Chapter 9: Urban Design and Visual Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential for the Proposed Actions to adversely affect the urban design characteristics and visual resources of the project sites and their surrounding study areas. The Proposed Actions would result in a mixed-use development on the Development Site and in residential development at two Additional Housing Sites ("Tenth Avenue Site" and "Ninth Avenue Site"). Since the Proposed Actions would result in development that differs in use, height, bulk, form, materials, and arrangement from that which currently exists on the project sites, an urban design and visual resources analysis is appropriate.

This chapter has been prepared in accordance with City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and follows the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*. As defined in the manual, urban design components and visual resources determine the "look" of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the street pattern, the size and shape of buildings, their arrangement on blocks, streetscape features, natural resources, and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis addresses each of these characteristics for existing conditions and the Future without and with the Proposed Actions.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on urban design and visual resources. Although the Proposed Actions would create pedestrian wind conditions on and adjacent to the Development Site that exceed the safety criterion, these conditions would be similar to conditions at comparable locations in Manhattan near the Hudson River. In consideration of that and other relevant factors relating to urban design, these exceedances would not be considered a significant adverse impact.

DEVELOPMENT SITE

Urban Design

The Proposed Actions would positively affect the urban design of the Development Site. They would result in the construction of up to eight mixed-use towers and a varied five-acre open space network on the Development Site. The Proposed Actions would enliven the Development Site, its street frontages, and the surrounding area with active ground-floor retail and school uses, anticipated widened sidewalks, and a street-tree program for the interior of the site and the sidewalks that border the perimeter of the site. The Proposed Actions would provide access to the currently inaccessible site through the creation of two roadways roughly aligned with the formerly mapped West 31st and West 32nd Streets. A large open space network with a variety of elements would provide landscaped areas, including vantage points from which one could enjoy unobstructed views of the Hudson River.

The Proposed Actions would alter the existing topography of the Development Site by constructing the proposed buildings on a platform over the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) rail yard below, so the topography of the Development Site would vary to promote unobstructed views west and southwest of the Hudson River and Hudson River Park through the site from the publicly accessible open spaces located within the center of the site. In addition, the Proposed Actions would result in the regrading of West 33rd Street adjacent to the Development Site, which would change the street profile between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues to provide better service access to and from the platform level. The design and construction of this profile change will be completed in coordination with the platform design and construction.

The Proposed Actions would alter the street pattern and block form of the Development Site. Changes in the street pattern would result from the creation of two private roadways that would partially break up the superblock of the Development Site. These two roadways would terminate in cul-de-sacs near the western portion of the site and would be generally aligned with the two private but publicly accessible vehicular roadways on the east side of Eleventh Avenue that are part of plans for the independent development of the Eastern Rail Yard (to be developed in the Future without the Proposed Actions).

The Proposed Actions would result in the development of up to eight tall buildings on the Development Site, which would be similar to proposed developments planned for completion in the surrounding area in the Future without the Proposed Actions. The building uses, bulk, height, density, and setback of the Proposed Actions would be compatible with the planned development of the Eastern Rail Yard and the high-rise residential and mixed-use buildings planned and under construction throughout the study area between West 26th and West 38th Streets and Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. The eight buildings proposed to be constructed on the Development Site would range in height from approximately 350 to 950 feet, and the six buildings planned for development on the Eastern Rail Yard will range in height from approximately 150 to 900 feet. Additionally, the planned office tower on the Extell Development site on the east side of Eleventh Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets will range in height from approximately 650 to 700 feet, and the planned office and residential tower on the Moinian Group development site one block to the north between West 34th and West 35th Streets will range in height from 900 to 1,000 feet. The buildings proposed on the Development Site would have similar massing to those planned on the Eastern Rail Yard and many of the other No Build projects planned on Eleventh Avenue in the study area, including the Extell Development, Moinian Group, and Avalon Bay Properties developments. The buildings on the Eastern Rail Yard and those planned adjacent to the future Hudson Park and Boulevard would be set back from adjacent streets and front onto public plazas and open spaces. The proposed buildings on the Development Site would be similar to the height, setback, and bulk of the other planned developments along the Eleventh Avenue corridor and side streets expected to be completed in the Future without the Proposed Actions.

The Proposed Actions would greatly improve the streetscape of the Development Site and study area with the creation of active ground floor uses and unique open spaces. Tree-lined sidewalks and ground floor uses would greatly enhance the streetscape from the currently inactive and blank concrete walls and chain link fencing that surround the Development Site. The adaptive reuse of the portion of the High Line located on the Development Site as a publicly accessible open space and connection to the rest of High Line Park would contribute to a new and unique open space, which would be easily accessed from the Development Site. The site's diverse and large open space network would include both passive and active uses with seating and playgrounds.

An assessment was undertaken to determine whether the Development Site would experience pedestrian level wind speeds that would be potentially hazardous. This assessment found that such conditions would occur with strong winds from the west and northwest. Measures that could reduce such conditions have been incorporated into the proposed zoning although full avoidance would not be feasible under the proposed zoning and site plan. These conditions would be similar to conditions at other comparable locations in Manhattan near the Hudson River. In consideration of that and other relevant factors relating to urban design, these exceedances would not be considered a significant adverse impact.

Visual Resources

The Proposed Actions would not directly block views of any visual resources from streets or publicly accessible open spaces. They would, however, result in some altered views in the study area, but as described more fully below, these altered views would not result in a significant adverse impact. Views of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center ("Convention Center") along the Eleventh Avenue view corridor and views of the Starrett-Lehigh Building along the Eleventh and Twelfth Avenue view corridors would be altered, as these two buildings are currently visible to the north and south over the Development Site. However, the Convention Center would still be visible along the Eleventh Avenue view corridor north of the Development Site, and the Starrett-Lehigh Building would still be visible along the Eleventh and Twelfth Avenue view corridors south of the Development Site. North-south views of the Daily News Building (formerly the Westyard Distribution Center), a 15-story modern office building with a sloping façade, along Tenth Avenue in the study area would not be affected by development on the Development Site. Views east to the Daily News Building will already be partially or entirely obstructed due to the development of the Eastern Rail Yard in the Future without the Proposed Actions. Views east to the Empire State Building will already be partially or entirely obstructed due to the development of the Brookfield Properties site on the west side of Ninth Avenue between West 31st and West 33rd Streets in the Future without the Proposed Actions.

The High Line, a visual resource located on the Development Site, would not be adversely affected by the Proposed Actions. The context of the visual resource would be altered due to the construction of tall buildings on the Development Site; however, this would not result in a significant adverse impact since the resource will be surrounded by tall buildings with the construction of other projects in the study area in the Future without the Proposed Actions. Further, as a result of the Proposed Actions, the High Line would be adaptively reused as a publicly accessible open space and would provide unencumbered views west of the Hudson River and north, south, and east to the City.

The Proposed Actions would result in the creation of new east-west views through the site with the construction of two roadways through the site; currently, the concrete wall surrounding the site obstructs views through the site from Eleventh Avenue west to the Hudson River. These new roadways would open views through the site. Further, they would roughly align with the two planned east-west roadways on the Eastern Rail Yard, which would result in extended views west from the publically accessible paved plazas and open spaces in the Eastern Rail Yard through the Development Site and to the Hudson River.

ADDITIONAL HOUSING SITES

Urban Design

The Proposed Actions would not alter the block form, street pattern and hierarchy of the two Additional Housing Sites. Both developments would occupy existing blocks and lots and would be in keeping with the existing building arrangement in each study area. By changing the topography on the Tenth Avenue Site (i.e., placing a building above the Amtrak cut), the Proposed Actions would reinforce the block form and street grid on West 48th and West 49th Street.

The Proposed Actions would improve the streetscape of the two Additional Housing Sites. Both developments would connect to the existing streetwalls of adjacent buildings. The Proposed Actions would allow for ground floor retail uses on the Tenth Avenue Site, which would greatly enhance the existing streetscape of the project site that includes a concrete wall and chain-link fencing. The Proposed Actions would allow for ground floor retail uses on the Ninth Avenue Site, which would improve the project site from the currently fenced-in surface parking lot that occupies the lot.

The Proposed Actions would result in development that would be similar with respect to existing building use, bulk, height, setbacks, and density of adjacent buildings for each of the Additional Housing Sites. The Proposed Actions would result in the construction of an 11-story residential building with ground floor retail on the Tenth Avenue Site, similar in height and massing to existing development in the study area. The Proposed Actions would result in the construction of a 12-story residential and office building with ground floor retail on the Ninth Avenue Site, similar to the use, bulk, height, and massing of existing development in the study area.

Visual Resources

The proposed buildings at the two Additional Housing Sites would not result in a significant adverse impact on visual resources. The proposed building at the Tenth Avenue Site would not directly obstruct any visual resources or block any view corridors. Views east over the project site of the varied skyline of Midtown Manhattan would be partially obstructed; however, the skyline would still be visible from cross streets in the study area, like West 48th and West 49th Streets adjacent to the project site. The proposed building at the Ninth Avenue Site would not directly obstruct any visual resources or block any view corridors. Background skyline views of the Time Warner Center and Hearst Building to the north and Worldwide Plaza to the south, visible over the Ninth Avenue Site would be partially obstructed with the development of the Ninth Avenue Site. However, these visual resources would still be prominently visible to the north and south along the Ninth Avenue view corridor adjacent to the project site and along east-west cross streets in the study area.

B. METHODOLOGY

URBAN DESIGN

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this analysis considers the effects of the Proposed Actions on the following elements that collectively form an area's urban design:

- *Block Form and Street Pattern.* This urban design feature refers to the shape and arrangement of blocks and surroundings streets, such as a grid pattern with regularly sized,

rectangular blocks. These features set street views, define the flow of activity through an area, and create the basic format on which building arrangements can be organized.

- *Building Arrangement.* This term refers to the way that buildings are placed on zoning lots and blocks. The buildings can have small or large footprints, be attached or detached and separated by open uses, and varied in their site plans. This urban design feature helps to convey a sense of the overall form and design of a block or a larger area. Given the location of the Development Site near the Hudson River and the size of the proposed buildings, consideration is given to the relationship of building configurations and wind conditions in Section E, "Probable Impacts of the Proposed Actions." See also Appendix K, "Pedestrian Wind Assessment."
- *Building Bulk, Use, and Type*. Buildings are usually described by these characteristics. A building's bulk is created from an amalgam of characteristics, which include its height, length, and width; lot coverage and density; and shape and use of setbacks and other massing elements. The general use of a building (e.g., residential, manufacturing, commercial office) gives an impression of its appearance and helps the viewer to understand its visual and urban design character.
- *Streetscape Elements.* Streetscape elements are the distinctive physical features that make up a streetscape, such as street walls, building entrances, parking lots, fences, street trees, street furniture, curb cuts, and parking ribbons. These features help define the immediate visual experience of pedestrians.
- *Street Hierarchy.* Streets may be classified as expressways, arterials, boulevards, collector/distributor streets, or local streets, and they may be defined by their width, type of access, and the presence or absence of at-grade pedestrian crossings. Street hierarchy helps convey a sense of the overall form and activity level of a neighborhood.
- *Topography and Natural Features.* Topographic and natural features help define the overall visual character of an area and may include varied ground elevation, rock outcroppings and steep slopes, vegetation, and aquatic features.

VISUAL RESOURCES

This analysis also considers the effects of the Proposed Actions on the area's visual resources, which the *CEQR Technical Manual* defines as unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. Visual resources can include public parks, landmark structures or districts, or natural features, such as a river or geologic formations.

As recommended by the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this technical analysis evaluates impacts on the Development Site and its surrounding study area, in addition to the two Additional Housing Sites and their respective surrounding areas. Due to the primarily low-rise scale of existing development in the immediate area surrounding the Development Site and the site's large footprint and the tall height of the buildings proposed for the site, the urban design and visual resources study area has been extended beyond the typical 400-foot boundary. The study area is roughly bounded by West 38th Street to the north, Tenth Avenue to the east, West 26th Street to the south, and the Hudson River to the west. The proposed developments on the two Additional Housing Sites would be similar in scale and use to buildings in their respective study areas; therefore, the urban design and visual resources study area for the Tenth Avenue Site and Ninth Avenue Site is each defined as within an approximately 400-foot radius of each project site.

As described in Chapter 2, "Framework for Analysis," the analysis of the Proposed Actions is performed for the expected year of completion of the project—2019. In addition, an assessment of the Proposed Actions' potential environmental impact is undertaken for an interim year of development. The following analysis considers the potential for significant adverse impacts of the Proposed Actions for the full (2019) Future with the Proposed Actions condition and then for the interim (2017) Future with the Proposed Actions condition.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

DEVELOPMENT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

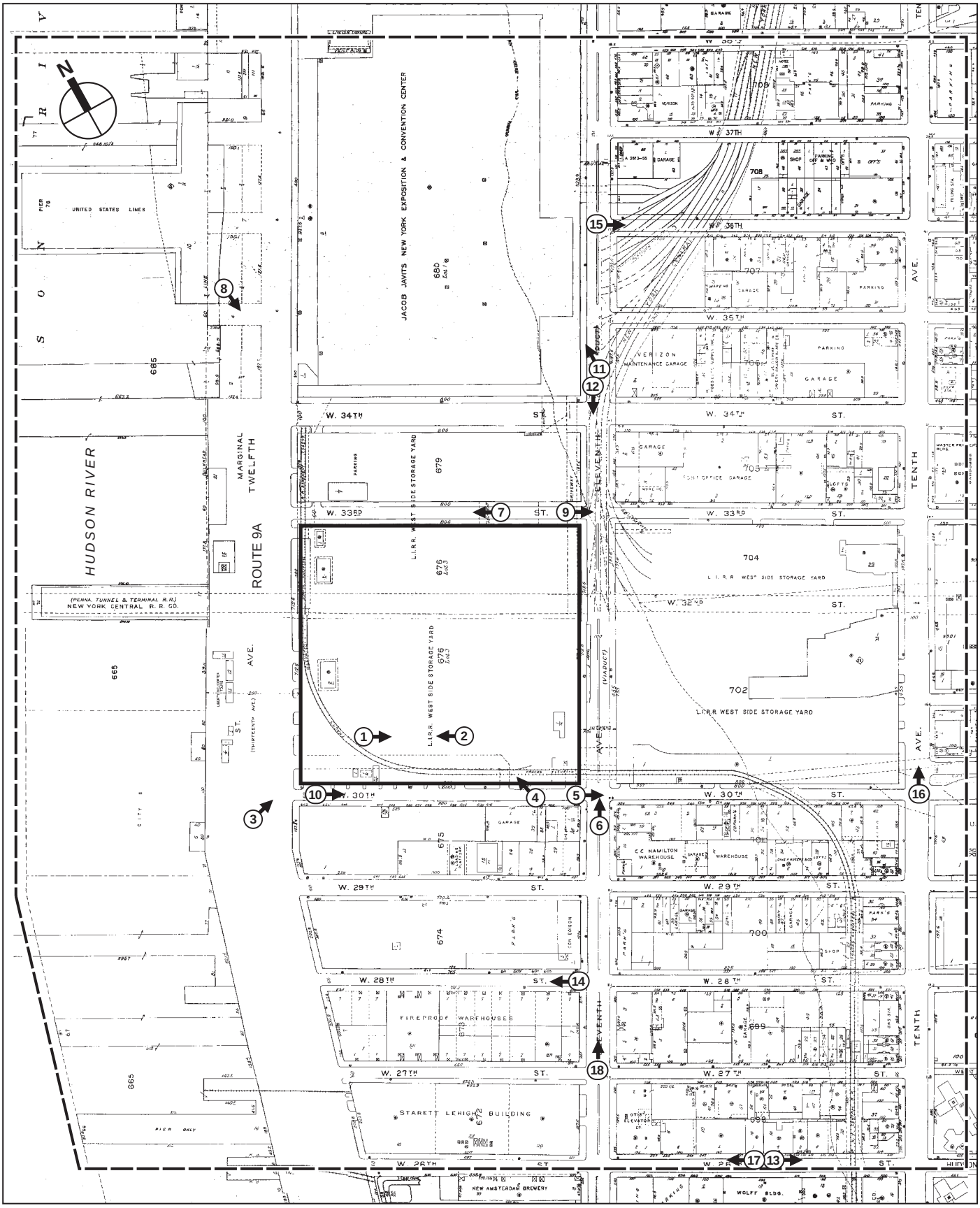
The Development Site consists of a "superblock" bounded by West 33rd and West 30th Streets and Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues (see Figure 9-1). The Development Site is largely below-grade, and does not contain any natural features. It connects, below-grade, to the Eastern Rail Yard underneath Eleventh Avenue, which spans the rail yard on a viaduct. Operated by LIRR as a commuter train storage and maintenance yard, the site is defined by transportation uses (see views 1 and 2 of Figure 9-2). It also contains several small buildings that house train maintenance operations and related offices. These buildings have small rectangular footprints, are of one and two stories in height, and clad in siding with few windows. These small structures are located along the Eleventh Avenue and Twelfth Avenue frontages of the site. The southern portion of the site between West 30th and West 31st Streets is occupied by truck storage for the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and parking for a private bus company. Several one-story temporary trailers, which house the offices related to the vehicular storage yard occupying this portion of the site, are situated along the West 30th Street frontage of the Development Site. This southern portion of the site is separated from the LIRR operations by chain-link fencing.

The Development Site is enclosed by a tall chain-link fence and concrete wall along its Twelfth Avenue frontage and a small portion of its West 30th Street frontage near Twelfth Avenue. There is a tall concrete retaining wall that encloses the site along Eleventh Avenue and West 33rd Street. Much of the West 30th Street frontage is enclosed by tall chain-link fencing with several openings for vehicular access to the site.

