)-eligible Austin, Nichols & Co. Warehouse is a former warehouse recently converted into residences located just north of the Project Area at 184 Kent Avenue; the S/NR-eligible Metropolitan Avenue Warehouse is located at 67-73 Metropolitan Avenue; and the NYCL-designated and S/NR-eligible Domino Sugar Refinery is located at 292-314 Kent Avenue, just south of the Project Area. Additionally, the S/NR-eligible Grand Avenue Historic District, which contains low-rise, 19th century rowhouses with ground-floor retail spaces, encompasses Grand Avenue to the east of Kent Avenue in the study area.

The Project Area is located within a transit zone with easy access to Manhattan, Long Island City, and other areas of Brooklyn. The B32 local bus runs northbound along Kent Avenue to Long Island City, Queens, and southbound along Wythe Avenue to the Williamsburg Bridge Plaza. The North Williamsburg

Ferry stop is located two blocks north of the Project Area. Additionally, the Bedford Avenue (L) Station on North 7th Street is located northeast of the Project Area.

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

The sections below discuss potential changes resulting from the Proposed Actions in the following technical areas that are considered in the neighborhood character assessment pursuant to the *CEQR Technical Manual:* 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 Actions and resultant Proposed Development 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 the study area's neighborhood character would not be adversely affected either through the potential of any significant adverse impact or in combination with any other moderate effects in the relevant 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 Actions on land use, zoning, and public policy, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. The Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of two residential buildings with commercial and community facility spaces, below-grade parking, and waterfront public open space in the Project Area that would be consistent with the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, & Public Policy," no significant adverse impacts related to land use, zoning, or public policy would occur in the future with the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would not adversely affect surrounding land use, nor would the Proposed Actions generate land uses that would be incompatible with land use, zoning, or public policy within the secondary study area.

While changes in land use and zoning would occur within the Project Area, with proposed residential (including 313 units of affordable housing), office, local retail, community facility uses, and public waterfront open space replacing an underutilized vacant property, those uses would be comparable to existing and planned developments in Williamsburg, and would directly support several major City policies aimed at increasing supply of affordable housing in New York City. The Proposed Actions would facilitate a mixed-use development in an area well-served by mass transit, and would also facilitate the creation of new public waterfront open space, making the waterfront portion of the Project Area accessible to upland residents and workers. Based on the increasingly residential character of the study area, the Proposed Development would constitute a substantial improvement with respect to land use compared to the Project Area's current vacant status or its future commercial and light industrial uses as is permitted as-of-right, neither of which provide community facility space, affordable housing, waterfront access, or public open space to the surrounding area.

The zoning actions requested for the Project Area would facilitate the creation of permanently affordable housing, open space, and access to the East River waterfront. These zoning changes would be compatible with the ¼-mile secondary study area. The requested C6-2 zoning district would allow a density in the Project Area that is found within a ¼-mile radius of the Project Area in other C6-2 and R8 districts and thus, the change in zoning designation would not significantly affect the character of the neighborhood. Rather, the removal of the M3-1 district from the Project Area, and the placement of the M1-4 district on

Blocks 2356 and 2362, would ensure that heavy industrial uses that are not compatible with adjacent residential and commercial uses would not be constructed. In addition, the proposed M1-4 district would allow community facility uses in the Project Area on Blocks 2356 and 2362.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on socioeconomic conditions, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As discussed in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts on direct residential displacement, direct business/institutional displacement, indirect residential displacement, indirect business/institutional displacement, or adversely affect specific industries in the Project Area or surrounding study area.

The Proposed Actions would not result in the direct displacement of any residents or businesses or adverse effects on specific industries, and the incremental commercial uses would not represent a substantial new use warranting assessment of potential indirect business displacement. With respect to potential indirect residential displacement, a preliminary assessment provided in Chapter 3 found that the average income of the project-generated population is expected to be similar to or lower than the current average in the study area as well as the future population, given existing trends of household incomes in the area. The permanently affordable housing added by the Proposed Actions pursuant to the MIH program would help to maintain a more diverse demographic composition within the study area than would otherwise exist. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not introduce a new concentration of higher-income residents that could alter rental market conditions in the study area. The proposed retail space is expected to be primarily local retail that would largely support the local resident and worker populations and expand shopping and service options. Thus, the new land uses that would result in the future with the Proposed Actions are foreseen as a continuation of current established land use trends in a manner sensitive to the surrounding land uses and built form. The area would retain its mixed-use character and the Proposed Actions would create opportunities for new housing, including affordable housing, in an area with strong demand for such housing.

Open Space

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on publicly accessible open space, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As detailed in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on the City's open space resources.

