Chapter 18: Neighborhood Character

18.1 Introduction

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

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) is proposing a series of land use actions, including zoning map amendments, zoning text amendments (including mapping a special purpose district and designating a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area), and changes to the City Map (collectively, the "Proposed Actions"), that would facilitate the implementation of a multi-year planning study conducted in the Parkchester, Van Nest, and Morris Park neighborhoods of the Bronx in partnership with local stakeholders, City agencies, and the Metropolitan Transportation authority (MTA). The Proposed Actions would affect an approximately 46-block area primarily along main corridors – East Tremont Avenue, White Plains Road, Bronxdale Avenue, Eastchester Road, and Stillwell Avenue, located near the future Parkchester/Van Nest and Morris Park Metro-North Stations in Bronx Community Districts 9, 10, and 11 (the "Affected Area"). The 28-block area closest to the future Parkchester/Van Nest Station is generally bounded by Baker Avenue and Van Nest Avenue to the north, Silver Street to the east, East Tremont Avenue to the south, and St. Lawrence Avenue to the west. The approximately 18-block area closest to the future Morris Park Station is generally bounded by Pelham Parkway to the north, Marconi Street to the east, Williamsbridge Road to the south, and Tenbroeck Avenue to the west. The Proposed Actions are intended to leverage new planned Metro-North

service to promote economic growth, facilitate the development of housing, including affordable housing, as well as guide investment in the public realm around stations to improve pedestrian safety and comfort.

In the 2033 Reasonable Worst-Case Development Scenario (RWCDS), the Proposed Actions would facilitate the incremental development of 7,474 dwelling units (DUs), including 1,902 affordable DUs;[1] 1,231,973 square feet (sf) of commercial uses; 1,290,628 sf of community facility uses; and 3,765 accessory parking spaces; as well as a net reduction of 405,096 sf of industrial uses on the 60 identified projected development sites (compared to the No-Action condition).

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

18.2 Principal Conclusions

The Proposed Actions would alter neighborhood character in the primary study area and to some extent the secondary area but would not result in any significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character. Development facilitated by the Proposed Actions would re-orient the community towards the corridor and future Parkchester/Van Nest and Morris Park Station Areas. The Proposed Actions would enable improved connectivity to the planned stations from the surrounding neighborhoods through the implementation of comprehensive streetscape improvements, including revising the street alignment to allow for wider sidewalks and pedestrian safety elements, as well as upgrading currently difficult and dangerous crossings, improving circulation, and enhancing the pedestrian experience in and around the proposed new transit stations and surrounding neighborhoods. These improvements would change the primary study area from a transitional border area between several neighborhoods, primarily defined by industrial uses near the existing railroad right-of-way (ROW), to an area that draws together several types of varying neighborhoods to two mixed-use, pedestrian-focused neighborhoods centered on transit access.

In the No-Action condition, development is expected to occur in a piecemeal manner and without the benefit of a comprehensive plan to coordinate appropriate densities and urban design controls across the neighborhood. In contrast, the Proposed Actions would provide for sufficient predictability, flexibility, and variety for building envelopes that account for the unique conditions in the study area with appropriate transitions between low- and medium-density adjacencies and the promotion of residential and economic development. While the character of this area of the Bronx has changed throughout the years and will continue to change with or without the Proposed Actions, the Proposed Actions would encourage predictable development patterns that meet current housing needs and accommodate the

[1] For CEQR analysis purposes, "affordable" refers to residential units set aside for households earning 80 percent or below of the Area Median Income (AMI).

growth of the Morris Park area as an economic hub of the Bronx, facilitated by commercial, life sciences, and medical development.

The Proposed Actions would result in several adverse impacts related to community facilities, open space, shadows, historic and cultural resources, and transportation. However, none of these impacts, on their own or in tandem with one another would result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character. Rather the Proposed Actions would serve to enhance neighborhood character, allowing for a gradual transition of the primary study area from an interstitial industrial area to a mixed-use, pedestrian-focused neighborhood anchored by two new Metro-North Stations. These changes would be considerate of the surrounding context of the secondary study area, allowing for contextual development based on the primary study area's surroundings, thereby permitting greater connectivity between neighborhoods while also preserving the defining features of each neighborhood. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.

18.3 Methodology

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

A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in other technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The preliminary assessment first identifies the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and then evaluates whether the proposed project or action has the potential to affect those defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the relevant technical areas. The key elements that define neighborhood character, and their relationships to one another, forms the basis of determining impact significance; in general, the more uniform and consistent the existing neighborhood context, the more sensitive it is to change. A neighborhood that has a more varied context is typically able to tolerate greater change without experiencing significant impacts. If there is no potential for the proposed project or action to affect the defining features of neighborhood character, a detailed assessment is not warranted.