The High Line, an unused freight railroad viaduct that runs from Gansevoort Street to West 34th Street, travels through the Development Site, beginning at the southeast corner of the site. From Eleventh Avenue, the viaduct runs westward along West 30th Street above the Development Site and then curves northward as it reaches Twelfth Avenue (see views 3 and 4 of Figure 9-3). Along West 30th Street, the viaduct has a concrete parapet simply ornamented with recessed panels and a tubular steel railing supported by square concrete posts. As it parallels Twelfth Avenue between West 30th and West 33rd Streets above the Development Site, the loop track viaduct has a decorative steel parapet and railing. There are views into the Development Site underneath the High Line.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

The High Line is an important visual resource located on the Development Site and within the study area. It is particularly visible along West 30th Street and Twelfth Avenue, which it borders (see views 3 and 4 of Figure 9-3). Portions of the High Line located beyond the Development



0 400 FEET

SCALE

Development Site Boundary

Study Area Boundary

① *Photograph View Direction and Reference Number*

Development Site
Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area
Figure 9-1



View east on Development Site near West 30th Street and Twelfth Avenue **1**



View west on Development Site near West 30th Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues **2**

Views of the Development Site
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Figure 9-2



View of High Line viaduct along Twelfth Avenue on the Development Site. **3**
View northeast on Twelfth Avenue from West 30th Street



View of High Line along West 30th Street, view northwest towards Twelfth Avenue **4**

Views of the Development Site
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Figure 9-3

Site are visible from the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the Development Site, particularly along the West 30th Street and Eleventh Avenue view corridors; the railroad viaduct crosses over both of these roadways on a trestle (see views 5 and 6 of Figure 9-4).

Other visual resources that can be seen from the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the Development Site include the Hudson River, Hudson River Park, and the New Jersey skyline to the west (see view 7 of Figure 9-5). Views of these resources include the cliffs of New Jersey populated with tall buildings, the waterfront, landscaping and historic lampposts associated with Hudson River Park, and the landscaped medians along Twelfth Avenue (see view 8 of Figure 9-5). To the east, visual resources, such as the Daily News Building (see view 9 of Figure 9-6) and the Empire State Building (see view 10 of Figure 9-6), are visible from West 33rd and West 30th Streets adjacent to the Development Site. The Daily News Building (formerly the Westyard Distribution Center) is a massive 15-story office and warehouse building with a sloping façade that extends outward to meet the lot line. The building's unique massing and form is prominently visible in the study area due to its massive bulk, and the overall low height of the warehouse and storage buildings in the study area. Both the Daily News Building and the Empire State Building are visible to the east over the Development Site from West 30th Street due to the current lack of development on the Eastern and Western Rail Yard sites between West 30th and West 33rd Streets and Tenth and Twelfth Avenues. To the north, the Convention Center, with its boxy steel frame clad in dark glass, is a prominent visual resource along the Eleventh Avenue view corridor (see view 11 of Figure 9-7). To the south the massive Starrett-Lehigh Building is visible along the Eleventh and Twelfth Avenue view corridors (see view 8 of Figure 9-5 and view 12 of Figure 9-7). The building's unique visual form with its horizontal bands of windows is also visible to the south over the Development Site from West 33rd Street.

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

Topography and Natural Features

In general, the land in the study area slopes downward from east to west toward the Hudson River. Tenth Avenue experiences changes in topography: north of West 30th Street, Tenth Avenue begins to ascend toward West 34th Street, at which point it slightly levels for a block, and then gradually descends in grade north of West 35th Street. Eleventh Avenue is a viaduct between West 37th and West 30th Streets that spans over the Amtrak Empire Line and the Caemmerer Rail Yard. The Eleventh Avenue viaduct gradually slopes downward from West 32nd Street south to West 30th Street. Due to the elevation of the Eleventh Avenue viaduct, cross streets east of Eleventh Avenue steeply ascend to the height of the structure and west of the avenue they steeply descend toward Twelfth Avenue and the Hudson River. Twelfth Avenue is relatively flat throughout the study area.

The far western portion of the study area includes two natural features—the Hudson River and Hudson River Park. The Hudson River is an important and scenic body of water with intermittent river traffic of large barges, tugboats, sightseeing boats, and small personal craft. Hudson River Park features a continuous walkway and bicycle path, which extends outside the study area from Battery Park to West 59th Street and beyond. It is lined with landscaped areas, including trees, flowers, and small shrubs (see view 8 of Figure 9-5). The walkway provides unencumbered views of the river and of the cliffs and skyline of New Jersey. The north- and south-bound lanes of Twelfth Avenue are separated by a landscaped median with small trees and



View of High Line along West 30th Street and trestle over West 30th Street. View east from Eleventh Avenue **5**



View of the High Line trestle over Eleventh Avenue. View north **6**

Views of the High Line in the Study Area
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Figure 9-4



View west on West 33rd Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues **7**



View southeast on Twelfth Avenue from approximately West 35th Street **8**

Views of the Study Area
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Figure 9-5



Retaining wall along West 33rd Street and Eleventh Avenue, view east from Eleventh Avenue **9**



View east on West 30th Street from Twelfth Avenue **10**

Views of the Study Area
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Figure 9-6



View north of the Convention Center from Eleventh Avenue and West 34th Street **11**



View south on Eleventh Avenue from West 34th Street **12**

Views of the Study Area
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Figure 9-7

shrubbery. Several piers line the waterfront in the study area; some have public uses, such as those owned by Hudson River Park, and some have transportation uses, such as the Heliport at West 30th Street and the New York City Police Department Tow Pound, which is located on Pier 76 at approximately West 36th Street.

Street Pattern and Hierarchy

Except for a number of superblocks, the street pattern in the study area is the typical Manhattan street grid with wide avenues running north-south and narrow cross streets running east-west. Tenth Avenue is a major one-way street with four northbound lanes of traffic and two parking lanes. North of West 34th Street, Eleventh Avenue is a wide arterial road that has two lanes running north and three lanes running south. South of West 34th Street, Eleventh Avenue becomes a one-way street with four southbound traffic lanes and two parking lanes. Twelfth Avenue (Route 9A) is a major north-south road with three lanes of traffic in either direction, divided by a landscaped median strip. All of the cross streets, except for West 34th Street, are narrow and carry one lane of traffic. West 34th Street has two lanes of traffic in each direction with a third lane in each direction reserved for cross town Select Bus Routes (SBS) routes. In the northern portion of the study area, several cross streets—West 35th, West 36th, West 37th, and West 38th Streets—do not continue west of Eleventh Avenue due to the superblock formed by the Convention Center. West 31st and West 32nd Streets are not mapped in the study area between Tenth and Twelfth Avenues due to the two superblocks occupied by the Caemmerer Rail Yard—the Development Site and the Eastern Rail Yard.

Block Form and Building Arrangement

The regular street pattern of the study area results in long, rectangular blocks, with the exception of four superblocks that contain the Development Site, Eastern Rail Yard, Convention Center, and Daily News Building. Directly east of the Development Site, the Eastern Rail Yard occupies a superblock bounded by West 30th and West 33rd Streets, between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. North of the Development Site, the Convention Center occupies a superblock bounded by West 34th and West 39th Streets and Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues. East of the Eastern Rail Yard, the Daily News Building is located on the western half of the superblock bounded by West 31st and West 33rd Streets between Ninth and Tenth Avenues, and is constructed on platforms over rail yards. South of West 30th Street, the curved alignment of Twelfth Avenue angles the western ends of the otherwise regularly shaped blocks between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues.

Building arrangements vary from attached, large warehouse, office, and commercial buildings occupying through-block lots with large footprints to smaller attached low-rise tenement, industrial, and automotive-use buildings with narrow footprints. Several buildings in the study area occupy full blocks including the Convention Center, the Starrett-Lehigh Building between West 26th and West 27th Streets and Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, the U.S. Morgan General Mail Facility between West 29th and West 30th Streets and Ninth and Tenth Avenues, and the U.S. Morgan General Mail Facility Annex between West 28th and West 29th Streets between Ninth and Tenth Avenues. The majority of buildings in the study area are built to the street line; however the Convention Center is set far back from all of its frontages to provide space for loading and visitor drop-offs. The site is enclosed by a low concrete wall on portions of its West 34th Street and Eleventh Avenue frontages. Several of the small automotive use buildings in the study area are set far back from the street to allow for vehicular storage enclosed by chain-link fencing. Several of the blocks in the study area, including the Development Site, the Eastern Rail Yard, and the blocks directly north and south of the Development Site, which are used for

vehicular or rail storage, contain one-story temporary structures located within the interior of the blocks.

Streetscape

The blocks immediately surrounding the Development Site are characterized by current and former transportation uses. The High Line, an elevated freight rail line that has not been used since the 1980s, snakes through the study area and is a unique streetscape element. From the Development Site, the High Line crosses over Eleventh Avenue at West 30th Street on a trestle and continues along the north side of the street above the Eastern Rail Yard to Tenth Avenue. Near the midblock, the High Line splits in two: a spur continues east toward Tenth Avenue, and the main line curves southward crossing over West 30th Street to run parallel to Tenth Avenue, occasionally passing through buildings, to its southern end at Gansevoort Street. The eastern spur crosses over Tenth Avenue in a double-track platform where it used to connect with the U.S. General Mail Facility. Along West 30th Street, both the eastern spur and the loop track viaduct of the High Line run above one-story brick warehouse buildings between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues (see view 5 of Figure 9-4). It is particularly visible along West 30th Street between Tenth and Twelfth Avenues where it runs over the Eastern Rail Yard and the Development Site. The southern spur of the High Line is also prominent along the cross streets south of West 30th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues (see view 13 of Figure 9-8). In the northern portion of the study area, the below-grade Amtrak railroad cut is a defining and deadening streetscape element. The rail cut splices through the study area curving east from the northeast corner of Eleventh Avenue and West 36th Street and then continuing north along the midblock between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. The rail cut is closed off from the street by both chain-link fencing and concrete walls, and results in long stretches of inactive streetwall along the midblock of the cross streets (see view 15 of Figure 9-9).

Much of the study area is defined by an inactive streetscape, due to the numerous fences and concrete walls that separate the vehicular and train storage yards from the sidewalk (see view 7 of Figure 9-5 and view 12 of Figure 9-7). The Eastern Rail Yard adds to the transportation uses and inactive streetscape of the study area. The large site, occupied by a train maintenance and storage yard, is enclosed by a concrete wall on its West 33rd Street and Tenth and Eleventh Avenue frontages; its West 30th Street frontage is bordered by the High Line and one-story vacant brick warehouse buildings beneath it (see view 5 of Figure 9-4). There are several curb cuts providing vehicular access to the site along its Tenth Avenue frontage. Overall, the largely below-grade site creates an inactive and pedestrian-unfriendly streetscape (see view 16 of Figure 9-9). The block north of the Development Site is occupied by an open-air truck storage facility, which is enclosed by a tall concrete wall on its Eleventh Avenue and West 33rd Street frontages and chain-link fencing on its Twelfth Avenue and West 34th Street frontages. The block south of the Development Site is occupied by an open-air bus storage facility, enclosed by chain-link fencing on its Twelfth Avenue, West 29th Street, and West 30th Street frontages. The next block south is occupied by an open-air storage and maintenance yard for Con Edison; the block is enclosed by chain-link fencing on its entire Twelfth Avenue and West 29th Street frontages and much of its West 28th Street frontage, and by a one- and two-story non-descript brick and concrete office building on its Eleventh Avenue and West 28th Street frontages. Several surface parking lots, which are enclosed by chain-link fencing, are located along the west side of Tenth Avenue at the northwest corner of West 34th Street and the southwest corner of West 30th Street.



View east on West 26th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues **13**



View west on West 28th Street of the New York Terminal Warehouse Company's Central Stores, left, from Eleventh Avenue **14**

Views of the Study Area
Urban Design and Visual Resources



View east on West 36th Street from Eleventh Avenue **15**



View north on Tenth Avenue from West 30th Street **16**

Views of the Study Area
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Figure 9-9

Several construction sites in the study area add to the pedestrian-unfriendly streetscape. Large construction sites for the No. 7 subway line extension occupy entire block widths on the east side of Eleventh Avenue from West 33rd to West 36th Streets. Large construction sites for new mixed-use commercial and residential buildings are also located on the west side of Tenth Avenue from West 27th to West 28th Streets and West 37th to West 38th Streets. These sites are bordered by construction fencing. The numerous concrete walls, chain-link fencing, and construction fencing throughout the study area are deadening streetscape elements that do not create attractive corridors to the Hudson River Park.

Loading and service docks and driveways related to automotive-uses and storage and warehouse buildings are also a defining streetscape feature of the study area. A prominent example is the New York Terminal Warehouse Company on the block bounded by West 27th and West 28th Streets between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, which is lined with loading docks and driveways on its West 27th Street and West 28th Street sides (see view 14 of Figure 9-8).

Street furniture in the study area generally includes standard metal streetlamps, traffic lights, fire hydrants, and poles supporting bus stop and parking signs. There are street trees in the study area along West 34th Street and Twelfth Avenue. The trees along the western side of Twelfth Avenue are especially full and dense as they are part of Hudson River Park. Small and large billboards are attached to the facades of several of the warehouse buildings in the study area. Some awnings and banners hang from the ground floors of the retail establishments, warehouses, offices, and automotive-related buildings.

Building Uses, Bulk, Height, Setback, and Density

Buildings in the study area include large institutional and warehouse structures that occupy entire through-block lots, mid-sized brick warehouses and storage buildings, and smaller automotive use buildings.

East of the Development Site, the Eastern Rail Yard, operated as a train storage and maintenance yard, contains two maintenance and office buildings that are clad in concrete and synthetic siding and one- and two-stories-in-height. These buildings are situated near the site's Tenth Avenue frontage, yet are only accessible from within the site.

The block south of the Development Site is occupied by a commercial bus and truck storage yard on the western half of the block. The eastern half of the block is occupied by several attached one- to four-story nondescript, brick and concrete manufacturing and auto-related buildings with small footprints located on Eleventh Avenue and West 29th Street. The block north of the Development Site is occupied by an open-air vehicular truck storage yard, and contains several temporary one-story structures used as offices.

North of West 34th Street, the Convention Center's large footprint occupies the majority of the superblock on which it is situated. The building has a dense, boxy form that is clad in dark glass and steel in a lattice design (see view 11 of Figure 9-7). The building has a central recessed and raised entrance on Eleventh Avenue between West 35th and West 36th Streets.

West 34th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues is lined with commercial, warehouse, and storage buildings, parking garages and lots, and construction sites. A majority of the buildings have large footprints occupying through-block lots extending north to West 35th Street on the north side of the block and south to West 33rd Street on the south side of the block. These buildings generally rise without setbacks from the lot line to their full heights, which range from two to 12 stories. The north side of the street contains four- to six-story brick and concrete

warehouse buildings on the eastern half of the block, and a large construction site occupies the east side of Eleventh Avenue between West 34th and West 35th Streets. The south side of West 34th Street contains a large construction site on the east side of Eleventh Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets, which is adjacent to a 12-story brick commercial loft building.

Southeast of the Development Site, the south side of West 30th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues contains an approximately 355-foot-tall residential building that is under construction on the corner of West 30th Street and Eleventh Avenue, a seven-story brick office building, and open-air parking lots. The residential building has a rectangular form and massing and rises to its full height after various setbacks (see view 12 of Figure 9-7). The High Line spans the length of West 30th Street on the north side of the block, and crosses over to the south side of the street in a diagonal trestle at midblock. The spur bisects and abuts buildings as it continues south parallel to Tenth Avenue. West 29th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues is characterized by storage facilities, auto-repair shops, and construction sites enclosed by chain-link fencing.

The north side of West 28th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues is characterized by low-rise parking and storage facilities and auto-repair shops. Many of the auto-repair shops along this block are set back from the sidewalk and further separated from the street by fencing. Buildings on the south side of the block are larger in scale and height; a five-story modern car dealership occupies the southeast corner of West 28th Street and Eleventh Avenue, and a six-story brick former factory building is located one lot to the east on West 28th Street.

On the west side of Eleventh Avenue, a nondescript, one- and two-story concrete building spans the entire street frontage of the avenue between West 28th and West 29th Streets and extends to the midblock of West 28th Street (see view 14 of Figure 9-8). The building has a recessed entrance on Eleventh Avenue near West 28th Street and contains Con Edison offices. A surface parking lot and maintenance yard occupies the remainder of the block.

One block south, the entire block is occupied by the New York Terminal Warehouse Company's Central Stores, which comprises 25 seven- and nine-story brick buildings of the same design. The warehouses are slightly set back from West 27th and West 28th Streets to provide room for loading docks on the ground floor (see view 14 of Figure 9-8). The façades are articulated with uniform arched window openings and terra cotta ornament. The warehouses are occupied by manufacturing and storage facilities as well as various galleries and interior design stores.

One block south, the Starrett-Lehigh Building occupies the entire block between West 26th and West 27th Streets between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues. It has a unique design with a series of setbacks, rounded corners, and horizontal bands of steel ribbon windows. The enormous building has a dominant presence on the adjacent cross streets (see view 17 of Figure 9-10). To the east of Eleventh Avenue, West 26th and West 27th Streets are lined with brick and masonry loft and warehouse buildings of various heights ranging from one to nine stories (see view 13 of Figure 9-8 and view 17 of Figure 9-10). Many of these buildings have been converted to gallery and artist studio uses.

Tenth Avenue within the study area contains a mix of four to five story brick tenement buildings on the west side of the Avenue, and taller, 6- to 18-story institutional and office buildings occupying entire street frontages on the east side of the Avenue. Such large institutional buildings like the U.S. Morgan General Mail Facility and Annex between West 28th and West 30th Streets have rectilinear forms and rise flush from the lot line. The buildings' frontages on Tenth Avenue contain louvered ground floors, loading docks, and few active uses or entrances.



View west on West 26th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues **17**



View north on Eleventh Avenue from West 27th Street **18**

Views of the Study Area
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Figure 9-10

The Daily News Building between West 31st and West 33rd Streets reaches 218 feet in height and has a unique massing, as each façade slopes down and outward to meet the lot line (see view 16 of Figure 9-9). The building is also unique for its construction over the rail yard.