The Proposed Actions would not directly displace or alter existing open space in the study area. Additionally, the Proposed Actions would not result in a reduction of open space ratios in the study area that would consequently overburden existing facilitates or further exacerbate a deficiency in open space. Conversely, the Proposed Development would substantially increase residential open space ratios in the study area as compared to No-Action conditions. In the future with the Proposed Actions, the residential total open space ratio in the study area would increase by 0.9 percent, the residential active open space ratio would decrease by 1.9 percent, and the residential passive open space ratio would increase by 2.8 percent as compared to the No-Action scenario. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to open space would occur as a result of the Proposed Actions, but rather, the introduction of 2.9 acres of publicly accessible waterfront open space plus 2.32 acres of accessible in-river space and 0.86 acres of intertidal area in the Project Area would enhance the public waterfront of Williamsburg, creating a continuous link of public open spaces on the East River running from Bushwick Inlet Park to the north to Domino Park to

the south.[1] The Proposed Actions would thereby improve the character of the East River waterfront, a defining feature of the ¼-mile study area.

Shadows

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential shadows of the Proposed Development, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As detailed in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the Proposed Actions would result in incremental shadow coverage (i.e., additional, or new, shadow coverage) on portions of five sunlight-sensitive open space/natural resources: John V. Lindsay East River Park, the East River, North 5th Street Pier and Park, Bushwick Inlet Park, and Bushwick Inlet Pop-up Park. However, the extent and duration of the incremental shadows on these open space/natural resources would (1) not significantly reduce direct sunlight exposure on any of the sunlight-sensitive features found within these five open spaces; and (2) would not significantly alter the public's use or enjoyment of the open spaces or threaten the viability of vegetation or other elements located within the open spaces. Therefore, incremental shadows as a result of the Proposed Development on these sunlight-sensitive resources would not be considered a significant adverse impact, in accordance with *CEQR Technical Manual* methodology, and would not significantly alter any of the defining characteristics of the neighborhood surrounding the Project Area.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to the potential effects of the Proposed Actions on historic and cultural resources, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As detailed in Chapter 7, "Historic & Cultural Resources," the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts to historic or cultural resources. As the Project Area does not contain any designated or eligible historic architectural resources, the Proposed Actions would not result in any direct impacts to historic resources. Additionally, as detailed in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the Proposed Actions would not generate incremental shadows on any sunlight-sensitive features of surrounding historic resources. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse shadows impacts on historic resources.

In the future with the Proposed Actions, no incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements would be introduced to any historic resource's setting. The development facilitated by the Proposed Actions would not alter the relationship of any identified historic architectural resources to the streetscape, as all historic resources' relationships to the street would remain unchanged in the future with the Proposed Actions. The development facilitated by the Proposed Actions would not eliminate or screen public views of any historic architectural resources, which would remain visible in view corridors on adjacent public streets and sidewalks. No primary facades, significant architectural ornamentation, or notable features of surrounding historic architectural resources would be obstructed by the Proposed or Projected Developments. Rather, the Proposed Actions would create new public views of the southern and western facades of the Austin, Nichols & Co. Warehouse when looking north and northeast from the publicly accessible waterfront open spaces in the Project Area.

[1] As discussed in **Chapter 1, "Project Description,"** the 2.9 acres of public open space is composed of 85,475 sf of WPAA and 40,833 sf of PAA. This area includes all upland park area, seaward breakwater trails, and Ring boardwalk.

The Proposed Actions would not result in development that would diminish the qualities that make the NYCL-eligible and S/NR-listed Austin, Nichols & Co. Warehouse, the S/NR-eligible Metropolitan Avenue Warehouse, the S/NR-eligible Rokeach & Sons Warehouse, or the S/NR-eligible Grand Street Historic District historically and architecturally significant. Although the Proposed Development would alter the backdrops of these historic architectural resources, these changes would not be significant or adverse, as the study area is a dense urban environment with multiple high-rise buildings that currently form the setting and context of these historic resources. As such, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse indirect or contextual impacts on historic architectural resources. Furthermore, as the Project Area is located within 90 feet of the S/NR-listed and NYCL-eligible Austin, Nichols & Co. Warehouse, construction of the Proposed Development would be subject to the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB)'s Technical Policy & Procedure Notice (TPPN) #10/88, which governs the protection of adjacent historic properties from accidental construction damage. As such, the Proposed Actions would not adversely affect the architectural character of the historic resources in the study area, and therefore no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character can be expected in relation to historic and cultural resources.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As discussed in Chapter 8, "Urban Design & Visual Resources," the Proposed Actions would facilitate development that is not currently permitted as-of-right in the Project Area, which would create a notable change in the urban design character of the area. Compared to the future without the Proposed Actions, the visual appearance, and thus the pedestrian experience of the Proposed Development Site, would change considerably. However, this change would not constitute a significant adverse urban design impact as it would not alter the arrangement, appearance, or functionality of the Project Area, thus not negatively affecting a pedestrian's experience of the area. The results of a wind study (provided in **Appendix D**) found that no regions exceeding wind safety criteria to the general or frail members of the public were found within the vicinity of the Proposed Development, and determined that the Proposed Development would satisfy respective comfort criteria. As such, outdoor trafficable areas within and around the Proposed Development would be suitable for their intended uses.