STUDY AREA

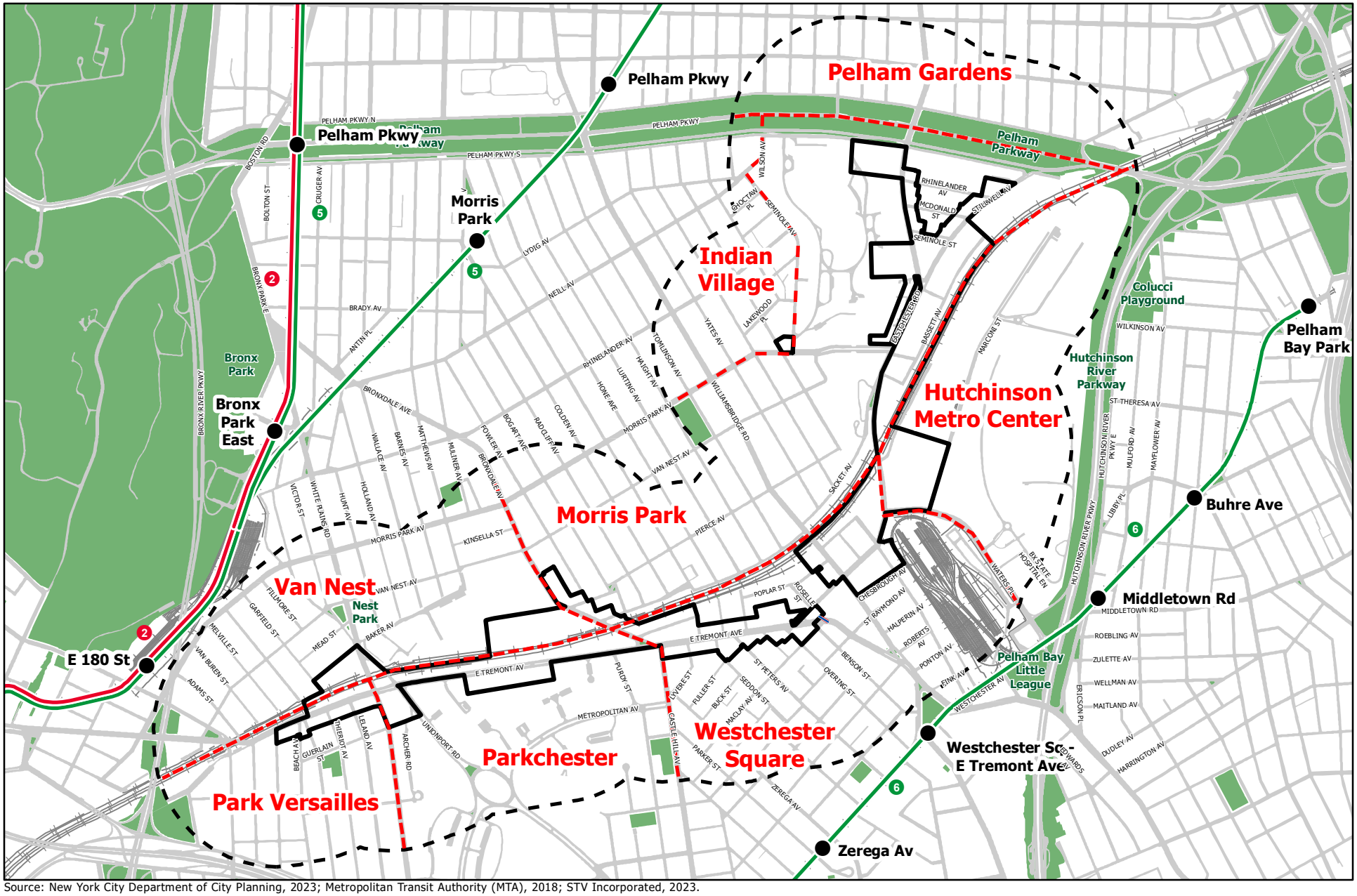
Per the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study area for a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character is typically consistent with the study areas in the relevant technical areas assessed per the *CEQR Technical Manual* that contribute to the defining features of the neighborhood. In the context of an area-wide rezoning such as the one envisioned by the Proposed Actions, the study area boundaries of the preliminary assessment of neighborhood character are generally coterminous with those used in the analyses of land use and urban design. As shown on Figure 18-1, "Study Area Neighborhoods," the study area for the assessment of neighborhood character comprises an area within a quarter-mile radius of the Affected Area.

Primary Study Area

This chapter identified a primary study area and secondary study area; the primary study area consists of the Affected Area, an approximately 46-block area primarily along main corridors – East Tremont Avenue, White Plains Road, Bronxdale Avenue, Eastchester Road, and Stillwell Avenue, located near the future Parkchester/Van Nest and Morris Park Metro-North Stations in Bronx Community Districts 9, 10, and 11. The 28-block area closest to the future Parkchester/Van Nest Station is generally bounded by Baker Avenue and Van Nest Avenue to the north, Silver Street to the east, East Tremont Avenue to the south, and St. Lawrence Avenue to the west. The approximately 18-block area closest to the future Morris Park Station is generally bounded by Pelham Parkway to the north, Marconi Street to the east, Williamsbridge Road to the south, and Tenbroeck Avenue to the west.

Secondary Study Area

As shown in Figure 18-1, "Study Area Neighborhoods," the secondary study area for the assessment of neighborhood character is generally defined as the area within a quarter-mile radius of the Affected Area. It is generally bound by Morris Park and Astor Avenues to the north, the Hutchinson River Parkway to the east, the Cross-Bronx Expressway and Westchester Avenue to the south, and the Bronx River Parkway to the west. Neighborhoods within the secondary study area include Pelham Gardens, Indian Village, Hutchinson Metro Center, Morris Park, Westchester Square, Van Nest, Parkchester, and Park Versailles.



Source: New York City Department of City Planning, 2023; Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), 2018; STV Incorporated, 2023.