New residential buildings are also under construction in the northern portion of the study area. Along the west side of Tenth Avenue between West 37th and West 38th Streets and extending to the midblock, two tall residential towers at approximately 24 and 43 stories in height are currently under construction (see view 15 of Figure 9-9). The new development is located across Tenth Avenue from a newly constructed 25 story glass and steel residential building with ground-floor retail. Along the cross streets north of West 34th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, small automotive and commercial uses occupy short one to four story attached tenement and warehouse buildings clad in brick.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

There are a number of visual resources in the study area. The most prominent views in the study area are of the Hudson River, Hudson River Park, and the New Jersey skyline. Most of the cross streets in the study area feature such views from as far east as the midblock between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues looking west toward the river (see view 7 of Figure 9-5). Views of these resources include the tall buildings and cliffs in New Jersey, the waterfront and river traffic of the Hudson River and the landscaped paths of Hudson River Park. Twelfth Avenue has more scenic views of the river along the landscaped Hudson River Park bike path and walkway, including unobstructed views of the cliffs and skyline of the New Jersey shoreline.

View corridors are created by the long and wide avenues as well as the cross streets. The Convention Center is a prominent visual resource along Eleventh Avenue in the study area (see view 11 of Figure 9-7). The building's imposing dark glass, steel frame, and cube forms are a unique architectural presence in this area of mostly low-rise warehouse, automotive-related, and tenement buildings. It is most commanding along the Eleventh Avenue view corridor between West 33rd and West 38th Streets, adjacent to the structure. Views west from Tenth Avenue on West 35th, West 36th, West 37th, and West 38th Streets are dominated by the Convention Center, as these cross streets terminate at the superblock on which the Convention Center is located. From the southern portion of the study area, south of West 33rd Street, the visual prominence of the Convention Center is slightly diminished in views north along the Eleventh Avenue view corridor due to the change in topography between West 30th and West 33rd Streets and recent high-rise residential construction on West 42nd Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues outside of the study area (see view 18 of Figure 9-10).

Prominent along both the Tenth and Eleventh Avenue view corridors and the east-west cross streets is the Daily News Building (formerly the Westyard Distribution Center), a 15-story, Brutalist-style modern office and warehouse building with sloping façades, located on the east side of Tenth Avenue between West 31st and West 33rd Streets. Due to the current lack of development on the Eastern and Western Rail Yards between West 30th and West 33rd Streets and Tenth and Twelfth Avenues, the Daily News Building's unique and massive form dominates views east along West 33rd Street in the study area (see view 9 of Figure 9-6). The building also commands north-south views along the Tenth Avenue view corridor (see view 16 of Figure 9-9). The massive Starrett-Lehigh Building, with its horizontal bands of steel ribbon windows, is visible from multiple locations within the study area; it is especially visible along the Eleventh Avenue and Twelfth Avenue north-south view corridors (see view 8 of Figure 9-5 and view 12 of Figure 9-7). The impressive historic structure is also visible on the east-west cross streets

between Tenth and Twelfth Avenues adjacent to the full block that it occupies (see view 17 of Figure 9-10). Views east within the study area along the cross streets between West 28th and West 34th Streets from as far west as Twelfth Avenue include views of the Empire State Building (see view 10 of Figure 9-6). The iconic Empire State Building is also visible outside of the street grid, due to the low-rise nature of the study area. It is seen in the distance over intervening buildings.

TENTH AVENUE SITE

PROJECT SITE

Urban Design

The Tenth Avenue Site is located between West 48th and West 49th Streets, approximately 100 feet west of Tenth Avenue, occupying the western portion of Block 1077, Lot 29 (see Figure 9-11). The project site is occupied by a railroad right-of-way for the Amtrak Empire Line located below the site. The rail line runs below the site through a deep cut, continuing to the north and south in a tunnel. Rising from the level of the tracks are jagged rock outcroppings and small trees and shrubbery on each side of the tracks. The right-of-way is separated from adjacent lots by concrete walls and fencing. Concrete wall and chain-link fencing also border the site on West 48th and West 49th Streets (see views 19 and 20 of Figure 9-12).

Visual Resources and View Corridors

There are no visual resources on the Tenth Avenue Site. There is one visual resource that can be seen from the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the project site, the Worldwide Plaza, a 50-story building located on Eighth Avenue between West 49th and West 50th Streets. The brown and white brick tower topped by a large pyramidal copper roof dominates views east on West 49th Street (see view 21 of Figure 9-13). Due to the low-rise scale of buildings fronting on Tenth Avenue, views east on West 48th and West 49th Streets adjacent to the project site contain views of the diverse skyscrapers that punctuate the skyline of Midtown Manhattan (see view 20 of Figure 9-12), in particular the modern glass and steel towers of 7 Times Square and the New York Times Building.

STUDY AREA

Topography and Natural Features

The study area is relatively flat; however the topography gradually descends on the cross streets west of Tenth Avenue towards the Hudson River. There are no natural features in the study area.

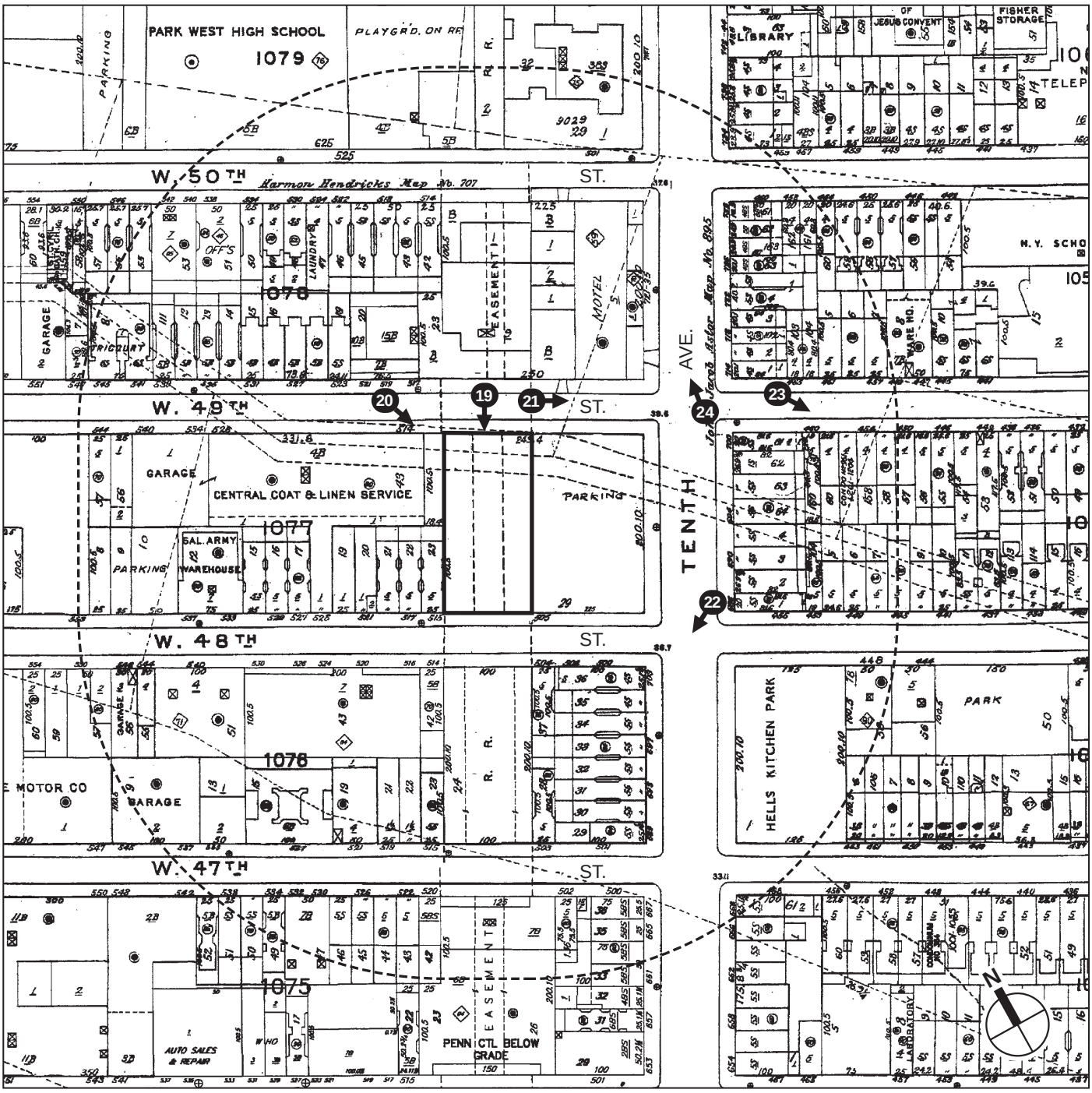
Street Pattern and Hierarchy

The study area follows the regular Manhattan street-grid with avenues running north-south and cross streets running east-west. Tenth Avenue is a wide north-bound thoroughfare with four lanes of traffic and parallel parking on both sides of the street. Cross streets in the study area are narrower and typically carry one lane of traffic.

Block Form and Building Arrangement

Block forms in the study area are rectangular and follow the Manhattan street grid pattern. Building arrangements in the study area include rows of attached four- and five-story tenements with narrow footprints fronting on Tenth Avenue and the cross streets, and larger four- to seven-

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Project Site Boundary

Study Area Boundary (400-Foot Perimeter)

19 *Photograph View Direction and Reference Number*

Tenth Avenue Site
Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area
Figure 9-11



View south of Tenth Avenue Site from West 49th Street west of Tenth Avenue **19**



View east on West 49th Street, west of Tenth Avenue **20**

Views of the Project Site and Study Area
Tenth Avenue Site
Figure 9-12



View east on West 49th Street of Worldwide Plaza **21**



View southwest on Tenth Avenue from West 48th Street **22**

Views of the Project Site and Study Area
Tenth Avenue Site
Figure 9-13

story attached apartment buildings and former warehouses and garages with larger footprints. Many of the rowhouses and small apartment buildings on the side streets are slightly set back from the lot line. Several large detached residential and institutional buildings located in the northern portion of the study area are situated on large lots and set back from the avenue and cross streets, for example, the 38-story apartment building located on the west side of Tenth Avenue between West 50th and West 51st Streets.

Streetscape

The study area is mainly residential in character with several institutional, retail, and office uses spread throughout. The tenement buildings lining Tenth Avenue have ground floor retail uses that are adorned with neon signage and awnings (see view 22 of Figure 9-13). The cross streets contain attached tenement buildings, rowhouses, and small apartment buildings, many of which are set back from the lot line behind low gates and have raised entrances.

There is one open space located within the study area—Hell's Kitchen Park—located on the east side of Tenth Avenue between West 47th and West 48th Streets. It is separated from the adjacent sidewalk by iron fencing.

Street furniture in the study area includes light poles, cobra head street lights, mail boxes, trash cans, parking meters, and bus shelters. Street trees are located throughout the study area, but are more commonly found on the cross streets east of Tenth Avenue.

There are several construction sites in the study area, which are enclosed by construction site fencing. Adjacent to the project site to the east, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Water Tunnel No. 3 construction occupies the entire west frontage of Tenth Avenue between West 48th and West 49th Streets and is enclosed by a combination of concrete wall and fencing. An additional construction site for a residential building is located on a through-block lot from West 48th to West 47th Streets west of Tenth Avenue, which is separated from the lot line by fencing. Such fencing and concrete walls create an inactive streetscape along stretches of the study area.

Building Uses, Bulk, Height, Setback, and Density

On Tenth Avenue in the study area, rows of four- to five-story brick tenement buildings that are built out to the lot line front on to the avenue, and have ground floor retail uses with residential above. The cross streets have more of a variety of residential buildings including small tenement buildings and brick and brownstone clad rowhouses (see view 23 of Figure 9-14). Some of the buildings are slightly set back from the lot line and enclosed behind low gates; others have raised stoop entrances.

Several larger residential and institutional buildings and hotels are located on the west side of Tenth Avenue in the northern portion of the study area, including the five-story motel that occupies the entire street frontage between West 49th and West 50th Streets and the 38-story glass and concrete residential tower between West 50th and West 51st Streets (see view 24 of Figure 9-14). Additionally, these two larger developments have varied setbacks. The motel has a recessed entrance with curb cuts to the parking garage near the West 49th Street corner at Tenth Avenue, and the tower is set back from the property line on Tenth Avenue and the cross streets where a concrete ramp and three sets of stairs rise to the main entrance.



View east on West 49th Street, east of Tenth Avenue **23**



View north on Tenth Avenue from West 49th Street **24**

Views of the Project Site and Study Area
Tenth Avenue Site
Figure 9-14

Visual Resources and View Corridors

There are no visual resources on the Tenth Avenue Site. Views east along the cross streets in the study area prominently feature the skyscrapers that compose the skyline of Midtown Manhattan. These include Worldwide Plaza, the New York Times Building, and 1 Times Square (see view 20 of Figure 9-12). Views east toward these buildings are further enhanced due to the low-rise scale of the residential buildings that make up most of the buildings in the study area. On the cross streets west of Tenth Avenue, views extend as far west as the Hudson River and cliffs of the New Jersey skyline. Views north and south along the Tenth Avenue view corridor extend for long stretches due to the width of the avenue and the low height of buildings fronting on the avenue within the study area; views include tall, modern, glass, and concrete residential and office buildings.

NINTH AVENUE SITE

PROJECT SITE

Urban Design

The Ninth Avenue Site occupies the westernmost portion of Block 1044, Lot 3, located on the southeast corner of Ninth Avenue and West 54th Street (see Figure 9-15). The project site is a gravel parking lot, which serves as the accessory parking lot to the adjacent six-story New York City Transit (NYCT) office building that occupies the remainder of the lot (see view 25 of Figure 9-16). The project site is enclosed by tall chain-link fencing on its West 54th Street and Ninth Avenue frontages. The lot is abutted to the south by a newly constructed seven-story glass and aluminum residential building. There are several curb cuts along the site's Ninth Avenue frontage.

Visual Resources and View Corridors

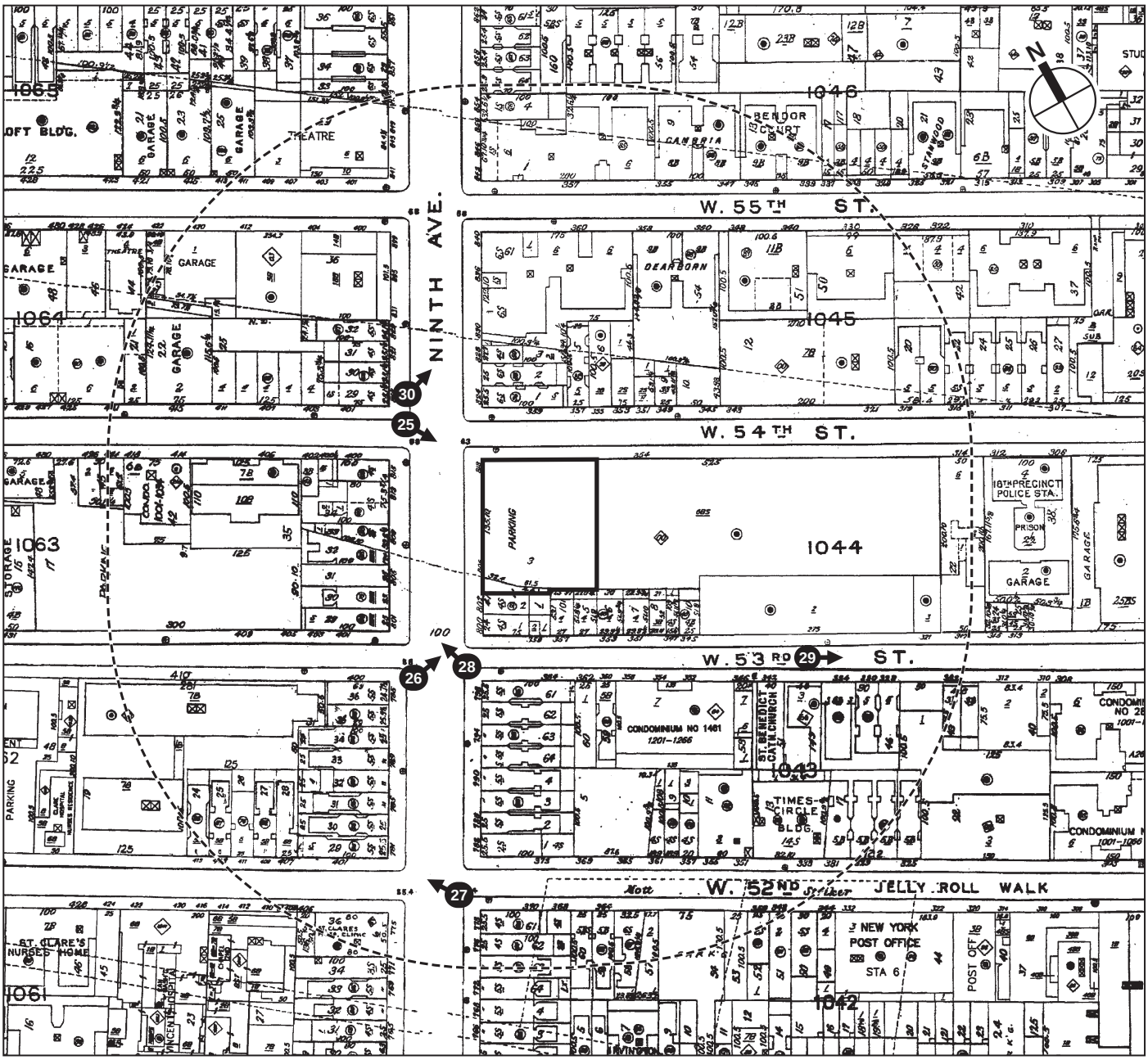
There are no visual resources on the Ninth Avenue Site. Due to the low scale of buildings fronting on Ninth Avenue, this wide view corridor offers broad expanses to the north and south. Visual resources that can be seen from the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the project site include views of the Hearst Tower and Time Warner Center to the north and Worldwide Plaza to the south. The Hearst Tower's large, dark glass panels encased in a triangulated steel frame and the two identical glass and steel towers of the Time Warner Center are dramatic and imposing visual landmarks on the skyline to the north of the study area (see view 26 of Figure 9-16). The Worldwide Plaza's brown and white brick tower with a copper-clad pyramidal crown dominates views to the south (see view 25 of Figure 9-16). Due to the lack of development on the Ninth Avenue Site, background skyline views of these visual resources are visible over the project site.