Development anticipated in the Project Area in the future with the Proposed Actions is expected to positively affect the urban design of the area and improve the pedestrian experience, through the redevelopment of a former industrial site which denied the community access to this portion of the waterfront for several decades (the Proposed Development Site) with a mixed-use development that would reactivate this portion of the East River waterfront, with physical and visual connections to 3.1 acres of newly developed, publicly accessible waterfront open space, with an additional 3.18 acres of newly created in-water space, including intertidal and in-water recreation and natural resource enhancement.

The Proposed Actions would revitalize the Proposed Development Site, a currently inaccessible portion of the East River waterfront that would largely continue to be publicly inaccessible absent the Proposed Actions. With connections to the North 5th Street Pier and Park to the north and Grand Ferry Park to the south, the proposed waterfront open space in the Project Area would result in a continuous public waterfront experience along the East River waterfront spanning from Bushwick Inlet Park to Domino Park, enhancing the pedestrian experience of the East River waterfront. It would also provide additional views of significant visual resources such as the Manhattan skyline to the west, and the Williamsburg Bridge to the south.

Although the 49- and 64-story towers on the Development Site would be denser and taller than the as-of-right No-Action buildings on the site, the additional density and height on the Proposed Development Site would not result in significant adverse urban design impacts. The study area is a dense urban environment with multiple existing high-rise buildings along the East River waterfront, ranging from 30 to 42 stories. The proposed towers on the Development Site would be in keeping with the heights and densities of these 21st century developments, while allowing for a greater portion of the Proposed Development Site to be transformed into publicly accessible open space. Additionally, the Proposed Development would not obstruct any significant view corridors in the study area, or otherwise adversely alter the context of surrounding visual resources.

Overall, the Proposed Development would contribute to the changing visual character of the study area, which is expected to undergo substantial redevelopment with modern residential and commercial towers in the future without the Proposed Actions. In addition, the Proposed Development would greatly enhance the streetscape experience adjacent to the Proposed Development Site with active ground floor retail use and therefore would improve the neighborhood character.

Transportation

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on transportation, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As described in Chapter 12, "Transportation," five analyzed crosswalks would be considered significantly adversely impacted in one or more analyzed peak hours. The east crosswalk on North 6th Street at Bedford Avenue and the north crosswalk on Wythe Avenue at Metropolitan Avenue would be significantly adversely impacted during the weekday PM and Saturday peak hour, the south crosswalk at Wythe Avenue and Metropolitan Avenue would be significantly adversely impacted during the Saturday peak hour, the north sidewalk on Kent Avenue at Metropolitan Avenue would be significantly adversely impacted in the weekday AM and PM and Saturday peak hours, and the south crosswalk on Kent Avenue at Metropolitan Avenue would be significantly adversely impacted in the weekday PM and Saturday peak hours. As discussed in Chapter 19, "Mitigation," widening each of these crosswalks by one foot to 5.5 feet would fully mitigate these impacts.

As also discussed in Chapter 12, "Transportation," at present the only crosswalk on River Street in proximity to the Project Area is located at North 3rd Street. It is therefore likely that some pedestrians en route to and from the Proposed Development Site would choose to cross River Street at a more proximate location where a crosswalk is not present, such as at Metropolitan Avenue or North 1st Street. This would result in a significant pedestrian safety impact. As discussed in Chapter 19, "Mitigation," this potential impact is expected to be fully mitigated by the installation of a new pedestrian crossing at one or both of these locations.

As the Proposed Actions' potential significant impacts to crosswalks and pedestrian safety would be fully mitigated, the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant alteration of this element of the neighborhood's character.

Noise

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the Proposed Actions, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As detailed in Chapter 15, "Noise," increased traffic volumes generated by the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse noise impacts as the relative increases in noise levels would fall well below the applicable *CEQR Technical Manual* significant adverse

impact threshold (3.0 dBA). With-Action noise levels would range from the ”Marginally Unacceptable” to “Acceptable” CEQR noise exposure category, same as under No-Action conditions. The noise levels in proximity to the Project Area are typical of many neighborhoods in New York City, and would remain so in the With-Action condition. As noise is not a defining feature of the neighborhood, the anticipated small increases in noise levels in the area as a result of the Proposed Actions would not constitute a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

Potential for Combined Effects on Neighborhood Character

As stated in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, if a proposed project would have the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood through a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical areas, then a detailed assessment may be required.

Though the Proposed Actions would result in small to moderate effects in all technical areas that contribute to neighborhood character, these combined effects would not result in any significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character. The Proposed Development’s uses—in conjunction with other No-Action developments within the study area—would represent the continued evolution of the area’s visual character from older, underutilized sites (and in many cases former industrial and transportation uses) to more modernized, mixed-use, high-rise development with an increased presence of residential uses that responds to the need for an increase in affordable housing. In addition, the Proposed Development would greatly enhance the streetscape experience adjacent to the Proposed Development Site and therefore would improve the neighborhood character.

Thus, based on the results of the preliminary assessment, there is no potential for the Proposed Actions to result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character, and further analysis is not warranted.