N

0 0.25 0.5 Mile

Primary Study Area/Affected Area

1/4-Mile Secondary Study Area

Study Area Neighborhoods

Bronx Metro-North Station Study

Figure 18-1

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER STUDY AREA NEIGHBORHOODS

18.4 Preliminary Assessment

AFFECTED AREA/PRIMARY STUDY AREA

The Affected Area is largely a non-residential area centered around an existing railroad right-of-way (ROW) with a predominance of medical facilities (ex. NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi and Montefiore/Einstein medical campuses), commercial development, and various industrial and manufacturing facilities (ex. autobody and repair shops). Residential uses are scattered throughout the Affected Area, but not in a manner that constitutes a residential neighborhood. As such, the Affected Area functions as a border and transitional area between several neighborhoods of varying contexts. The defining features throughout the Affected Area include the existing railroad ROW and low-scale auto-related and industrial businesses. Specific to the northern portion of the Affected Area ("Morris Park Station Area") additional defining features include various medical campuses on large blocks, and the commercial Hutchinson Metro Center and views of the Pelham Parkway (both located in the secondary study area). Specific to the southern portion of the Affected Area ("Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area") additional defining features include three properties (2000 East Tremont Avenue, 14 Metropolitan Oval, and 2040 East Tremont Avenue,) that are contributing elements to the Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, which is eligible for listing in the State/National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR-eligible), as well as views toward other portions of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District in the secondary study area. A further description of the Affected Area by neighborhood subarea is provided following.

Morris Park Station Area

The defining features of the Morris Park Station Area are the existing railroad ROW, low-scale auto-related and industrial businesses, medical campuses on large blocks, the commercial Hutchinson Metro Center, and views toward Pelham Parkway in the secondary study area.

The existing railroad ROW runs northeast to southwest immediately adjacent and east of Bassett Avenue, passes over Eastchester Avenue, turning slightly westward and passing beneath Williamsbridge Road in the Morris Park Station Area. Low-scale auto-related and industrial businesses tend to be located in the areas closest to the existing ROW, especially along Bassett Avenue. These businesses are predominantly low-rise (one- to two story) buildings with some accessory parking and/or outdoor storage areas. Similar patterns of development are also present along Stillwell Avenue and some areas along Eastchester Road. Further, low-rise commercial businesses, including a deli, a McDonald's, and a Starbucks, are located along Eastchester Road.

Medical campuses and offices are located throughout the Morris Park Station Area. The Jacobi Medical Center Campus is a large-block medical campus that defines the northern portion of the Morris Park Station Area along Eastchester Road. Portions of the Jacobi Medical Center Campus are located within the Affected Area or are located immediately adjacent. Calvary Hospital is located within the Morris Park Station Area near the intersection of Bassett Avenue and Eastchester Road. Further, several medical

offices and buildings associated with Montefiore Medical Center are located along Eastchester Road, Poplar Street, and Jarrett Place.

Hutchinson Metro Center is a commercial and office park that is partially located within the Morris Park Station Area along Marconi Street and Waters Place. The portion of the Hutchinson Metro Center that is located within the Morris Park Station Area comprises a former supermarket and a medical testing center.

Pelham Parkway, an open space located within the Secondary Study Area, can be seen when looking north from Eastchester Avenue and Stillwell Avenue in the northern portion of the Affected Area.

In addition to the defining features of the neighborhood, scattered residential buildings are located throughout the Morris Park Station Area. Notably, there is a six-story apartment building on Eastchester Road between Rhinelander Avenue and McDonald Street, as well as several residential buildings along or near Stillwell Avenue.

Overall, the Morris Park Station Area is defined by its predominance of medical facilities and low-rise industrial and commercial businesses that border the existing railroad ROW. Views are afforded of the Pelham Parkway in the northern portions of the area and scattered residences are present throughout. The Morris Park Station Area functions as a border area between the more residential neighborhoods of Indian Village and Morris Park to the west and the more commercial Hutchinson Metro Center to the east.

Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area

The defining features of the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area are the existing railroad ROW, low-scale auto-related and industrial businesses, three buildings (2000 East Tremont Avenue, 14 Metropolitan Oval, and 2040 East Tremont Avenue,) that are contributing elements to the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, as well as views toward other portions of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District in the secondary study area.

The existing railroad ROW runs east to west adjacent to Sackett Avenue and East Tremont Avenue in the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area. Low-scale auto-related and industrial businesses tend to be located in the areas closest to the existing ROW, including auto-repair shops, gas stations, car washes, parking facilities. Notably, a large Con Edison plant is located near the ROW on the west side of Bronxdale Avenue. In addition to industrial and auto-related uses, various small commercial businesses such as restaurants, a clothing store, and gym are located near the ROW along East Tremont Avenue and Bronxdale Avenue.

A portion of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District is located along East Tremont Avenue within the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area. This portion contains three adjoining buildings (2000 East Tremont Avenue, 14 Metropolitan Oval, and 2040 East Tremont Avenue,) that are contributing elements to the overall S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District. 2000 East Tremont Avenue is a five-story, brick building that is used as storage, office, and commercial space. 14 Metropolitan Oval is an approximately 90-foot-tall brick building with an approximately 200-foot-tall exhaust stack that protrudes from the building's rooftop that functions as a utility building for the larger Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District. 2040 East

Tremont Avenue is a five-story, brick building used as a parking garage and unoccupied commercial space. The brick façades of all three buildings are adorned with protruding terracotta sculptures characteristic of the larger Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District.

Additionally, residential portions of the larger S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District are visible from the Parkchester/Van Nest Area. Views into the district from East Tremont Avenue and Unionport Road consist of views of mid-rise, brick apartment buildings arranged around a curvilinear street pattern and interspersed with open spaces.

Some residential uses are present in the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area. Notably, along Baker Avenue between White Plains Road and Garfield Street, as well as Poplar Street between Paulding Avenue and Bronxdale Avenue. Generally, residential uses in the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area are limited and are typically located near industrial uses or vacant land.