STUDY AREA

Topography and Natural Features

The topography of the Ninth Avenue Site study area has a steep downwards slope toward the river on the cross streets west of Ninth Avenue, and there is a slight descent in grade on Ninth Avenue moving from the north of the study area to the south. There are no natural resources in the Ninth Avenue Site study area.

2.27.09



Project Site Boundary

Study Area Boundary (400-Foot Perimeter)

Photograph View Direction and Reference Number

Ninth Avenue Site
Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area
Figure 9-15



View east of Ninth Avenue Site from Eleventh Avenue and West 54th Street **25**



View northeast on Ninth Avenue from West 53rd Street **26**

Views of the Project Site and Study Area
Ninth Avenue Site
Figure 9-16

Street Pattern and Hierarchy

The study area follows the Manhattan street grid with wide avenues running north-south and more narrow cross streets running east-west. Ninth Avenue is a wide south-bound road with four lanes of traffic and parallel parking on both sides of the street. The cross streets in the study area are more narrow and generally only carry one lane of traffic with parallel parking on each side of the street.

Block Form and Building Arrangement

Due to the street pattern in the study area blocks in the study area are long and rectangular. Building arrangements include rows of attached tenement buildings with narrow footprints primarily situated on the avenue, and taller, attached apartment, office, and institutional buildings with larger footprints located on the cross streets and corner lots on the avenue. On the cross streets, some of the residential buildings are slightly set back from the lot line and enclosed behind small gates; buildings on the avenue are built fully out to the lot line.

Streetscape

The Ninth Avenue Site study area is primarily residential in character with several institutional, retail, and office uses spread throughout. Rows of tenement buildings line Ninth Avenue with ground floor retail uses and residential above. Such ground-floor retail uses are adorned with neon signage and awnings. Buildings in the study area are typically built out to the lot line, forming a consistent streetwall, although some buildings are set back from the streetwall and enclosed by low iron fencing. Entrances to several of these buildings are elevated from the street level by a stoop. Entrances to some of the larger residential buildings on the cross streets are adorned with awnings and others are recessed within light-courts. Several driveways and loading bays serve to further break up the streetwall.

Street furniture in the study area includes modern light poles, cobra head street lights, mail boxes, trash cans, parking meters, and bus shelters. Street trees, although found throughout the study area, are more predominant on the cross streets. Four-foot-tall metal bollards line the front façade of the six-story office building adjacent to the project site on West 54th Street, separating the sidewalk from the street. Parking ribbons line both sides of the cross streets and the avenue.

Building Uses, Bulk, Height, Setback, and Density

Along Ninth Avenue, rows of four- to six-story tenement buildings with ground-floor retail line both sides of the avenue. Many of the brick tenements have external fire escapes attached to their front façades, decorative window lintels, and intact cornices (see view 27 of Figure 9-17). Ground floor retail uses include restaurants, delis, boutiques, and neighborhood service uses. Larger residential buildings, clad in glass and concrete or stone and brick, are located on corner lots on the avenue and along the cross streets (see view 28 of Figure 9-17). Such buildings vary in height from 6 to 18 stories. Most of these residential buildings are fully built out to the lot line; however, some have recessed entrances located within light-courts. Other residential buildings have raised entrances (see view 29 of Figure 9-18). Most of these buildings rise without setbacks from the property line.

Several institutional buildings and commercial offices of varying heights, footprints, and density are spread throughout the study area. Older institutional buildings such as the 18th Precinct Police Station at 312 West 54th Street—a four-story, heavily ornate, terra cotta and masonry building—and the St. Benedict the Moor Church at 342 West 53rd Street—a two-story brick



View west on Ninth Avenue from West 52nd Street **27**



View northwest on Ninth Avenue from West 53rd Street **28**

Views of the Project Site and Study Area
Ninth Avenue Site
Figure 9-17



View east on West 53rd Street, east of Ninth Avenue **29**



View northeast on Ninth Avenue from West 54th Street **30**

Views of the Project Site and Study Area
Ninth Avenue Site
Figure 9-18

building with a temple-front façade—have small footprints and are low-rise. Both buildings are described more fully in Chapter 8, "Historic Resources." Larger, more modern institutional buildings are also located in the study area, including the ten-story, transparent glass Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater located on the northwest corner of Ninth Avenue and West 55th Street.

Visual Resources

Due to the low height of most buildings lining Ninth Avenue in the study area, this view corridor provides ample views to the north and south. There are several visual resources located outside of the study area that are visible from within it; these include the Hearst Building and Time Warner Center, both located northeast of the study area. The unique geometric forms of the glass and steel Hearst Building and the massive identical glass towers of the Time Warner Center are prominent structures that tower above the intervening low-rise tenement buildings (see view 26 of Figure 9-16 and view 30 of Figure 9-18). Views south along the Ninth Avenue view corridor include the Worldwide Plaza (see view 26 of Figure 9-16).

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

DEVELOPMENT SITE

PROJECT SITE

In the Future without the Proposed Actions, no changes will occur on the Development Site. The Development Site will remain in use as a below-grade service, storage, and maintenance yard for the LIRR. The portion of the High Line that spans the south and west frontages of the Development Site will remain vacant and inaccessible to the public.

STUDY AREA

As described more fully in Chapter 2, "Framework for Analysis" and Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," there are several large-scale projects in the Development Site study area that are planned for completion within the urban design and visual resources study area by 2019 (see Figure 2-1 of Chapter 2, "Framework for Analysis"). These new developments will greatly alter the existing streetscape, density, and character of the study area by transforming the currently vacant, industrial, and pedestrian-unfriendly blocks with a new open space network, including a tree-lined pedestrian boulevard, and a mix of residential, commercial, and hotel uses.

Several of these new projects are located on development parcels that were analyzed as part of the 2004 *No. 7 Subway Extension — Hudson Yards Rezoning and Development Program Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement ("Hudson Yards FGEIS")*; the Hudson Yards Rezoning and Development Program rezoned the portion of the Far West Side generally from West 30th Street to West 42nd Street and from Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River. The rezoning was intended to spur medium to high-density commercial and residential development, in addition to the creation of a new open-space network through a tree-lined park and boulevard system that would connect to the Eastern Rail Yard open spaces and the new High Line Park to the south (see below).

The *Hudson Yards FGEIS* analyzed projected development sites that were previously underutilized and would be improved with mixed-use development. These projected development sites include three parcels where planned developments are expected to be completed by 2019: the Extell Development Company site, a large parcel occupying the east

frontage of Eleventh Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets, the Moinian Group development site, located one block to the north, on the east side of Eleventh Avenue between West 34th and West 35th Streets, and the Rockrose Development site located on the west side of Tenth Avenue between West 37th. The Extell Development and Moinian Group planned development projects will greatly increase the density along Eleventh Avenue with the construction of nearly 1.5 million square feet (sf) of office space and approximately 75,000 sf of retail space at each of the two sites. Additionally, the Moinian site will add approximately 360 new residential units to the area. The planned building on the Extell site will range in height from 650 to 700 feet and the planned building on the Moinian site will range in height from 900 to 1,000 feet; each tower will rise after setbacks from a podium occupying the entire building footprint. The Moinian site will be further articulated with additional setbacks at the building's crown. The two towers would face onto Hudson Park and Boulevard (see below) with their main building entrances and ground floor retail along this frontage. As mentioned above in existing conditions, two new residential towers are currently under construction on the Rockrose Development site (see view 15 of Figure 9-9). The residential development is expected to be completed in 2010 and will contain approximately 855 residential units and 65,000 sf of retail space. The towers have rectangular massing that set back from podiums, which rise flush from the lot line.

One of the most unique and visually appealing changes planned in the Hudson Yards Rezoning and Development Program is the creation of Hudson Park and Boulevard, a north-south tree-lined park and boulevard system between West 33rd and West 36th Streets between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues and a six-acre public square on the Eastern Rail Yard between West 33rd and West 30th Streets, described below. The tree-lined system will be built on platforms on top of the existing Amtrak railroad cut between West 33rd and West 36th Streets. The new open-space networks will greatly improve the streetscape of the study area by replacing inactive and inaccessible areas dominated by transportation uses with wide, open, and public tree-lined spaces.

The development of the Eastern Rail Yard, located across Eleventh Avenue from the Development Site, will greatly change the streetscape and increase the density of the study area. Currently connected below-grade to the Development Site underneath the Eleventh Avenue viaduct, the Eastern Rail Yard is a large superblock that is completely enclosed on all of its frontages by a tall concrete wall and the unused High Line viaduct structure with one-story brick warehouses underneath it. All development proposed for this site will be constructed on top of a platform over the existing rail yard. The site will be developed with five mixed-use high-rise towers and one low-rise building occupied by community facility uses. Overall, the site will contain approximately 3.5 million sf of office space, 1 million sf of retail space, nearly 2,000 residential units, 300 hotel rooms, 200,000 sf of community facility space, and up to 1,000 parking spaces. Three of the buildings on the site will be freestanding, and the other three will rise from a shared six-story, 140-foot-tall podium base. The tallest tower, located on the northeast corner of the site, would reach 800 to 900 feet in height and contain office uses. An approximately 800 to 850-foot-tall residential tower would rise along the site's Tenth Avenue frontage, and an approximately 700 to 750-foot-tall commercial office tower would be located at the southeast corner of the site; each tower would rise from the 140-foot-tall retail base that would extend along the majority of the site's Tenth Avenue frontage. At the northwest corner of the site, a freestanding, approximately 700 to 800-foot-tall mixed-use tower with residential, hotel, and retail uses would rise with setbacks in a curved massing. The two remaining towers on the site would be situated along its West 30th Street frontage. At the southwest corner of the site,

a freestanding, approximately 500 to 600-foot-tall residential tower with ground floor retail would rise from the site in a rectangular massing. Directly east, the shortest building on the site would rise without setbacks up to 150 feet in height and contain cultural and/or community uses. The six buildings would be situated on the perimeter of the site around an open space network. The site will have a total of 5.2-acres of outdoor passive open space, including a public square and public plazas. This new open space will anchor the southern end of Hudson Park and Boulevard, described above, and connect to the High Line Park to the south.

Another No Build project would reconstruct and re-grade West 33rd Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. At present West 33rd Street adjacent to the Eastern Rail Yard between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues slopes downward from the avenues to a low point located at the midblock. This low point is at an elevation approximately 11 feet below that of the avenues creating a considerable dip in the roadway. Due to the vertical clearance requirements of the platform over the site, and the grades and elevations of Hudson Park and Boulevard and the planned 34th Street Station entrance for the No. 7 subway line, West 33rd Street will be raised by as much as 12 feet above existing grade at this midblock location and connect with the existing grade at its intersections with the avenues.

The High Line Park is a planned adaptive reuse of the vacant railroad viaduct that would result in a 4.4 acre publicly accessible open space park. The park will extend approximately 1.5 miles from its southern end at Gansevoort Street north to West 30th Street. The park will offer such amenities as walkways, benches, landscaping, and kiosks, with both elevator and stair access. The park will greatly alter the urban design of the study area by adapting a currently vacant visual and historic resource into a unique publicly accessible open space. The High Line Park will have numerous access points from Gansevoort Street to West 30th Street; within the study area, an entrance will be located midblock on West 30th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues adjacent to the Eastern Rail Yard.

In the southern portion of the study area, several new mixed-use residential and commercial or hotel developments are planned for completion in the Future without the Proposed Actions. As mentioned in existing conditions, a new residential building is currently under construction by Douglaston Development on the southeast corner of West 30th Street and Eleventh Avenue across from the Development Site. This new development is anticipated to be approximately 355 feet in height, and have 365 residential units and approximately 5,000 sf of retail space. The building has a rectilinear massing with setbacks on its east, west, and north façades (see view 12 of Figure 9-7). To the east, another residential development with ground floor retail is planned midblock on West 30th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. This development will occupy two buildings; the taller of the two will rise to approximately 325 feet in height and face onto West 30th Street, and the shorter building at approximately 125 feet in height will face onto West 29th Street. Each building will rise with setbacks above the streetwall. The development will contain 368 residential units, approximately 25,000 sf of retail space, and parking. On the southwest corner of Tenth Avenue and West 30th Street a 330-foot-tall residential tower with rectangular massing is expected to be completed in the Future without the Proposed Actions. To the south, occupying the southwest corner of Tenth Avenue and West 29th Street, a mixed-use residential and hotel building will rise to approximately 300 feet after setbacks from a shorter podium base. A new mixed-use building with residential and hotel uses is planned at the northwest corner of Tenth Avenue and West 26th Street. In the midblock on the south side of West 27th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, two new developments are planned and expected to be completed by 2012. A residential building with 285 residential units and approximately 40,000 sf of retail space is to be located midblock and a building with 159

residential units and approximately 30,000 sf of retail space is to be located adjacent to the High Line. On the east side of Eleventh Avenue between West 28th and West 29th Streets, a large residential building with 600 residential units is planned by Avalon Bay Properties. The building's rectangular tower would set back from its podium on all sides and rise to approximately 280 feet in height.

Many of these new developments will alter the existing view corridors and views to visual resources in the study area. Due to the expected height and bulk of new developments, specifically those to be constructed on and north of the Eastern Rail Yard, the prominence of many visual resources as seen from within the study area will be somewhat lessened in the Future without the Proposed Actions. Views east to the Daily News Building and Empire State Building from Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues between West 30th and West 33rd Streets would be altered due to the proposed development on the Eastern Rail Yard. It is also likely that views east to the Empire State Building will be obstructed by the approximately 4.6 million square foot office tower planned by Brookfield Properties—located outside of the urban design study area—on the eastern half of the superblock between Ninth and Tenth Avenues and West 31st and West 33rd Streets adjacent to the Daily News Building. This planned development will also likely alter the visual context and prominence of the adjacent Daily News Building. Proposed developments along the east side of Eleventh Avenue, particularly on the blocks between West 33rd and West 35th Streets will alter the visual prominence of the Convention Center in views along the avenue between West 33rd and West 38th Streets. Similarly, the visual prominence of the Starrett-Lehigh Building will be lessened due to new developments planned along Eleventh Avenue between West 28th and West 35th Streets, as can already be seen with the existing construction of the 355-foot-tall residential building at the southeast corner of West 30th Street and Eleventh Avenue (see view 12 of Figure 9-7). However, in the Future without the Proposed Actions, such No Build projects are not expected to obstruct direct views of the Convention Center or the Starrett-Lehigh Building.

Overall, future developments will completely alter the urban design of the existing neighborhood, from an underutilized, mainly industrial and transportation-oriented area to one with a mix of residential, commercial, and retail uses. These new developments will also differ in bulk, height, and massing from existing development in the study area. Such new developments will greatly improve the streetscape of the study area from inactive, pedestrian-unfriendly streets to vibrant and active sidewalks further enhanced by a new open space network. Hudson Park and Boulevard and High Line Park will result in the replacement of currently unused areas occupied by transportation cuts, below-grade rail yards, and low-scale industrial buildings with unique and varied open spaces providing both active and passive uses.

TENTH AVENUE SITE

PROJECT SITE

In the Future without the Proposed Actions, the Tenth Avenue Site is expected to remain in its current condition as a railroad right-of-way for the Amtrak Empire Line.

STUDY AREA

There are four projects within the study area of the Tenth Avenue Site that are planned for completion by 2019. Two of these projects—the DEP construction of the Water Tunnel No. 3 Project and a new publicly accessible open space—are adjacent to the project site to the east.

DEP's Water Tunnel No. 3 will be constructed below-grade between West 48th and West 49th Streets along the west side of Tenth Avenue above the Amtrak rail cut. A permanent DEP easement area will be located on the southern half of this site. Upon completion of the tunnel, a new publicly accessible open space, approximately 10,000 sf in size, will be constructed on the northern half of the site. These two projects will add new uses to the study area. The tunnel will be below-grade, and, therefore, will not affect the urban design or any visual resources in the study area. That project will result in the creation of a new open space in the area.

The two other projects are new residential developments. An approximately 150-unit residential building with 90 accessory parking spaces is planned for development on a through-block lot west of the project site. Directly south of the Tenth Avenue Site, a seven-story residential building is currently under construction on a through-block lot between West 47th and West 48th Streets west of Tenth Avenue. Both projects will be similar in bulk, height, and massing to the existing attached six- to eight-story apartment buildings in the study area.

NINTH AVENUE SITE

PROJECT SITE

In the Future without the Proposed Actions, the Ninth Avenue Site is expected to remain in its current condition as a gravel parking lot.

STUDY AREA

There is one project within the study area of the Ninth Avenue Site that is expected to be completed by 2019. A seven-story residential building with approximately 40 accessory parking spaces is currently under construction on West 53rd Street west of Ninth Avenue. The building will be similar in bulk, height, and massing to the existing attached low- to mid-rise apartment buildings located in the study area.

E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS—2019

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Actions would result in the development of up to eight new mixed-use towers containing residential units, commercial space, a public school, approximately five acres of publicly accessible open space, two new roadways on axis with West 31st and West 32nd Streets, and accessory parking spaces (see Figure 9-19). These buildings would be slender towers of varying bulk, massing, and height situated around a new, expansive open space network that would physically and visually connect to the open space network on the Eastern Rail Yard to the east and the new High Line Park to the west and south, and would visually connect to the Hudson River Park to the west and southwest (see Figure 9-20). The site plan, bulk, massing, and height are subject to the provisions of the proposed rezoning, as presented in more detail in Appendix A, "Proposed Zoning Text."

DEVELOPMENT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

Topography and Natural Features

The Proposed Actions would alter the topography of the Development Site by constructing a platform on top of the site, on which the proposed buildings would be built. The minimum



Approximate Boundary of Proposed Platform

Approximate Boundary of Terra Firma Area

Development Site
Illustrative Site Plan
Figure 9-19

4.30.09



Illustrative Massing Diagram of Development Site

Figure 9-20

height of the platform is anticipated to be approximately 35 feet above ground level. The topography of the Development Site would gradually rise to the west toward Twelfth Avenue in order to increase views west of the Hudson River and Hudson River Park (see Figure 9-21). The proposed central open space would reach the highest point on the site and would provide a passive open space from which to enjoy views west and southwest of the Hudson River and Hudson River Park. The change in grade would be most noticeable on the southwest corner of the site where the grade would taper down to street level from about 45 feet to five feet through a series of sweeping hills, lawns, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant ramps, which would serve as an entry and exit point to the Development Site from Twelfth Avenue and West 30th Street (see Figure 9-22). Due the varied topography on the Development Site, the two proposed roadways on the site would also be at different grades. The change in grade would also be noticeable moving west from the central lawn, to amphitheater seating near Twelfth Avenue, and eventually to the section of the High Line along Twelfth Avenue. The total change in grade from Eleventh Avenue would be approximately 18 feet.

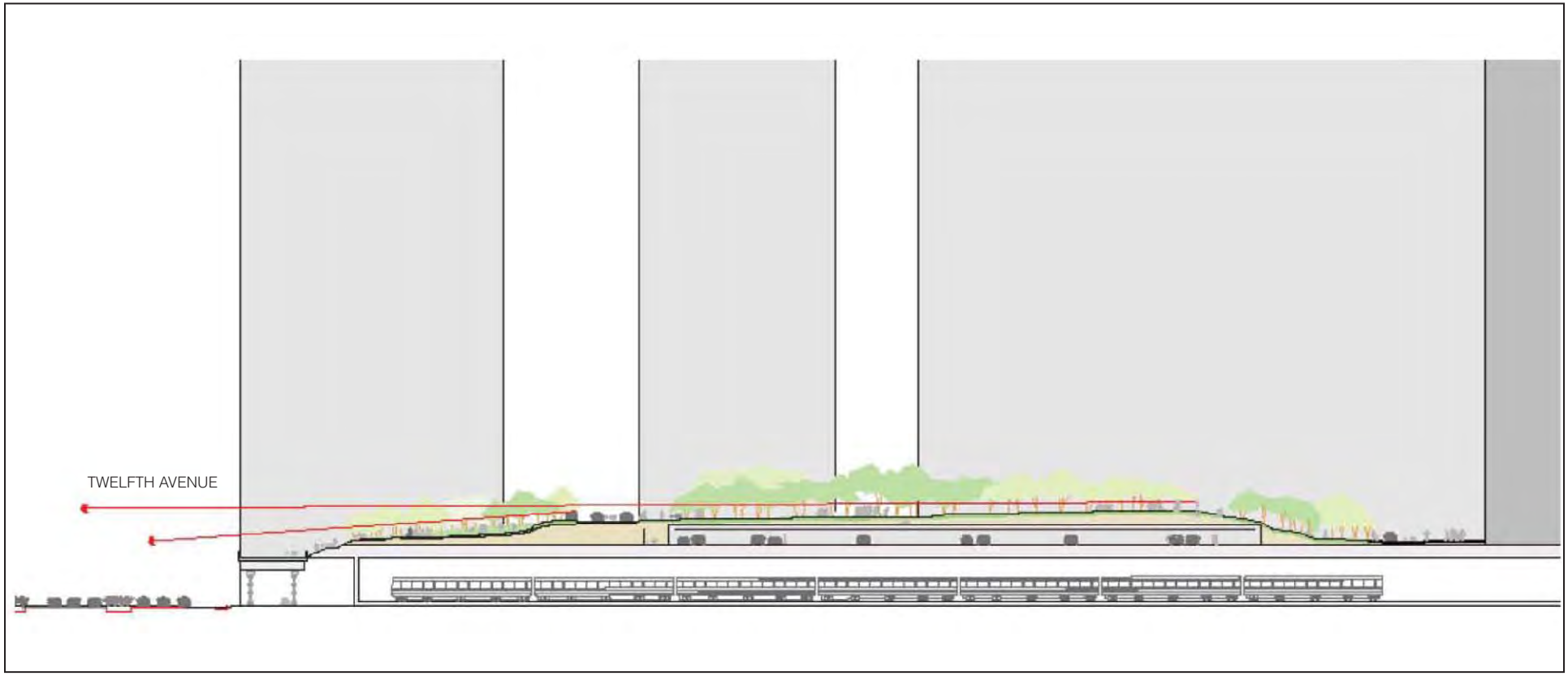
Street Pattern and Hierarchy

The Proposed Actions would alter the street pattern of the Development Site. Although the roadways on the site would not be mapped they would generally align with West 31st and West 32nd Streets further east of the site. These publicly accessible roadways would be designed with sidewalks and approximately 38-foot-wide roadways, which would terminate in cul-de-sacs near the western portion of the site. The roadways would allow vehicular drop-offs to buildings within the interior of the site, and improve pedestrian access to the site. A north-south road proposed to the far west of the site would connect these two roadways to provide emergency-only vehicular access. The two roadways would align east of Eleventh Avenue with the two new planned roadways located on the Eastern Rail Yard. It is anticipated that the two roadways would have standard granite curbs with tree-lined sidewalks, in addition to curb cuts to access the below-grade garages located underneath the residential buildings. The tree-lined sidewalks of the new east-west roadways would be subject to the following width requirements: north sidewalk of the north roadway, 25 feet; south sidewalk of the north roadway, 20 feet; north sidewalk of the south roadway, 15 feet, south sidewalk of the south roadway, 20 feet.

Block Form and Building Arrangement

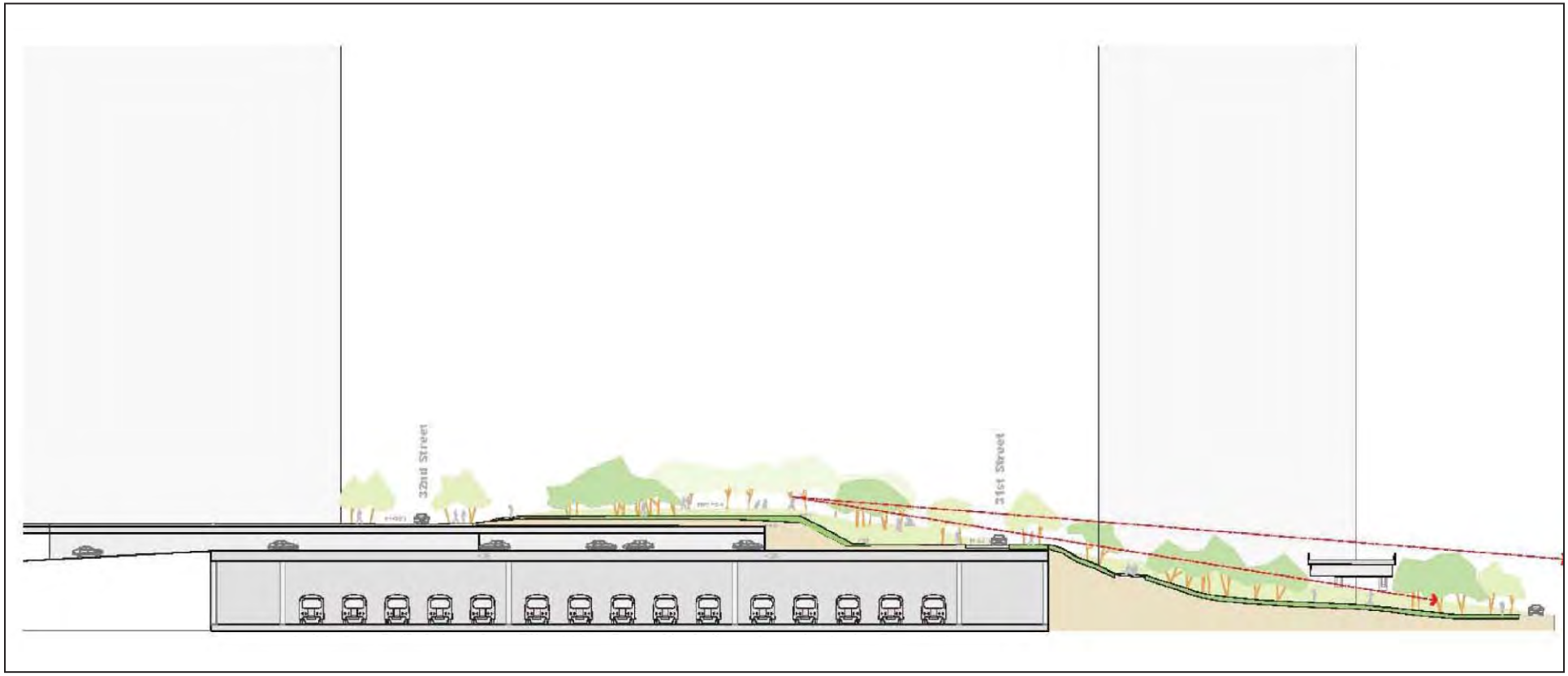
As mentioned above, the Proposed Actions would create two new east-west roadways through the Development Site, which would partially break down the scale of the superblock on which the Development Site is located.

Of the eight towers proposed, three would be situated along the West 33rd Street frontage of the Development Site, two along the West 30th Street frontage, one tower at the southwest corner of the site that would potentially bridge over the High Line, one within the interior of the site surrounded by the open space network, and one along Eleventh Avenue between buildings located on West 33rd Street and Eleventh Avenue and West 30th Street and Eleventh Avenue (see Figure 9-19). The zoning text amendments would govern building envelopes for the proposed buildings within the Development Site. Tower controls would govern the heights and dimensions of each building above the base height. Development envelope controls would establish maximum tower dimensions and maximum tower floor plate sizes. Specifically, within the commercial building in the northeast corner of the Development Site, floor plates located above 250 feet could not exceed 40,000 square feet. Within the residential buildings, the floor plates located above the tower base could not exceed 12,000 square feet. Tower top rules would



North-South Section of Development Site, View North

Figure 9-21



East-West Section of Development Site, View West

Figure 9-22

govern tower heights based on the location of a building on the Development Site, as well as its location in relation to other buildings on the site. Specific streetwall height requirements would be established for key frontages on Eleventh Avenue, West 30th and West 33rd Streets, and along the internal roadways on the north side of the northern internal roadway and the south side of the southern internal roadway.

All of the buildings would contain large footprints; it is anticipated that buildings along the perimeter of the site—WC-1, WR-2, WR-3, WR-6, and WR-7—would have rectilinear shaped footprints and buildings within the interior of the site—WR-4 and WR-5—would have less rectilinear footprints. WR-1's footprint would likely be rectilinear along Eleventh Avenue and curved along the interior of the site. Two of the eight buildings would be freestanding, and the remaining six towers would rise from podiums of varying footprint and height. All of the buildings would have entrances on the five-acre open space network located within the interior and western portion of the site.

Wind

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, also causing accelerated ground level wind speeds. Both singularly and in combination, winds that have been either downwashed 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.

Since the Proposed Actions would result in the construction of multiple large buildings close to one another at the Development Site, they have the potential to cause both downwash and channelization effects, and consequent elevated pedestrian-level wind conditions. Recognizing this potential, an assessment was completed by the firm Rowan William Davies & Irwin, Inc. (RWDI) to determine whether the Development Site was particularly susceptible to high wind speeds, and whether the Proposed Actions would result in ground-level wind speeds that would be potentially hazardous to pedestrians (see Appendix K, "Pedestrian Wind Assessment"). This was completed through:

- A comparison of wind conditions at the Development Site to other locations in Manhattan to determine if site wind conditions were significantly different than conditions elsewhere in Manhattan, and
- An assessment of the effects of the proposed buildings at the Development Site on pedestrian-level wind conditions based on the application of computational fluid dynamics (CFD) modeling to the current conceptual design.

An assessment of the potential effects of development at the Additional Housing Sites was not completed since the scale and locations of that development would not be sufficient to cause the downwash or channelization of winds to the degree that would result in significant increases in pedestrian wind levels.

In completing the assessment of potential wind effects, wind conditions at the Development Site in the Future with the Proposed Actions were compared against safety-related wind force criteria developed by the firm RWDI, which has conducted research and observations of wind patterns

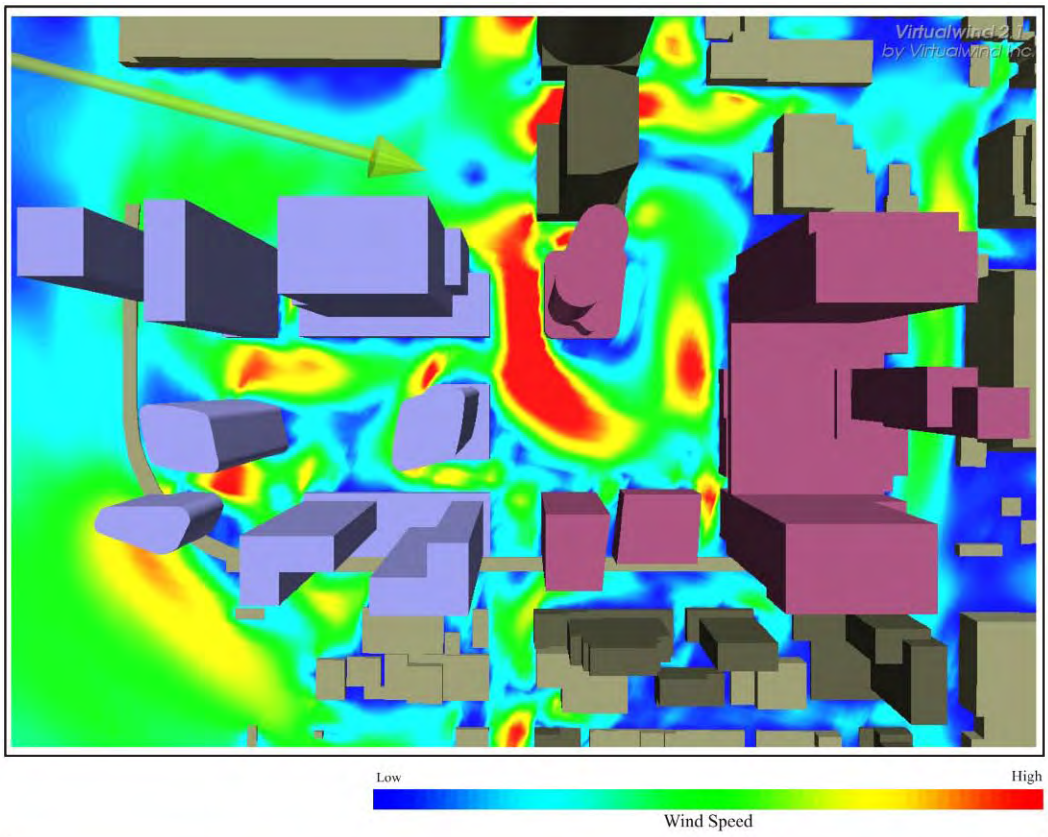
at developments throughout North America over the past 30 years. The assessment applied a 55 mile per hour (mph) wind safety criterion, since wind gusts at that level have been shown to have the potential to affect a pedestrian's balance and footing. Under this criterion, mitigation measures should be considered if winds of this magnitude could occur more than three times per year at locations where pedestrians would be expected to be present.

Existing wind conditions at the Development Site were evaluated based on wind conditions monitored at United States National Weather Service meteorological stations at John F. Kennedy, Newark and LaGuardia Airports for the period 1948 through 2005. Wind conditions were analyzed for the May through October "Summer" period and November through April "Winter" period. A review of these data indicated that winds during the Summer period were predominately from the South and Southwest, while winds during the Winter period were predominately from the West and Northwest, with winds exceeding 20 mph approximately 5 percent of the time during the Summer period and approximately 15 percent of the time during the Winter period (see Appendix K, "Pedestrian Wind Assessment"). The prevailing winds and wind conditions at the Development Site are similar to those at comparable locations in Manhattan near the Hudson River, since there are no major intervening terrain features that would change the flow of winds from the dominant wind directions affecting the Development Site.

A CFD-based model, *Virtualwind*, was used by RWDI to depict winds at the Development Site with the Proposed Action. CFD uses numerical methods and algorithms to describe the flow of fluids, including air and water, in and around structures, and has been widely applied to describe the flow of wind around buildings. In order to assess pedestrian-level wind in the Future with the Proposed Actions condition, *Virtualwind* was applied to identify areas at and near the Development Site that would be potentially subject to high pedestrian-level wind conditions, including pedestrian-level wind conditions exceeding the safety criterion. This was completed using the current conceptual-level of design for the Development Site using wind data for the period 1948 through 2005 from John F. Kennedy, Newark and LaGuardia Airports. Predictions of pedestrian-level wind conditions were completed for winds blowing from the three dominant wind directions: South, West and Northwest.