Overall, the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area, is defined by low-rise industrial and commercial businesses and the northern edge of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, both of which border the existing railroad ROW. The low-rise industrial and commercial businesses predominant to the north and east of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District. The northern edge of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District is a notable feature of the area west of Purdy Street and on the south side of East Tremont Avenue. Despite Parkchester being a notable residential community, the most notable presence the community has in the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area are parking garages and a utility building. Similar to the Morris Park Station Area, the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area functions as a border area between several neighborhoods. The existing railroad ROW and surrounding industrial and commercial uses serve to separate the residential neighborhoods of Morris Park and Van Nets from Westchester Square, Parkchester, and Park Versailles.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

The secondary study area is defined as a quarter-mile radius from the Affected Area and contains portions of several neighborhoods including Pelham Gardens, Indian Village, Hutchinson Metro Center, Morris Park, Westchester Square, Van Nest, Parkchester, and Park Versailles. While much of the secondary study area is comprised of medium-density residential neighborhoods, such as Pelham Gardens, Morris Park, Van Nest, and Park Versailles, the study area also contains large medical campuses in Morris Park, a large office and commercial development in the Hutchinson Metro Center, and a mixed-use commercial hub in Westchester Square. The secondary study area also contains a portion of the Pelham Parkway, which is a linear park that runs adjacent to the roadway with the same name, as well as several smaller open spaces such as Van Nest Park and Loreto Playground. At the southern end of the secondary study area is a large portion of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District. Overall, the secondary study area is comprised of several medium-density residential neighborhoods of varying character interspersed with large medical facilities, a large commercial and office development, and mixed-use commercial corridors.

Defining features of the secondary study area include medium-density residential neighborhoods, large medical campuses, the Hutchinson Metro Center, the Westchester Square Mixed-Use Corridor, the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, the S/NR-eligible former St. Dominic's Parochial School, Pelham Parkway, Hutchinson River Parkway, Loreto Playground, Van Nest Park, Taylor Playground, and Noble Playground.

Pelham Gardens

The defining features of the Van Nest neighborhood subarea in the Secondary Study Area are one- and two- family residences and the neighborhood's proximity to Pelham Parkway. Some small institutional and commercial uses are present along Eastchester Road and Astor Avenue. View corridors of Pelham Parkway exist along Pelham Parkway North and intersecting streets such as Bouck and Fish Avenues. There are no other significant natural features, historic resources, or other notable buildings within the Secondary Study Area in Pelham Gardens that would be considered important visual resources.

Indian Village

The defining features of the Indian Village neighborhood subarea in the Secondary Study Area are one- and two- family residences and Pelham Parkway. West of Seminole Avenue, the neighborhood is characterized by one-and two- family residences. Some commercial and mixed uses are also present along Williamsbridge Road. There are no other significant natural features, historic resources, or other notable buildings within the Secondary Study Area in Indian Village that would be considered important visual resources.

Hutchinson Metro Center

The defining feature of the Hutchinson Metro Center neighborhood subarea in the Secondary Study Area is the Hutchinson Metro Center commercial and office development, large medical campuses, and a small portion of the Pelham and Hutchinson River Parkways. The Hutchinson Metro Center commercial and office development contains commercial uses, medical offices, and Mercy University's Bronx Campus. Nearby are large medical campuses, such as the Bronx Behavioral Health Center and Montefiore Hutchinson Campus. A small portion of the Pelham Parkway is located within this subarea to the north and a small portion of the Hutchinson River Parkway is located in this subarea to the east. Views toward both of these open spaces are available in select areas of the Hutchinson Metro Center. Other notable features of the neighborhood subarea include the Public Safety Answering Center II at the northern edge of the Secondary Study Area and a large Amazon-leased warehouse that runs along Bassett Avenue. There are no other significant natural features, historic resources, or other notable buildings within the Secondary Study Area in Hutchinson Metro Center that would be considered important visual resources.

Morris Park

The defining features of the Morris Park neighborhood subarea in the Secondary Study Area are medium-density residential neighborhoods, Loreto Playground, large medical campuses, Pelham Parkway, and

commercial development along Morris Park Avenue. The majority of the Secondary Study Area within Morris Park is occupied by one- and two- family residences. Multi-family residences are scattered throughout the neighborhood, but are more prevalent in the eastern half, near Williamsbridge Road. Some commercial and mixed uses are also present along Williamsbridge Road and Morris Park Avenue. In the western portion of the neighborhood in the secondary study area is Loreto Playground, a public open space that contains play structures, basketballs courts, and a soccer field. East of Seminole Avenue in the northern portion of the neighborhood, the Secondary Study Area is characterized by large institutional medical campuses, such as Jacobi Medical Center and Albert Einstein College of Medicine which amongst many notable buildings include the Eastchester Road Residence Complex, located on the northern part of the campus. Pelham Parkway, a linear park that runs adjacent to the roadway with the same name, is located at the northern edge of the neighborhood and is visible from the Jacobi Medical Center Campus. Morris Park, a major commercial corridor, runs through the neighborhood providing local retail for the surrounding area. There are no other significant natural features, historic resources, or other notable buildings within the Secondary Study Area in Morris Park that would be considered important visual resources.