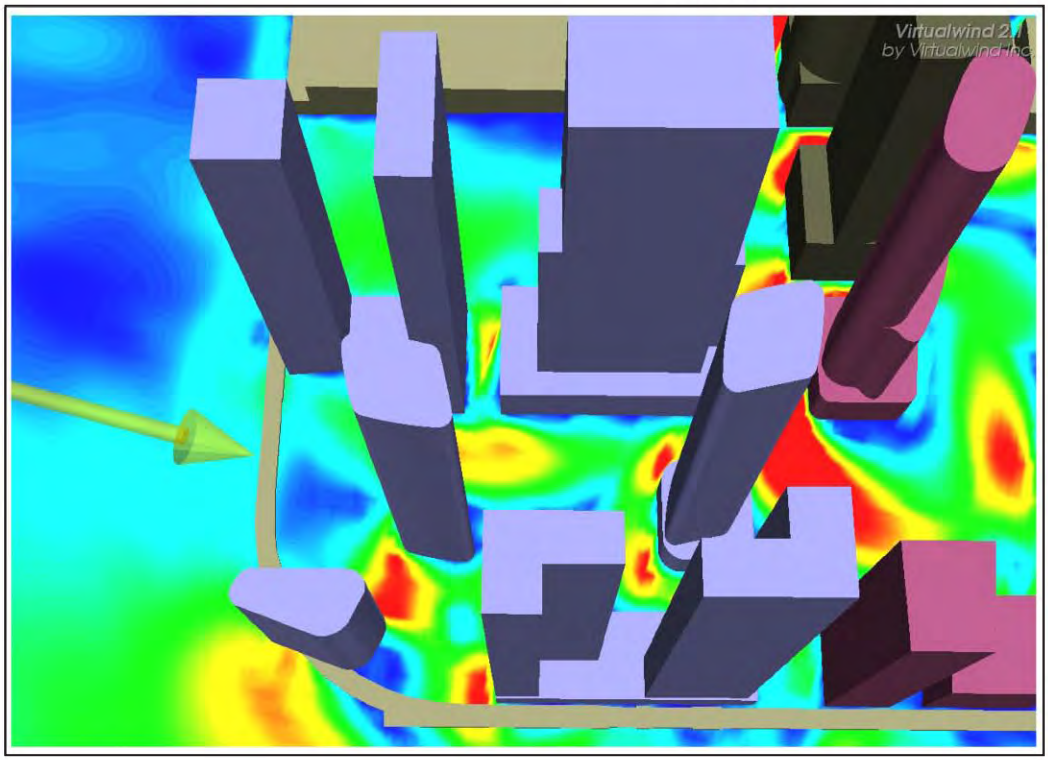
As depicted in Figures 9-23, 9-24, and 9-25, the results of this analysis indicate that there would be the potential for high pedestrian-level winds exceeding the safety criterion at several pedestrian-level locations at and near the Development Site when winds are blowing from the west and northwest (i.e., the dominant wind directions during the Winter period). These include locations between WR-4 and WR-5, locations between WR-5 and WR-6, locations to the southwest, northwest and east of WR-1, and locations to the east of WC-1, when the winds are blowing from the northwest, and locations between WR-5 and WR-6, locations between WR-6 and WR-7, locations to the north and northwest of WR-6 and WR-7, locations between WR-1 and WE-1, and locations to the east of WR-1 and WR-2, when winds are blowing from the west. No locations were identified at which the safety criterion would be exceeded when winds are blowing from the South, the dominant Summer season wind direction.

As noted above, the assessment of pedestrian-level wind effects was completed based on the current conceptual level of design of the proposed development at the Development Site. Actual effects will vary depending on the final design of the Development Site Project that would be developed under the proposed zoning amendments. A number of measures have been incorporated into the proposed zoning amendments (requirements for podiums and setbacks and minimum requirements for landscaping) and similar additional measures could be incorporated

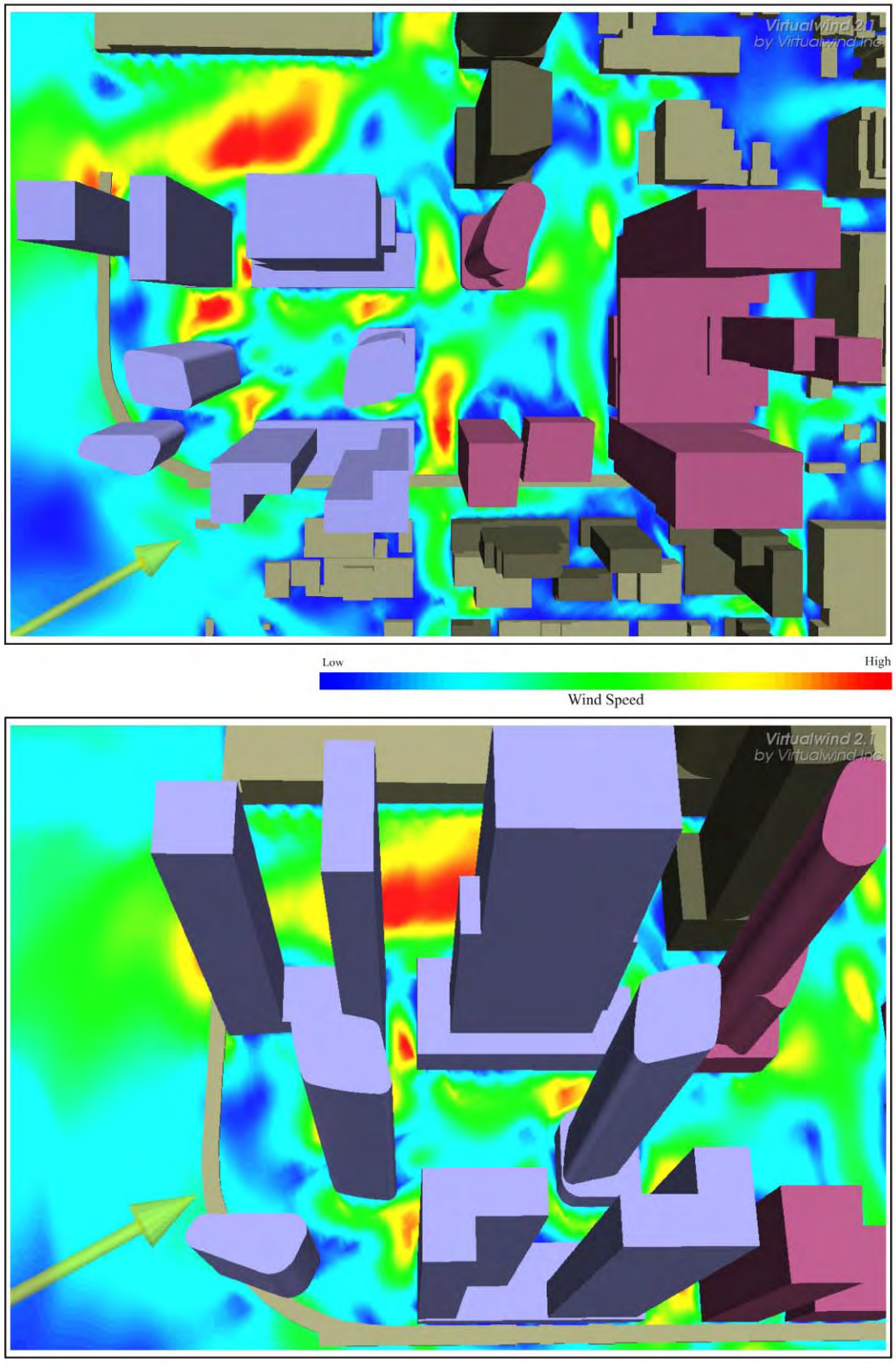


Low — High

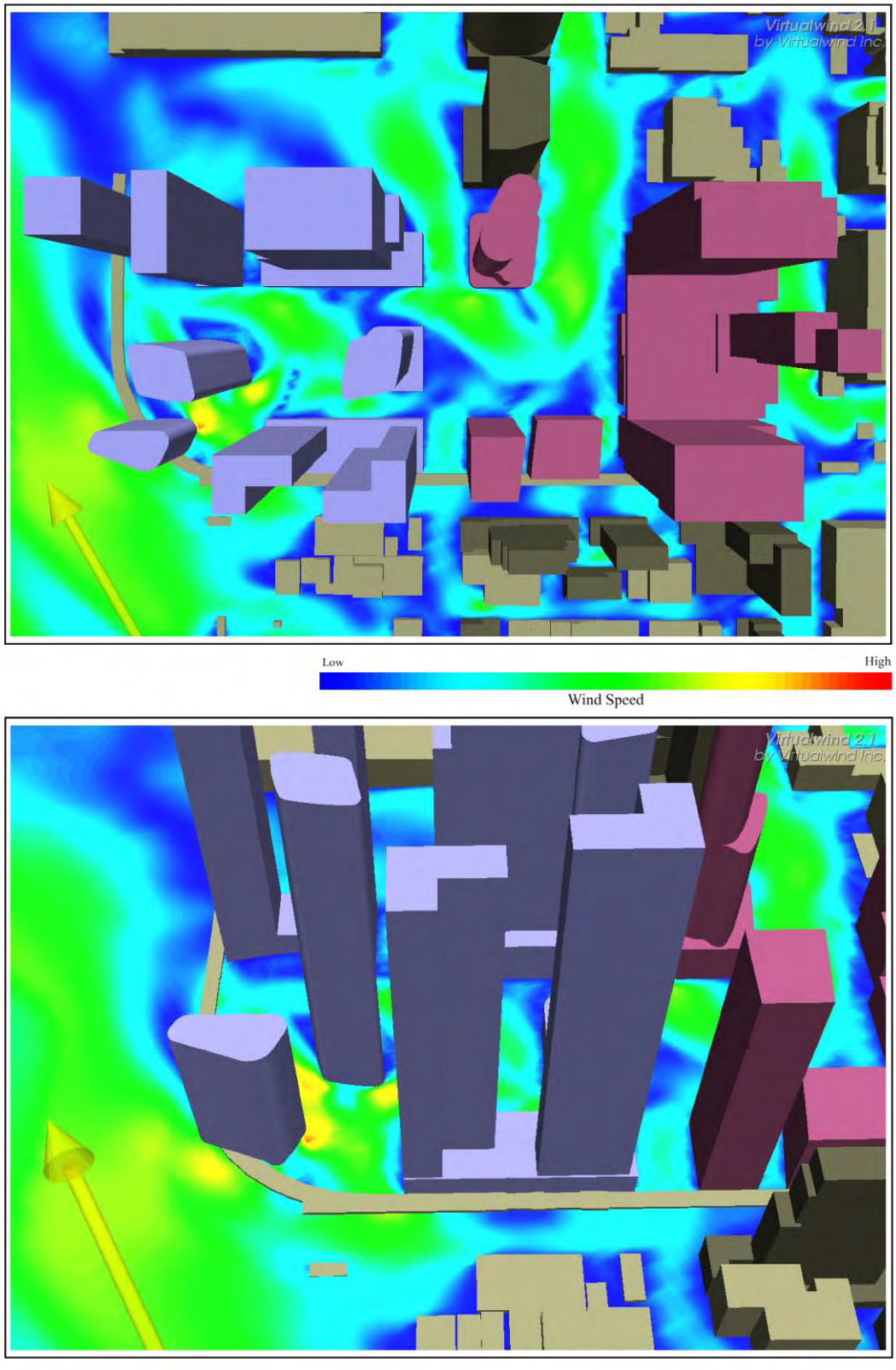
Wind Speed



Wind Simulation Results: Full-Build Configuration
Winds from the Northwest
Figure 9-23



Wind Simulation Results: Full-Build Configuration
Winds from the West
Figure 9-24



Wind Simulation Results: Full-Build Configuration
Winds from the South
Figure 9-25

into the final design of the Development Site Project that would reduce or eliminate the potential for the creation of pedestrian-level wind conditions that exceed the safety criterion. The measures recommended by RWDI include:

- The creation of a podium, a series of terraces or setbacks at one of more of the proposed buildings to intercept winds that are downwashed along the faces of the proposed structures before they reach ground level.
- Shifting one or more of the building footprints to reduce the potential channeling of winds between buildings.
- Incorporation of a chamfer or notched features along the corner of one of more of the buildings to reduce the potential for channeling of winds between buildings.
- Incorporation of one or more colonnades into the design of one or more of the buildings to deflect the flow of wind.
- Development of one or more protective canopies along walkways.
- Incorporation of one or more trellises between buildings to intercept winds that are downwashed along the faces of the proposed structures before they reach ground level.
- Incorporation of hard and soft landscaping, including wind screens and coniferous landscaping to help shelter pedestrians using sidewalks and other locations available to pedestrians near the bases of the buildings.

The extent to which these measures would be available to be incorporated into the final design of the buildings on the Development Site would have to be balanced against urban design considerations embodied in the zoning proposal for the Development Site, including the goals of maximizing views of the Hudson River and the High Line, and the encouragement of a street wall on the Development Site roadways. Measures would also have to be evaluated to determine their feasibility from a structural and engineering design, and cost considerations, including the presence of the operating LIRR rail yard.

Further assessment of the viability and effectiveness of potential wind-reduction design measures will be conducted at the time a final or near final level of architectural design is available. This assessment will be completed through application of physical (i.e., wind tunnel) modeling that reflects this higher level of design. The requirement for conducting this physical modeling would be incorporated into the Restrictive Declaration for the Development Site Project.

Given the current level of design, the level of precision of analysis possible using CFD modeling techniques, and the need to consider a broad range of factors in determining the feasibility of implementing measures to reduce or avoid wind effects into the final design of the Development Site Project, the potential exists that there may be exceedances of the wind-related safety criterion at the Development Site. However, these conditions would be similar to conditions at comparable locations in Manhattan near the Hudson River. Given this, and also taking into account the benefits of the high quality open space and maintenance of streetwalls on the Development Site, these exceedances would not result in a significant adverse impact with respect to urban design.

Streetscape

With the Proposed Actions, the streetscape of the Development Site would be improved with active uses along most of the site's street frontages. The planting of street trees along the

adjacent streets and creation of a five-acre open space network would enhance the pedestrian experience on the streets surrounding the Development Site and promote use of the site.

On Twelfth Avenue, existing curb cuts would remain on the Development Site in order to provide LIRR vehicular access to the site. Underneath the High Line, it is anticipated that louvers would span the remainder of the Twelfth Avenue frontage, excluding the southern portion at West 30th Street (see Figure 9-26). This corner of the site would be enhanced with a landscaped entry plaza that would gradually slope up from the street level towards the level of the platforms over the Development Site at approximately 48 feet through a series of ADA-compliant ramps, stairs, hills, and sloped lawns.

The site's Eleventh Avenue frontage would be improved with active ground floor retail uses, transparency requirements, and street trees. The three buildings facing onto Eleventh Avenue would be lined with retail entrances with requirements for transparency, which would result in a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly streetscape along this currently inactive and desolate street corridor.

Along West 30th Street, low-rise extensions of the shared podium of WR-2 and WR-3 would extend underneath the High Line and out to the lot line. The podium would contain ground-floor retail uses and transparent materials, as required by the proposed zoning, and would also be occupied by the proposed school. It is anticipated that the proposed school would have its main entrance on West 30th Street. Street trees lining the sidewalk would provide much needed greenery to the streetscape.

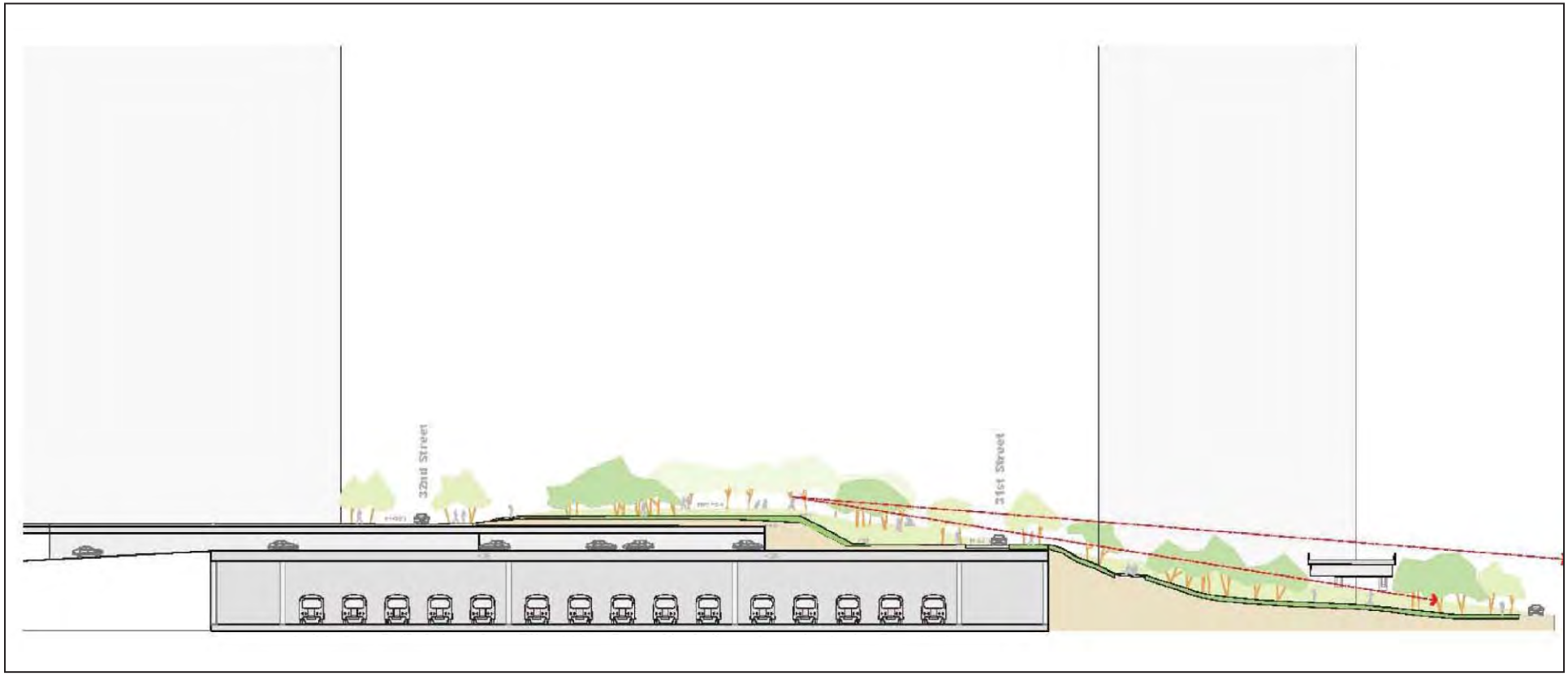
Due to the location of the LIRR facilities on site, there would be no active uses along the West 33rd Street frontage of the site. Louvers would line the site's streetwall (along the podiums of WC-1, WR-6, and WR-7), and one curb cut would be located near Eleventh Avenue to provide access to a proposed parking garage and loading dock located underneath WC-1. Located midblock in the podium of WC-1, a covered pedestrian-arcade would provide access from the street level on West 33rd Street to the Development Site. A small public plaza located on the northeast corner of the site would provide landscaped and paved areas.

The proposed open space network would be approximately five acres. Proposed zoning controls would create several zones of publicly accessible open spaces on the Development Site, into which core open space elements would be defined for each zone, as well as connection requirements among the zones. As currently conceived, the Development Site open space is anticipated to provide unique and varied spaces providing both active and passive uses. Ramps, paths, and walkways would connect the various open space areas/zones and improve pedestrian access and connectivity throughout the site. The site plan for the Development Site currently calls for an approximately 1.6-acre central open space located between the northern and southern vehicular roadways, and it is anticipated to feature a playground and lawn. The central open space would be the highest point on the Development Site, and it would provide views west and southwest across the site and above the height of the High Line to the Hudson River and Hudson River Park. North of the lawn, the site plan proposes an allée of trees located on the southern sidewalk of the roadway aligned with West 32nd Street. The allée would provide a continuous tree-lined pedestrian pathway that would extend from Eleventh Avenue to the western portion of the site. This pathway would also align across Eleventh Avenue to a similar pathway on the Eastern Rail Yard, which would continue eastward to a terminus at a north-south roadway in the center of the Eastern Rail Yard site. It is anticipated that several seating areas and plazas with cafes would be located on the Development Site in the area south of the allée of trees, surrounding buildings WR-1 and WR-5 (see Figure 9-27).



Twelfth Avenue Elevation of the Development Site, View East

Figure 9-26



East-West Section of Development Site, View West

Figure 9-27

Along the western portion of the Development Site, an approximately 1.1 acre waterfront lawn would be anchored to the north by building WR-7 and to the south by building WR-4. The lawn would allow for active and passive recreation. The lawn would descend westward toward the proposed amphitheater seating that would abut the High Line along its Twelfth Avenue frontage on the Development Site (see Figure 9-28). The amphitheater seating would provide unobstructed views of the Hudson River and Hudson River Park. Approximately 200 linear feet of the eastern railing of the High Line would be removed along its Twelfth Avenue section between WR-7 and WR-4 in order to construct the amphitheater seating and provide direct access from the High Line to the open space network on the Development Site. As discussed further in Chapter 8, "Historic Resources," measures would be taken to preserve and protect the historic integrity of the High Line. The southwest corner of the site would contain a tiered open space that would lead down from the higher grade of the roadway aligned with West 31st Street to the lower grade of the existing street level at West 30th Street and Twelfth Avenue through a series of ADA-compliant ramps, hills, and stairs. This open space area is anticipated to include a playground, seating area, plaza, and café. Two smaller open space areas would be situated along West 33rd Street, including an approximately 2,500 square foot plaza on the northeast corner of the Development Site at street level and an approximately 6,800-square-foot open space located above street level on the Development Site between WR-6 and Tower WC-1 that is anticipated to include a pedestrian plaza and a dog run.

The High Line is proposed to be integrated into the overall site plan for the Development Site as a passive open space resource and pedestrian pathway that would connect with the High Line Park to the east and south. The Proposed Actions would result in one new entrance/exit to the High Line along its Twelfth Avenue section from street level—a new ramp and stair would gradually ascend to the level of the High Line, just north of WR-4. Additionally, as mentioned above, the High Line would physically abut the proposed open space amphitheater seating along much of its Twelfth Avenue frontage. In order to preserve the visual integrity of the High Line, all buildings along West 30th Street fronting on the structure would be set back five feet from the High Line. (However, there is some ongoing preliminary discussion between the co-lead agencies and the selected developer about creating connections between some of the adjacent buildings and the track level of the High Line.) Underneath the High Line, it is anticipated that small neighborhood retail shops, residential lobby entrances, the school entrance, and curb cuts for loading and parking would line the Development Site's West 30th Street frontage.

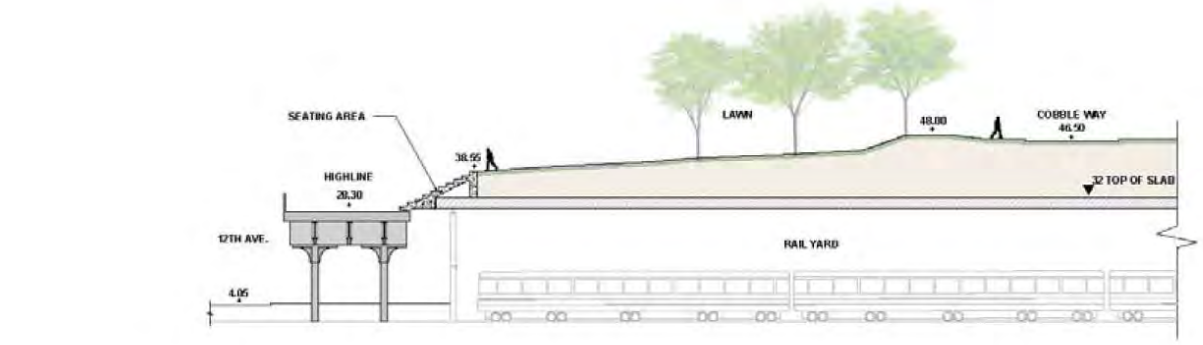
Building Uses, Bulk, Height, Setbacks, and Density

The proposed buildings would range in height from approximately 350 to 950 feet and would descend in height across the site, with the tallest tower located on the northeast corner of the site and the shortest tower on the southwest corner of the site (see Figure 9-20).

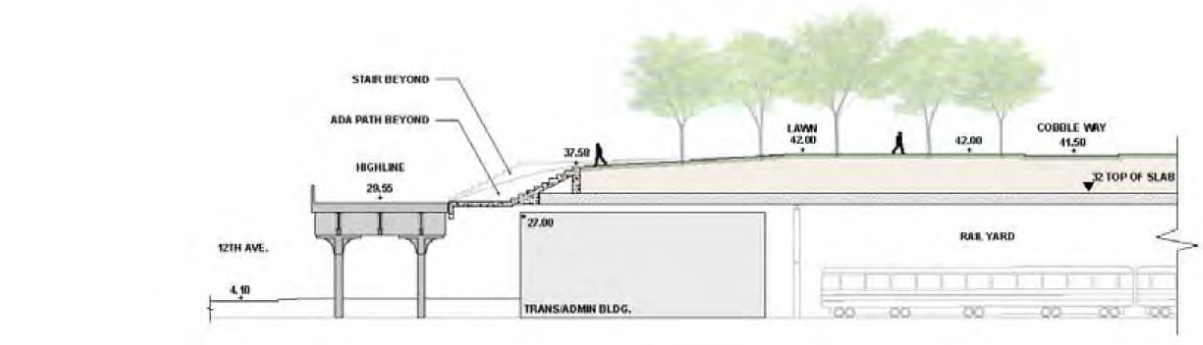
The massing of buildings along the perimeter of the site—WC-1, WR-2, WR-3, WR-7, and WR-6—would be more rectilinear in form, and have larger footprints and tower floor plates, while the massing of buildings within the interior of the site—WR-4 and WR-5—would be more sculptural to directly engage with the publicly accessible open spaces, which would surround them. WR-1, which faces onto both Eleventh Avenue and the central open space, has both types of massing along its podium base with a rectilinear edge along the Eleventh Avenue frontage and rounded corners fronting onto the open space. The massing of this building's tower, above its podium base, is sculptural in form to permit more east-west views through the site. The six buildings proposed along the perimeter of the site would rise from podiums of various heights, and the remaining two buildings would rise from the lot line without setbacks to their full



C HIGHLINE RAILING & PLANTING ZONE SECTION



D HIGHLINE & STAIR CONNECTION SECTION



E HIGHLINE & PATH CONNECTION SECTION

Proposed Connections to the High Line from the Development Site, Sections View North

Figure 9-28

heights. The Development Site would have specific streetwall height requirements for key frontages on Eleventh Avenue, West 30th and West 33rd Streets, and along the internal roadways on the north side of the northern internal roadway and the south side of the southern internal roadway.

Building WC-1, the tallest building on the Development Site, would be located on the northeast corner of the site and rise to approximately 850 to 950 feet. The building's footprint would extend west to the midblock of West 33rd Street and south to West 32nd Street. The building's podium, which would fill the footprint, would be occupied by retail, lobby, office, and other service uses. From within the center of the podium, a wide rectangular tower would be oriented parallel to the podium. Tower placement and footprint would be regulated by the proposed zoning. The podium's northeast corner would be set back from Eleventh Avenue and West 33rd Street to provide space for an approximately 2,500 sf public plaza with seating and landscaped areas. The tower would contain either office or hotel uses. Entrances to the main lobby of the building would be located on the roadway aligned with West 32nd Street just west of Eleventh Avenue. The building's ground floor lobby would extend the entire building's width. A covered pedestrian arcade would be located on the northwest corner of the building along West 33rd Street to provide midblock ADA-compliant access to the Development Site from West 33rd Street.

The adjacent tower to the west, WR-6, would rise to approximately 650 to 810 feet in height and contain residential uses. WR-7, the third tower on the West 33rd Street frontage, would rise to approximately 550 to 710 feet in height and contain residential uses. The two residential towers would be connected via a podium that would contain accessory parking. Tower WR-6 would have a rectangular form along West 33rd Street and the roadway aligned with West 32nd Street. WR-7 would have a square footprint along West 33rd Street and Twelfth Avenue. As the design of the proposed buildings progress, it is possible that WR-7 would cantilever over the High Line at the northwest corner of the site. WR-6 and WR-7 would be set apart approximately 125 feet from each other.

WR-5 would be located within the interior of the site between the two vehicular roadways and on the west side of the central open space. It is anticipated that the building would have a non-rectilinear footprint and an approximately 103-foot width from which the tower would rise flush without setbacks from the street level to its full height of approximately 500 to 700 feet. It would have residential uses with ground floor retail facing onto the publicly accessible open spaces, which surround it. Its main entrance would be accessed from the southern roadway.

WR-1, located on Eleventh Avenue and across the open space's central lawn from WR-5, would be taller than WR-5 and rise to approximately 700 to 800 feet in height from podium. The tower would be oriented toward the western façade of the podium. The podium would contain the building's ground floor retail accessed along Eleventh Avenue. The building's north and west façades would face onto public plazas with seating areas adjacent to the central lawn.

South of WR-1 and occupying the southeast corner of the Development Site, WR-2 would have frontages on Eleventh Avenue and West 30th Street. The tower would share podium with WR-3, which would occupy a rectangular footprint on Eleventh Avenue and West 30th Street. WR-2 would set back tfive feet from the High Line along its West 30th Street frontage. The two towers (WR-2 and WR-3) would rise from their shared podium with a distance of approximately 90 feet between them. WR-2 would rise to approximately 650 to 810 feet in height and WR-3 to approximately 550 to 710 feet in height. The towers would be occupied by residential uses, and the shared podium would be occupied by both ground floor retail and a 120,000 sf new public

school to be located in the base of the buildings. Access to the school would most likely be from West 30th Street; however, all of the school details will be discussed finalized by the New York City School Construction Authority.

Located on the southwest corner of the block, WR-4 would be the shortest building on the site and with a maximum permitted height of 450 feet. The building would bridge over the High Line at about 60 feet above the structure, and be supported on columns that would be located on the other side of the High Line. The building would have a rounded footprint and massing.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

The High Line, a visual resource on the Development Site, would not be adversely affected by the Proposed Actions. The structure would remain intact on the site and be adaptively reused as a passive open space. No views of this visual resource would be blocked under the Proposed Actions; instead, new views of this visual resource would be created from within the Development Site. The context of this visual resource from the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the Development Site would be altered, through the construction of tall buildings on its north and east sides. However, the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact to this visual resource, as future No Build projects will similarly alter the context of the High Line, specifically the development of the Eastern Rail Yard described above. Additionally, southeast of the Development Site, the Tenth Avenue section of the High Line runs parallel to and in between buildings of varying height and density, many of large scale and bulk, and historically the High Line ran adjacent to and through buildings. Therefore, the proposed development would not result in a significant adverse impact on this visual resource. Further, any alterations to the structure, including new stair and elevator exits and entrances, would be planned to enhance public access to and preserve the historic and visual integrity of the structure (see Chapter 8, "Historic Resources" for further detail).

Further, with the Proposed Actions, the High Line would be adaptively reused as an open space and opened up to public use. The High Line's Twelfth Avenue Section would provide unobstructed views of the city skyline to the north and south, the Hudson River and Hudson River Park to the west, and the new publicly accessible open spaces on the Development Site to the east. Views along the West 30th Street section of the High Line would be framed through Tower WR-4, which would bridge over the elevated structure at the southwest corner of the site.

Views to other visual resources would be improved and enhanced with the Proposed Actions. The Development Site's publicly accessible open spaces, including the High Line, would create new east-west view corridors. The new publicly accessible open spaces on the Development Site would provide new landscaped destinations from which to view the Hudson River and Hudson River Park. The creation of the two roadways aligned with the formerly mapped West 31st and West 32nd Streets would create new east-west view corridors which would result in new views west to the Hudson River, Hudson River Park, and New Jersey Skyline.

The Convention Center north of the site and the Starrett-Lehigh Building to the south along Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues would not be as prominent along these view corridors due to the height and scale of the eight proposed buildings on the Development Site. Existing views of these visual resources from the midblock of West 30th and West 33rd Streets over the Development Site would be obstructed with the proposed development; however, the obstruction of these views would not result in a significant adverse impact, as these views are only currently visible due to the lack of any building height or development on the site, and they are not publically accessible view corridors. Further, in the Future without the Proposed Actions, the

visual prominence of the Convention Center and Starrett-Lehigh Building along the Eleventh Avenue view corridor will be diminished due to the height and bulk of planned new developments beyond the Development Site fronting on Eleventh Avenue.

Views east on West 33rd Street of the Daily News Building will already be partially or entirely obstructed due to the development of the Eastern Rail Yard in the Future without the Proposed Actions. Views east on West 30th Street of the Empire State Building will already be partially or entirely obstructed with the development of the Brookfield Properties site on the west side of Ninth Avenue between West 31st and West 33rd Streets and the Eastern Rail Yard in the Future without the Proposed Actions. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not block views of these visual resources from west of Eleventh Avenue.

STUDY AREA

TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL FEATURES

The Proposed Actions would alter the topography of the study area. West 33rd Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues would be re-graded and raised in elevation to improve access to the Development Site from West 33rd Street. The proposed change in grade of the Development Site would also create new views through the site along the two vehicular roadways aligned with West 31st and West 32nd Streets. It would also improve views west to the Hudson River, Hudson River Park, and the New Jersey skyline. The change in topography would not result in a significant adverse impact on the topography of the study area. Further, the change in grade would be compatible with the planned No Build project to re-grade West 33rd Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. The Proposed Actions would have no effect on the two locations of natural resources in the study area—the Hudson River and Hudson River Park.

STREET PATTERN AND HIERARCHY

The Proposed Actions would improve the street pattern in the study area by creating two new east-west roadways aligned with the formerly mapped West 31st and West 32nd Streets through the Development Site. They would carry two-lanes of traffic and would be generally aligned with the two roadways planned as part of the Eastern Rail Yard No Build project on the east side of Eleventh Avenue. The new roadways would increase pedestrian and vehicular access in the study area and would partially break up the existing superblock on the Development Site by reintroducing a street grid. The extension of the roadways east of Eleventh Avenue and into the Eastern Rail Yard site would provide additional east-west connectivity between the two sites. The creation of two new east-west roadways on the Development Site would not have a significant adverse impact on the street pattern of the study area, but would, instead, provide more access to the various open space areas and retail uses located on the Development Site and facilitate better access between this site and the Eastern Rail Yard, across Eleventh Avenue.

BLOCK FORM AND BUILDING ARRANGEMENT

The Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on block forms or building arrangement in the study area. As a result of the creation of the two new roadways, described above, the block form of the Development Site would be altered. The superblock of the Development Site would be partially broken up, since the two new roadways would not fully extend west to connect with Twelfth Avenue. Since there are both regularly shaped blocks and

irregular superblocks in the study area, the irregular block form of the Development Site would not result in a significant adverse impact.

As a result of the Proposed Actions, up to eight tall buildings would be constructed on the Development Site. These structures would be set back from the adjacent streets, and front onto paved public plazas and landscaped open spaces. Buildings situated on the perimeter of the site on West 30th and West 33rd Streets would have rectangular or approximately rectangular footprints, and the buildings located within the interior of the site including WR-4, which would bridge over the High Line, would have more rounded or less-rectilinear footprints. Several of the buildings would be connected to one another via a shared podium base. The building arrangement of the proposed buildings would be in keeping with building arrangements of proposed new developments in the Future without the Proposed Actions, especially the five tall mixed-use buildings planned for construction on the Eastern Rail Yard. Other No Build projects in the study area will have large rectangular footprints. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on building arrangements in the study area, as the proposed building arrangement would be in keeping with the mix of building arrangements in the study area.

STREETSCAPE

The development of the Development Site, which is currently enclosed by concrete walls and fencing, would alter the streetscape of the study area. The provision of ground floor retail in most of the Development Site's eight buildings, and the proposed open space network would result in a lively and pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Two new roadways with tree-lined sidewalks would provide enhanced pedestrian access into the site. The adaptive reuse of the currently vacant High Line would result in a unique passive open space on the southern and western frontages of the site. The site's open spaces would include both active and passive uses including playgrounds and plazas with seating areas adjacent to retail uses. Street trees planted on the streets bordering the Development Site would add much needed greenery to the study area. Other streetscape elements of the proposed development—the location of curb cuts for service and garage entrances, breaks in the street wall, and paved plaza surfaces—would be in keeping with the urban design character of the study area. On Eleventh Avenue and West 30th Street bordering the site, active ground-floor retail uses with maximum permitted transparency glazing levels would enliven the streetscape of the study area from the currently inactive uses that line these street frontages. The required five-foot setback of the buildings from the High Line along West 30th Street would maintain its visual prominence. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on the streetscape of the study area.

BUILDING USES, BULK, HEIGHT, SETBACKS, AND DENSITY

Although the Proposed Actions would result in the development of up to eight tall buildings on the Development Site, the proposed development would be in keeping with the scale of many of the No Build projects planned for completion in the study area by 2019 in the Future without the Proposed Actions. The proposed development would be particularly similar in building use, bulk, height, density, and setback characteristics to the planned development of the Eastern Rail Yard. The eight proposed buildings, which would range in height from approximately 350 feet to 950 feet, would be similar in height to the five high-rise mixed-use towers and one low-rise building planned for development on the Eastern Rail Yard, which would range in height from approximately 500 feet to 900 feet. The massing of the buildings proposed for the Development Site would be similar to that of the buildings planned for the Eastern Rail Yard, including both

freestanding and attached buildings, in particular the tower with podium massing. Further, the buildings on the Eastern Rail Yard would be similarly set back from the adjacent streets and would front onto a series of open spaces and public plazas, which, like on the Development Site, would connect to the High Line.