Westchester Square

The defining features of the Westchester Square neighborhood is the Westchester Square mixed-use corridor along Williamsbridge Road and East Tremont Avenue, medium-density residential development, and select views of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District. Mixed and commercial uses are concentrated in the eastern portion of the subarea where Williamsbridge Road and East Tremont Avenue intersect. This portion of the neighborhood functions as a well-established mixed-use and commercial corridor in close proximity to the Westchester Square 6-train subway station located immediately outside of the Secondary Study Area. The western portion of the neighborhood is characterized by a mix of multi- and one- and two- family residences. Some small institutional uses are present throughout this portion of the neighborhood, such as the Westchester Square Library and PS 012 Lewis and Clark School. Views toward the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District are available in the western portion of the subarea. Another notable feature in the subarea is Westchester Yard, a large New York City Transit (NYCT) rail yard. There are no other significant natural features, historic resources, or other notable buildings within the Secondary Study Area in Westchester Square that would be considered important visual resources.

Van Nest

The defining features of the Van Nest neighborhood subarea in the Secondary Study Area are the area's medium-density residential developments, the S/NR-eligible former St. Dominic's Parochial School, now known as the STEAM Bridge School, and Van Nest Park. Residential uses in this subarea are defined by one-and two-family attached, semi-detached, and detached residences with some multi-family buildings. The S/NR-eligible former St. Dominic's Parochial School, now a public school, is an L-shaped, three-story building representative of post-WWII educational design, located at the corner of White Plains Road and Van Nest Avenue. Van Nest Park is a triangular public park containing playgrounds and spray showers, located at the intersection of White Plains Road and Unionport Road. Other notable features in this

subarea include commercial and mixed uses along Morris Park Avenue in the northern portion of the Secondary Study Area. There are no other significant natural features, historic resources, or other notable buildings within the Secondary Study Area in Van Nest that would be considered important visual resources.

Parkchester

The defining feature of the Parkchester neighborhood subarea in the Secondary Study Area is the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, a significant visual resource located largely conterminously with the Parkchester neighborhood subarea. The district is a 129-acre area consisting of over 12,271 apartments in 171 buildings grouped in 51 clusters. Parkchester's red-brick buildings have flat roofs with terra cotta ornamentation. Landscaping, including tree-lined walkways and lawn areas are interspersed throughout the district. There are no other significant natural features, historic resources, or other notable buildings within the Secondary Study Area in Parkchester that would be considered important visual resources.

Park Versailles

The defining features of the Park Versailles neighborhood subarea in the Secondary Study Area are medium—density residences, Taylor Playground, and Noble Playground. East of Beach Avenue, the neighborhood is dominated by multi-family residences; west of Beach Avenue, it is dominated by one- and two- family residences. Taylor Playground lies just north of PS 531 and contains a basketball court, tennis court, and play structures. Noble Playground lies at the far western end of the Secondary Study Area and is comprised of basketball courts and a large grass baseball field. Views of this open space exist along Noble Avenue, Bronx River Avenue, and portions of Mansion Street. Other notable features of this subarea include some small institutional uses are scattered throughout the neighborhood, such as PS 531 Archer Elementary School and Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic Church. There are no other significant natural features, historic resources, or other notable buildings within the Secondary Study Area in Park Versailles that would be considered important visual resources.

ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT THE DEFINING FEATURES OF THE STUDY AREA NEIGHBORHOODS

Future Without the Proposed Actions

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," in the 2033 future without the Proposed Actions (the "No-Action" condition), future development in the Affected Area and Secondary Study Area is expected to occur in a piecemeal manner. It is likely that in the future, property owners may seek discretionary approvals within the Affected Area for zoning changes to allow for a mix of uses including residential development. Although specific development proposals by private property owners and the discretionary

approvals needed to facilitate those projects are unknown, it is reasonable to assume some owners will seek to utilize their properties to the fullest extent. In the No-Action condition, it is likely that new mixed-use residential and non-residential development will occur, albeit in a piecemeal manner and without the benefit of a comprehensive plan to coordinate redevelopment activities, infrastructure investments, and appropriate densities and urban design controls. Additionally, new residential development will continue without any requirement to provide needed affordable housing.

Affected Area/Primary Study Area

As detailed further in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," some changes to land use are expected in the Affected Area in the No-Action condition as a result of MTA's Penn Station Access project which is slated for completion in 2027. Penn Station Access will establish rail service between Penn Station and the eastern portion of the Bronx by extending the MTA's Metro-North Railroad New Haven line. Four new stations in the East Bronx will be built to support the new service, two of which will be located within the Affected Area: the Parkchester/Van Nest Station and the Morris Park Station. In addition to Penn Station Access and anticipated related ROW developments, there are four expected and ongoing developments in the Affected Area, detailed below.

Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area

Building the Parkchester/Van Nest Station will require the MTA to pursue property acquisitions and easements in the Affected Area. Current projected acquisition sites include 2015 East Tremont Avenue, a site currently used for parking adjacent to the rail line in the north and the Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District to the south. Additionally, there are three sites expected to be redeveloped in the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area absent the Proposed Actions. A three-story supportive housing building will be constructed at 2443 Poplar Street, and an eight-story, 46-unit residential building will be developed at 2438 Lyvere Street. Additionally, while no permits have been filed, the property at 1615 Unionport Road is expected to be redeveloped as it is currently underbuilt with 310,000 sf of available development rights. These No-Action developments would not significantly alter the existing neighborhood character of the Parkchester/Van Nest Station Area in the future without the Proposed Actions.

Morris Park Station Area

There is one project expected to be completed in the Morris Park Station Area absent the Proposed Actions. In the northern part of the area, it is expected that 1682 Stillwell Avenue will be redeveloped with a 30-unit homeless shelter with a community facility use on the first floor. This No-Action development would not significantly alter the existing neighborhood character of the Morris Park Station Area in the No-Action condition.

Secondary Study Area

Pelham Gardens

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is planning to renovate the Pelham Parkway greenway in the future without the Proposed Actions, enhancing the significant open space and visual resource of the secondary study area. Although still in the design phase, completion of the planned

renovation is anticipated in 2026, and will include landscaping restoration and the construction of new seating areas and trails of the open space between Boston Road and Stillwell Avenue. This will not significantly affect neighborhood character and there are no other known changes to neighborhood character that are expected to occur in the Pelham Gardens neighborhood in the No-Action condition.

Indian Village

As previously described, DPR is planning to renovate the Pelham Parkway greenway in the future without the Proposed Actions. This will not significantly affect neighborhood character and there are no other known changes to neighborhood character that are expected to occur in the Indian Village neighborhood in the No-Action condition.

Hutchinson Metro Center

As previously described, DPR is planning to renovate the Pelham Parkway greenway in the future without the Proposed Actions. Additionally, a new residential building with 30 supportive residential units at 1682 Stillwell Avenue will be developed in the future without the Proposed Actions. Neither the renovations to Pelham Parkway nor the development at 1682 Stillwell Avenue will significantly affect neighborhood character in the Hutchinson Metro-Center neighborhood in the No-Action condition.

Another major change to urban design and visual resources in the Hutchinson Metro Center neighborhood that will occur in the No-Action condition is the first phase of the Bronx Psychiatric Center Land Use Improvement Project, slated for completion in 2030. When complete, the development is expected to include 250,000 sf of residential space, a 124,300-sf hotel, 1.2 million sf of commercial office space, 40,000 sf of retail, 100,000 sf of biotech/research space, a 100,000-sf college/trade school, 2,000 sf of community facility space, 8,100 sf of amenity space, and 4,029 sf of parking, all in new buildings, as well as 8.7 acres of open space. The implementation of the Bronx Psychiatric Center Land Use Improvement Project will not significantly alter the neighborhood character of this area of the Hutchinson Metro Center neighborhood in the No-Action condition.

Morris Park

There are a number of projects slated for development in the Morris Park neighborhood in the future without the Proposed Actions. A new mixed-use building with 228 dwelling units (DUs), 20,000 sf of commercial space, and 2,000 sf of community facility space is planned for 1312 Blondell Avenue; a new 182-DU non-profit hospital staff housing building will be developed at 1776 Eastchester Road; and a 21,886-sf commercial expansion is planned at 25 Westchester Square. Additionally, a new transient shelter facility building is planned for 1374 Blondell Avenue, which will contain 18 DUs, 31,413 sf of commercial space, 3,100 sf of community facility space, and 20 parking spaces.

Open space and visual resource improvements in the Morris Park neighborhood include the ongoing renovation of the Golden Age Center located in the Owen F. Dolen Park and the upgrades to the P.S. 0X12 Playground. Currently in the construction phase and slated for completion in 2024, the renovation of the Golden Age Center includes the reconstruction of the center's doors and windows. Slated for completion

in 2025, the upgrades to the P.S. 0X12 Playground will include the development of an additional 0.69 acres of active recreational open space at the site.

The above mentioned developments will not significantly alter neighborhood character and no other changes to neighborhood character are expected in the Morris Park neighborhood in the future No-Action condition.

Van Nest

There are two small projects slated for completion in the Van Nest neighborhood in the future without the Proposed Actions: a new three-story, 11-unit residential building at 840 Morris Park Avenue, and a new eight-unit residential building with ground-floor retail space at 841A Morris Park Avenue. No changes to neighborhood character are expected in the Van Nest sub-area in the future No-Action condition.

Westchester Square

There are two new buildings planned in the Westchester Square neighborhood in the future without the Proposed Actions: a 32-unit residential building at 2422-2426 Lyvere Street, and an eight-unit residential building with 2,996 sf of commercial space at 1644-1646 Parker Street. These developments will not significantly alter neighborhood character and no other changes to neighborhood character are expected in the Westchester Square neighborhood in the future No-Action condition.

Parkchester

In the future No-Action condition, there are several projects slated for completion in the Parkchester neighborhood subarea. A new residential building with 221 affordable DUs has been substantially completed at 1701 Purdy Street, and a new 166,906 sf industrial/manufacturing storage shed will be developed at 1601 Purdy Street. Additionally, a 39-unit residential building will be constructed at 1550 White Plains Road. These developments will not significantly alter neighborhood character and no other changes to neighborhood character are expected in the Parkchester neighborhood in the future No-Action condition.

Park Versailles

There are two new buildings planned in the Park Versailles neighborhood in the future without the Proposed Actions: an 8,316-sf apartment building at 1547 Leland Avenue, and an eight-unit residential building with 943 sf of commercial space at 1846 Guerlain Street. Additionally, the ongoing construction at the Noble Playground at 1541 Bronx River Avenue is slated for completion in the No-Action condition, enhancing this significant open space and visual resource of the West Farms neighborhood. The upgraded playground will include 3.21 acres of new baseball fields, basketball courts, fitness equipment, play areas, and spray showers. These developments will not significantly alter neighborhood character and no other changes to neighborhood character are expected in the Park Versailles neighborhood in the future No-Action condition.

Future With the Proposed Actions

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

Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy

As discussed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, or public policy. The new uses would be compatible with, and supportive of, existing and planned uses in the study areas and the overall increase in residential, commercial, and community facility uses would advance important Citywide objectives related to housing and economic development. The Proposed Actions would allow a wider range of commercial uses, including retail uses such as supermarkets, and they would eliminate the outdated use restrictions imposed by existing industrial zoning districts – currently, new residential uses are not permitted and many community facility uses are limited. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any adverse land use impacts in the primary or secondary study areas. As such, the introduction of new land use and zoning would not adversely affect any of the defining features of neighborhood character in either the primary or secondary study area.