The proposed development would also be similar to the height, density, and uses of other planned developments expected to be completed elsewhere in the study area by 2019, including those on the east side of Eleventh Avenue occupying entire block fronts between West 33rd and West 35th Streets—the planned 900 to 1,000-foot-tall Moinian Group development and the planned 650 to 700-foot-tall Extell Development—and smaller lots located south of the Development Site between West 28th and West 30th Streets—the 355-foot-tall residential building at the southeast corner of West 30th Street and Eleventh Avenue and the planned Avalon Bay Properties development at approximately 280 feet in height. Many of these future developments will result in tall structures fronting on the avenue; such developments will be slightly set back from the adjacent streets and generally rise to their full heights from a podium and series of setbacks. In addition, the planned Extell Development and Moinian Group sites will face onto the paved plazas and the open space system of Hudson Park and Boulevard, similar to the proposed buildings facing onto the central open space on the Development Site. Further, both buildings will rise to their full heights after setbacks from a podium base, like six of the eight proposed buildings on the Development Site. Other No Build projects located in the southern portion of the study area will have a similar podium and setback massing, similar to six of the eight proposed buildings on the Development Site; these also include the 355-foot-tall tower at the southeast corner of West 30th Street and Eleventh Avenue, and the planned Avalon Bay Properties development at approximately 280 feet in height, which will be on the east side of Eleventh Avenue between West 28th and West 29th Streets. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on the building use, bulk, height, density, and setbacks of the study area.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

The Proposed Actions would not directly block views of any visual resources or view corridors in the study area. New views of the Hudson River, Hudson River Park, and the New Jersey skyline would be created with the development of the Development Site Project through the creation of new view corridors from Eleventh Avenue along the two roadways aligned with the formerly mapped West 31st and West 32nd Streets and the adaptive reuse of the High Line. Further, these two roadways would roughly align with the two planned roadways on the Eastern Rail Yard and would result in extending views west from the publically accessible paved plazas and open space on the Eastern Rail Yard through the Development Site and to the Hudson River. The landscaped areas on the Development Site and the new open space segments of the High Line on the Development Site would provide new unobstructed views of the Hudson River, Hudson River Park, and the New Jersey skyline. Further, views west from the West 30th Street section of the High Line on the Eastern Rail Yard would be preserved and extended with the development of the Proposed Actions and the adaptive reuse of the portion of the High Line on the Development Site. Views to the Hudson River and Hudson River Park from the High Line would be framed through the proposed Tower WR-4, which would cantilever over the High Line on the southwest corner of the site.

Views north of the Convention Center and views south of the Starrett-Lehigh building from Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues would be partially obstructed due to the height, density, and scale of the proposed development. However, these resources would still be visible to the north and

south of the Development Site along these view corridors. In comparison to the Future without the Proposed Actions, the Eleventh Avenue view corridor will be further altered with the added density and height of the proposed development. However, the diminished visual prominence of visual resources along this view corridor, such as the Convention Center and Starrett-Lehigh Building, will already be less visually prominent in the Future without the Proposed Actions due to the many No Build projects planned along the east side of Eleventh Avenue between West 28th and West 36th Streets, which will add a considerable amount of bulk and density to Eleventh Avenue.

It is expected that views east on West 33rd Street of the Daily News Building and on West 30th Street of the Empire State Building would be obstructed by several No Build projects planned for completion in the Future without the Proposed Actions, such as the Extell Development and the Brookfield Properties sites. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on these visual resources.

TENTH AVENUE SITE

PROJECT SITE

As described in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the design for a building on the Tenth Avenue Site would be subject to the zoning regulations of the Special Clinton District. As a result of the Proposed Actions, an 11-story, approximately 99-foot-tall residential development with ground floor retail could be developed on the Tenth Avenue Site. The building would rise seven-stories on West 48th and West 49th Streets, and then set back 15 feet and rise an additional four stories. There would be ground floor retail uses on West 49th Street (see Figure 9-29).

The Proposed Actions would improve urban design and visual conditions on the Tenth Avenue site by covering the Amtrak cut, thus reinforcing the grid on West 49th Street, and adding a compatible residential building on the site. At 99 feet, the building would be taller than what is provided for as-of-right under existing zoning, but this height would not be substantially out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood of north Clinton. Thus, the Proposed Actions would have a beneficial effect on urban design on the project site.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

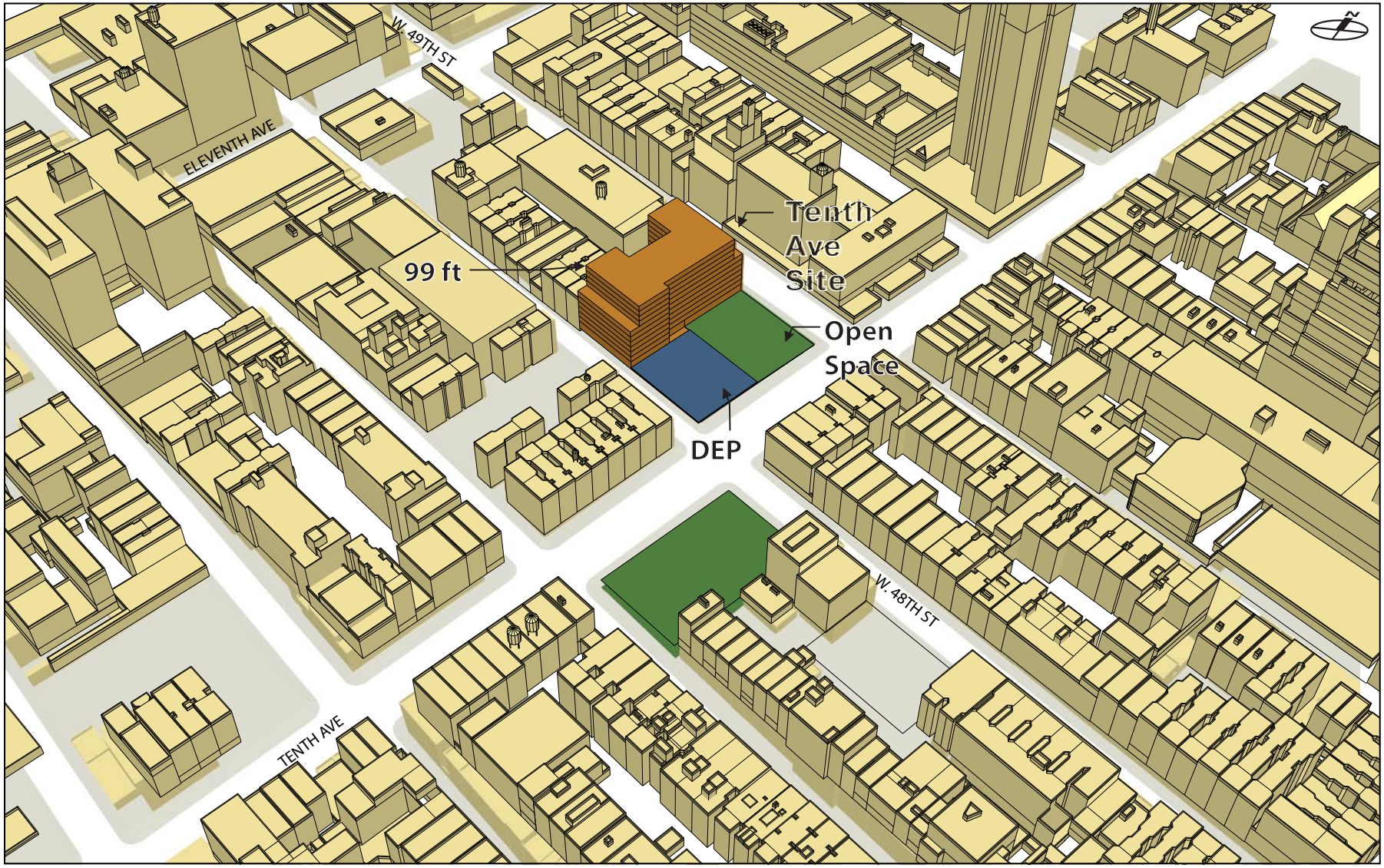
There are no visual resources on the project site. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on visual resources on the project site.

STUDY AREA

Topography and Natural Features

The Proposed Actions would raise the grade of the Tenth Avenue site from the bottom of the rail cut to street level. This change in topography would remove the current gap in the built form on West 48th and West 49th Streets and improve urban design conditions. There are no natural features on the project site. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on topography or natural features in the study area.

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Tenth Avenue Site
Massing Model - Looking North
Figure 9-29

Block Form, Street Pattern, and Hierarchy

Since the proposed building would be constructed on an existing block, it would maintain the existing block forms, street pattern and street hierarchy of the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on these urban design features. By filling in the gap created by the Amtrak rail cut, the proposed building would reinforce the street grid and block form and would improve urban design conditions in the areas adjacent to the project site.

Building Arrangement

The building arrangement of the proposed development at the Tenth Avenue Site would be in keeping with existing arrangements in the study area. The building would abut adjacent buildings to the west, and would be set back on its Tenth Avenue façade behind an open space and the DEP easement area. The majority of buildings in the study area are low-rise attached buildings, and several of the larger footprint buildings are set back from adjacent streets and the avenue, like the 38-story glass and concrete residential tower to the north between West 50th and West 51st Streets. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on this urban design feature.

Streetscape

The proposed development at the Tenth Avenue Site would cover an open rail cut bordered by a concrete wall and chain link fencing with a residential building with ground floor retail. This new building would meet the existing streetwalls of the existing buildings adjacent to the west and would improve the streetscape. Overall, the Proposed Actions would improve the streetscape on West 49th Street in the study area.

Building Uses, Bulk, Height, Setbacks, and Density

The proposed development at the Tenth Avenue Site would be similar in use, bulk, height, setbacks, and density of other buildings in the study area. The residential building with ground floor retail would be in keeping with the uses found throughout the study area. The building's height would be shorter than the taller buildings located north of the project site. The building's bulk and setbacks would also be similar to the massing of other buildings in the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on the building use, bulk, height, setbacks, and density of the study area.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

Since the proposed development at the Tenth Avenue Site would be built on an existing block and lot, it would not result in the direct obstruction of any visual resources. Similarly, the proposed residential building would not alter any view corridors. Views east over the project site of the diverse skyline of Midtown Manhattan would be partially obstructed; however, these buildings would still be visible on the cross streets adjacent to the project site, in addition to other east-west view corridors in the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on visual resources or view corridors in the study area.

NINTH AVENUE SITE

PROJECT SITE

The design for a building on the Ninth Avenue Site would be subject to the existing zoning regulations in the Preservation Area of the Special Clinton District. The Proposed Actions assume that a 12-story, approximately 115-foot-tall building along Ninth Avenue—with a six-story, approximately 66-foot-tall portion in the midblock—with residential, ground floor retail, and NYCT office and parking uses would be developed on the Ninth Avenue Site. The building would be contiguous to the adjacent six-story building to the east and the seven-story building to the south. The building's rectangular footprint would occupy the entire corner of the lot. The building would rise six stories from the lot line, and then set back on its north, east, and west frontages and rise an additional six stories (see Figure 9-30). The building's first floor would be occupied by retail and NYCT office space, the second floor would be occupied by NYCT office space, and the remainder of the building would be residential. The development would also allow for NYCT below-grade parking for approximately 15 emergency vehicles.

This active mixed-use development would replace a gravel parking lot on the project site. Overall, the Proposed Actions would improve visual conditions at the Ninth Avenue Site.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

As described above, there are no visual resources on the project site. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on visual resources on the project site.

STUDY AREA

Topography and Natural Features

The proposed development at the Ninth Avenue Site would have no effect on the study area topography, and as mentioned above, there are no natural features in the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on these urban design features.

Block Form, Street Pattern and Hierarchy

Since the proposed development would be constructed on an existing block, it would maintain the existing block forms, street pattern and street hierarchy of the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on these urban design features.

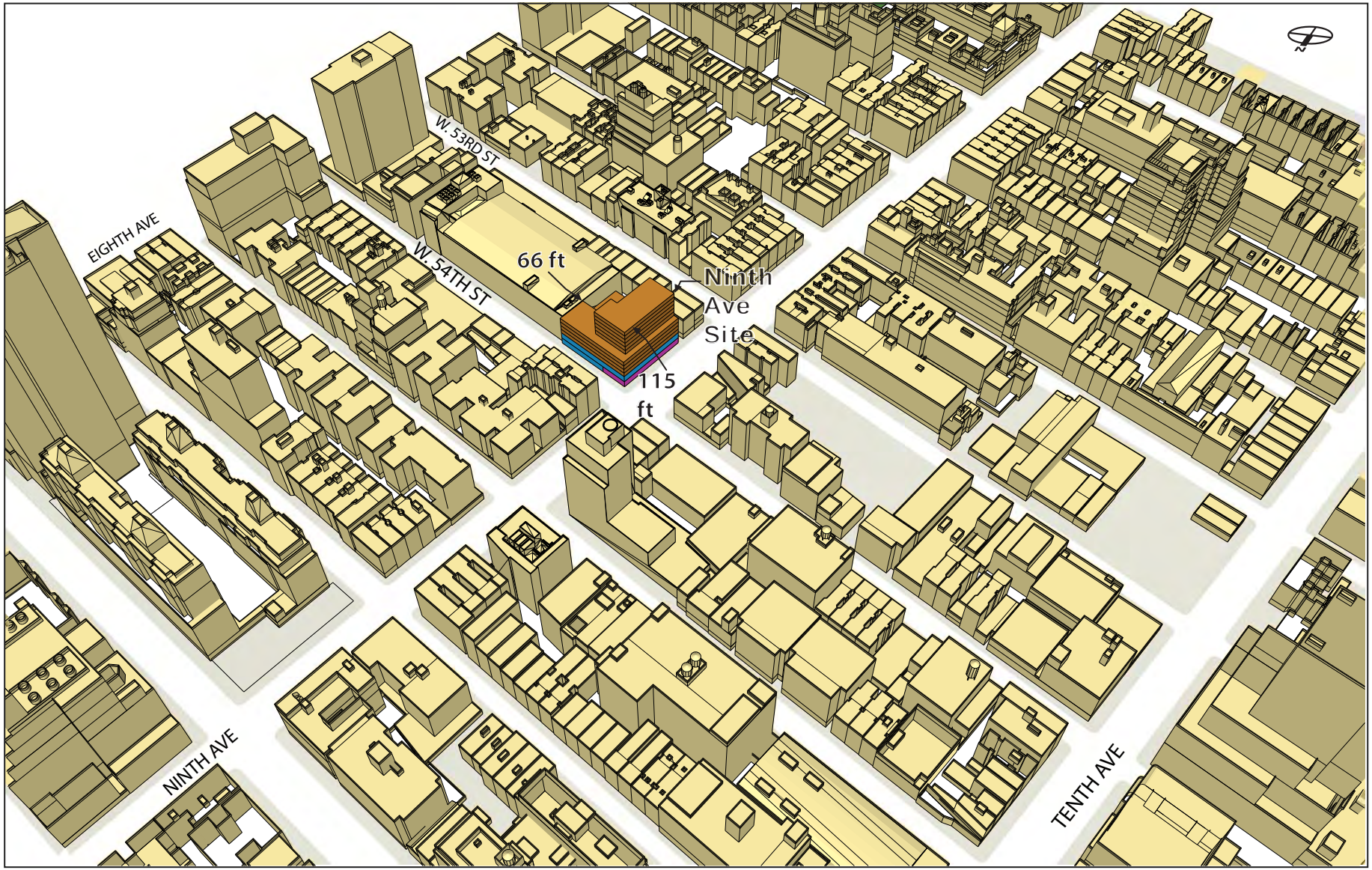
Building Arrangement

The proposed building arrangement would be in keeping with building arrangements in the study area, where there are numerous attached buildings that are built out to the lot line and have rectangular footprints. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on this urban design feature.

Streetscape

The replacement of a parking lot with a residential building would improve the streetscape, and the ground floor retail uses would be in keeping with the commercial character of the avenue. The six-story base of the building would continue the streetwall of the block, as it would abut the six-story office building to the east and a seven-story residential building to the south. Therefore,

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Ninth Avenue Site
Massing Model - Looking South
Figure 9-30

the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on the streetscape of the study area.

Building Uses, Bulk, Height, Setbacks, and Density

The proposed building would be in keeping with the use, bulk, height, setbacks, and density of other buildings in the study area. At 12 stories, the residential and office building would be comparable to other residential buildings in the study area that range from six to 18 stories. The building's massing would be similar to other study area buildings, which both rise flush from the lot line and are set back above the base, from which point they rise to their full height. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have a significant adverse impact on the building use, bulk, height, setbacks, and density of the study area.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

The proposed building at the Ninth Avenue Site would not have a significant adverse impact on visual resources. Since the proposed building would be constructed on an existing block and lot with setbacks, the building would not alter any existing view corridors. The proposed building could partially obstruct background skyline views along Ninth Avenue of three visual resources located outside of the study area—the Time Warner Center and Hearst Building to the north and Worldwide Plaza to the south, as views to these visual resources are visible over the project site. However, these visual resources would still be prominently visible along the Ninth Avenue view corridor and east-west cross streets in the study area.

F. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS—2017

As described in Chapter 2, "Framework for Analysis," for analysis purposes, the interim year of development of the Proposed Actions is 2017. By 2017, construction on the Development Site is anticipated to be complete for the three buildings closest to Eleventh Avenue, the central open space area, and a plaza located at the northwest corner of the site. The mixture of building types and form that would be developed on the Development Site as a result of the Proposed Actions would be the same for the interim Future with the Proposed Actions condition as the full Future with the Proposed Actions condition.

Given (1) the similarity of uses between the interim and full Build years; (2) the interim year would have a smaller amount of development; and (3) that the full Future with the Proposed Actions condition concludes that the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on urban design or visual resources, this analysis concludes that the Proposed Actions would not create a significant adverse impact on urban design and visual resources in the interim Future with the Proposed Actions condition. ✷