Socioeconomic Conditions

As discussed in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," the Proposed Actions would not induce any significant direct or indirect residential and business displacement and would not adversely affect any specific industries. The Proposed Actions would not be expected to exceed the analysis threshold of 500 directly displaced residents and therefore are not expected to result in significant adverse impacts due to direct residential displacement. Therefore, no preliminary analysis of direct residential analysis is required. Additionally, the 60 potentially displaced businesses and between 650 and 880 directly displaced employees do not represent a majority of study area businesses or employment for any given sector. In addition, the sector that faces the largest number of potentially displaced employees, Health Care and Social Assistance, would grow substantially in the Affected Area and it is likely that the largest impacted business, Montefiore and Montefiore-Einstein Cancer Center, would have an even larger presence in the Affected Area following the Proposed Actions. As these medical campuses are defining features of the primary and secondary study area, the expansion of their presence would build upon the existing neighborhood character. Therefore, any changes to socioeconomic conditions would not adversely affect neighborhood character.

Community Facilities

The Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse impact to elementary schools. As discussed in Chapter 21, "Mitigation Measures," certain measures can be taken to minimize these impacts; however, some impacts may remain. While these impacts would be significant, they would not alter the defining features of the primary or secondary study area, and on their own, would not constitute a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character. Further, no impact to libraries, police, fire, health care services, intermediate schools, or high schools would occur in the future with the Proposed Actions.

Open Space

As described in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse indirect impact to both passive and active open space in the residential study area, as well as adverse shadows impact to open spaces within the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, Pelham Parkway, and a Greenstreet at Sacket Avenue. Defining features within the primary and secondary study areas that would potentially be affected by this increase in open space usage and/or incremental shadow would include the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, Pelham Parkway Greenway, Hutchinson River Parkway Greenway, Loreto Playground, Van Nest Park, Taylor Playground, and Noble Playground. While the potential for increased usage of these open space resources may lead to lower ratios of passive and active open space per resident, their function and aesthetic contributions to the primary and secondary study areas would remain unchanged. Similarly, while there would be increased incremental shadows on select open spaces, the availability of passive and active open space within the primary and secondary study area would not decrease. Therefore, while there would be impacts to open space resources as a result of the Proposed Actions, the effects would not be to such a degree to alter the neighborhood character of any of the neighborhoods in either the primary or secondary study area.

Shadows

As described in Chapter 6, "Shadows," in the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse shadow impacts on three sunlight-sensitive resources, a portion of Pelham Parkway, a Greenstreet at Sacket Avenue, and a small portion of the larger 129-acre Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District would not receive adequate sunlight during the growing season (at least the six- to eight-hour minimum specified in the *CEQR Technical Manual*) as a result of incremental shadow coverage, and vegetation at these resources could be significantly impacted. Defining features within the primary and secondary study areas would potentially be affected by this increase in incremental shadow, notably the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District and Pelham Parkway. Vegetation within these resources may be affected. However, the areas affected would not constitute either the entirety of the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District or Pelham Parkway. As these resources would remain in place and the impact of incremental shadow localized, the effects would not be to such a degree to alter the neighborhood character of any of the neighborhoods in either the primary or secondary study area.

Historic and Cultural Resources

As discussed in Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources," the Proposed Actions the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse impacts associated with direct, indirect, and construction related impacts to historic and cultural resources.

The Proposed Actions would result in the demolition and/or alteration of 2000 East Tremont Avenue, 14 Metropolitan Oval, and 2040 East Tremont Avenue, all of which are contributing resources to the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, constituting a direct adverse impact to architectural resources. The demolition and/or alteration of 2000–East Tremont Avenue, 14 Metropolitan Oval, and 2040 East Tremont Avenue would alter the streetscape along East Tremont Avenue in the primary study area. However, the demolition and/or alteration of these parking garages, storage areas, and surface parking lots would allow for greater connectivity with the future Parkchester/Van Nest Metro-North Station. So, while the change would be significant, it would allow for greater accessibility to transit, permit new transit-oriented development, and allow for greater connectivity and activity between Parkchester and the surrounding areas. As such, this change would allow for an improvement in neighborhood character conditions.

Indirect impacts related to shadows on the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District would also result from the Proposed Actions. The indirect shadows impact would only affect a small portion of the total S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, and as previously described, would not be to such a degree to alter the neighborhood character of any of the neighborhoods in either the primary or secondary study area.

Potential significant adverse impacts may occur to contributing resources in the S/NR-eligible Parkchester Special Planned Community Preservation District, as a result of adjacent construction located within 90 feet of projected or potential development sites. However, this impact would be limited to a small portion of the historic district and would be unlikely to alter the neighborhood character of the surrounding areas.

The Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse impact related to the disturbance of archaeologically sensitive resources associated with 2547 East Tremont Avenue; 19th century shaft features associated with the church on the western section of the site, and potential human remains associated with the Methodist Episcopal Church of Westchester cemetery on the eastern section of the site. Because none of these resources are defining elements of neighborhood character, the significant adverse archeology impact would not result in an impact to neighborhood character.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

As discussed in Chapter 8, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," the Proposed Actions would facilitate development that is not currently permitted as-of-right in the Affected Area, which would create a notable change in the urban design character of the area. Compared to the future without the Proposed Actions, the visual appearance, and thus the pedestrian experience in the vicinity of the Affected Area would change considerably. However, this change would not constitute a significant adverse urban design impact as it would not negatively affect a pedestrian's experience. Rather, development facilitated by the

Proposed Actions is expected to positively affect the urban design of the area and improve the pedestrian experience in and surrounding the Affected Area. The Proposed Actions would result in the construction of active ground-floor uses, including retail, community facility spaces such as medical offices and houses of worship, and residential and office lobbies and would facilitate pedestrian amenities like the proposed Morris Park station plaza, reactivating the corridors of the Affected Area and making the area more accessible, safe, and enjoyable for pedestrians. As such, the Proposed Actions would allow for an improved urban experience for pedestrians and an overall improvement in urban design conditions.

Transportation

As discussed in Chapter 13, "Transportation," there are several significant adverse impacts related to traffic, bus service, pedestrians, and parking in the Affected Area. Significant adverse traffic impacts were identified to 78 lane groups at 36 intersections during the weekday AM peak hour, 63 lane groups at 30 intersections in the weekday midday peak hour, 66 lane groups at 34 intersections in the weekday PM peak hour, and 41 lane groups at 21 intersections during the Saturday midday peak hour. Chapter 21, "Mitigation Measures," discusses potential measures to mitigate these significant adverse traffic impacts. However, certain impacts would remain unmitigated and would affect the primary and secondary study areas. The Proposed Actions are intended to encourage transit-oriented-development and encourage greater ridership on transit, in particular the new Metro-North stations that would be constructed as part of the Penn Station Access Project. The increase in traffic volumes, while significant, would not rise to a level that it would alter the defining aspects of either the primary or secondary study area. Therefore, this increase in traffic volumes would not adversely affect neighborhood character.

Based on projected levels of bus service in the No-Action condition, the Proposed Actions would result in a capacity shortfall on Bx4A, Bx21, Bx31, Bx40, Bx42, and BxM10 bus routes. The significant impacts to bus service could be mitigated by increasing the number of buses in each peak hour to meet the incremental demand. The general policy of the MTA is to provide additional bus service where demand warrants, taking into account financial and operational constraints. Therefore, the increase in bus ridership would not rise to level that it would alter the defining aspects of either the primary or secondary study area. Therefore, this increase in bus ridership would not adversely affect neighborhood character.

Based on *CEQR Technical Manual* criteria, The Proposed Actions would also adversely impact 14 sidewalks and ten crosswalks during one or more of the analyzed peak hours. Chapter 21, "Mitigation Measures," discusses potential measures to mitigate these significant adverse pedestrian impacts. However, in the scenario that certain impacts would remain unmitigated, the impacts would be localized and would not rise to a level that they would alter the defining features of the primary or secondary study area. Therefore, this increase in pedestrian volumes would not adversely affect neighborhood character.

The Proposed Actions would also result in significant parking shortfall in the Affected Area. Despite the area's access to alternative modes of transportation, the fact that a significant portion of the Proposed Actions' demand would be accommodated on-site, and that some drivers destined for the Affected Area would potentially have to travel a greater distance (e.g., between ¼ and ½ mile) to find available parking, the shortfall in parking under the Proposed Actions would be considered a significant shortfall, particularly during the weekday and Saturday midday periods. However, this lack of parking would not fundamentally

change the defining features of the primary or secondary study area, and as such, would not adversely affect neighborhood character.

Noise

The defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the Proposed Actions, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas. As described in Chapter 16, "Noise," the analysis finds that the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse noise impacts at nearby noise receptors. As a result, there would be no noise-related impacts on neighborhood character.

CONCLUSION

The Proposed Actions would alter neighborhood character in the primary study area and to some extent the secondary area. Development facilitated by the Proposed Actions would re-orient the community towards the corridor and Metro-North's future Parkchester/Van Nest and Morris Park Station Areas. The Proposed Actions would enable improved connectivity to the planned stations from the surrounding neighborhoods through the implementation of comprehensive streetscape improvements, including revising the street alignment to allow for wider sidewalks and pedestrian safety elements, as well as upgrading currently difficult and dangerous crossings, improving circulation, and enhancing the pedestrian experience in and around the proposed new transit stations and surrounding neighborhoods. These improvements would change the primary study area from a transitional border area between several neighborhoods, primarily defined by industrial uses near the existing railroad ROW, to an area that draws together several types of varying neighborhoods to two mixed-use, pedestrian-focused neighborhoods centered on transit access.

In the No-Action condition, development is expected to occur in a piecemeal manner and without the benefit of a comprehensive plan to coordinate appropriate densities and urban design controls across the neighborhood. In contrast, the Proposed Actions would provide for sufficient predictability, flexibility, and variety for building envelopes that account for the unique conditions in the study area with appropriate transitions between low- and medium-density adjacencies and the promotion of residential and economic development. While the character of this area of the Bronx has changed throughout the years and will continue to change with or without the Proposed Actions, the Proposed Actions would encourage predictable development patterns that meet housing needs and facilitate the growth of Morris Park as an economic hub, facilitated by commercial, life sciences, and medical development.

The Proposed Actions would result in several adverse impacts related to community facilities, open space, shadows, historic and cultural resources, and transportation. However, none of these impacts, on their own or in tandem with one another would result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character. Rather the Proposed Actions would serve to enhance neighborhood character, allowing for a gradual transition of the primary study area from an interstitial industrial area to a mixed-use, pedestrian-focused neighborhood anchored by two new Metro-North stations. These changes would be considerate

of the surrounding context of the secondary study area, allowing for contextual development based on the primary study area's surroundings, thereby permitting greater connectivity between neighborhood while also preserving the defining features of each neighborhood. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.