1

Project Description

This chapter provides descriptive information about the requested discretionary actions and the development project that would be facilitated by the requested actions. The purpose of this chapter is to convey project information relevant to environmental review.

Introduction

Queens Future, LLC (the Applicant) proposes to redevelop approximately 78 acres of underutilized, largely asphalt surface parking areas located west of Seaver Way and adjacent to Citi Field (see **Figure 1-1**) with a major mixed-use development (the Queens Future Project, or the Proposed Project).

The Queens Future Project is anticipated to comprise up to approximately 3.7 million square feet (sf) of new construction, with destination entertainment that includes a music hall, hotel, a gaming facility,[1] convention and meeting space, restaurant and retail space, and office and community facility space. The Proposed Project would also include public park space—at least 20 acres of the Development Site would be improved with landscaping and other amenities for public recreation—and other public realm improvements as well as structured parking facilities to accommodate up to 13,750 spaces.

The parking areas that compose the majority of the Development Site are located in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, which is mapped parkland. They provide parking for the adjacent Citi Field baseball stadium. The property is owned by the City of New York (the City) and predominantly leased to Queens Ballpark Company, LLC. (Ballpark, LLC), pursuant to state law enacted in 1961 in connection with the construction of Shea Stadium. Shea Stadium was later demolished and replaced with Citi Field.

[1] The inclusion of a gaming facility is contingent upon receiving a gaming license from the New York State Gaming Commission. See Required Approvals section below.

Figure 1-1 Site Location Map



To facilitate the Proposed Project, the Applicant is seeking several city and state approvals. The Applicant will require the approval of several land use actions, including City Map amendments and a zoning map amendment. The city approvals also include amendments to the existing parking site leases, project agreements, and other project documents relating to the Citi Field parking areas as well as new agreements in connection with the Proposed Project; approval by the New York City Public Design Commission of open space and building design; and authorization of potential financing for certain portions of the project leased to Ballpark, LLC by the New York City Industrial Development Agency. The Proposed Project will require state legislation authorizing parkland alienation of a portion of the Development Site for the purpose of developing portions of the Proposed Project (state legislation is not subject to SEQRA). The Queens Future Project includes highway access improvements along westbound Grand Central Parkway, which requires review and approval from the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). A license is required from the New York State Gaming Commission for the proposed gaming facility. These actions are described in detail below and are collectively referred to as the Proposed Actions.

The Proposed Actions are subject to environmental review pursuant to SEQRA, in conformance to City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) guidelines and procedures. The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce (ODMHEDW) is acting as the lead agency for the environmental review. Completion of the Proposed Project is anticipated by 2030.

Project Area and Context

Development Site

The Development Site is approximately 78 acres of land bounded by Seaver Way to the east, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Corona Yard to the south, Grand Central Parkway to the west, and Northern Boulevard to the north (see **Figure 1-2**). The majority of the Development Site is part of Flushing Meadows Corona Park. A 1.1-acre portion on the northwest corner of the Development Site is located within the boundary of the Grand Central Parkway and a 0.44-acre portion on the northeast corner is located within the mapped boundary of Northern Boulevard. Approximately 53 of the 78 acres consists of asphalt surface parking lots; the remaining acres include roadways and other circulation areas. **Photo 1-1** and **Photo 1-2** show existing conditions of the Development Site.

Figure 1-2 Tax Map

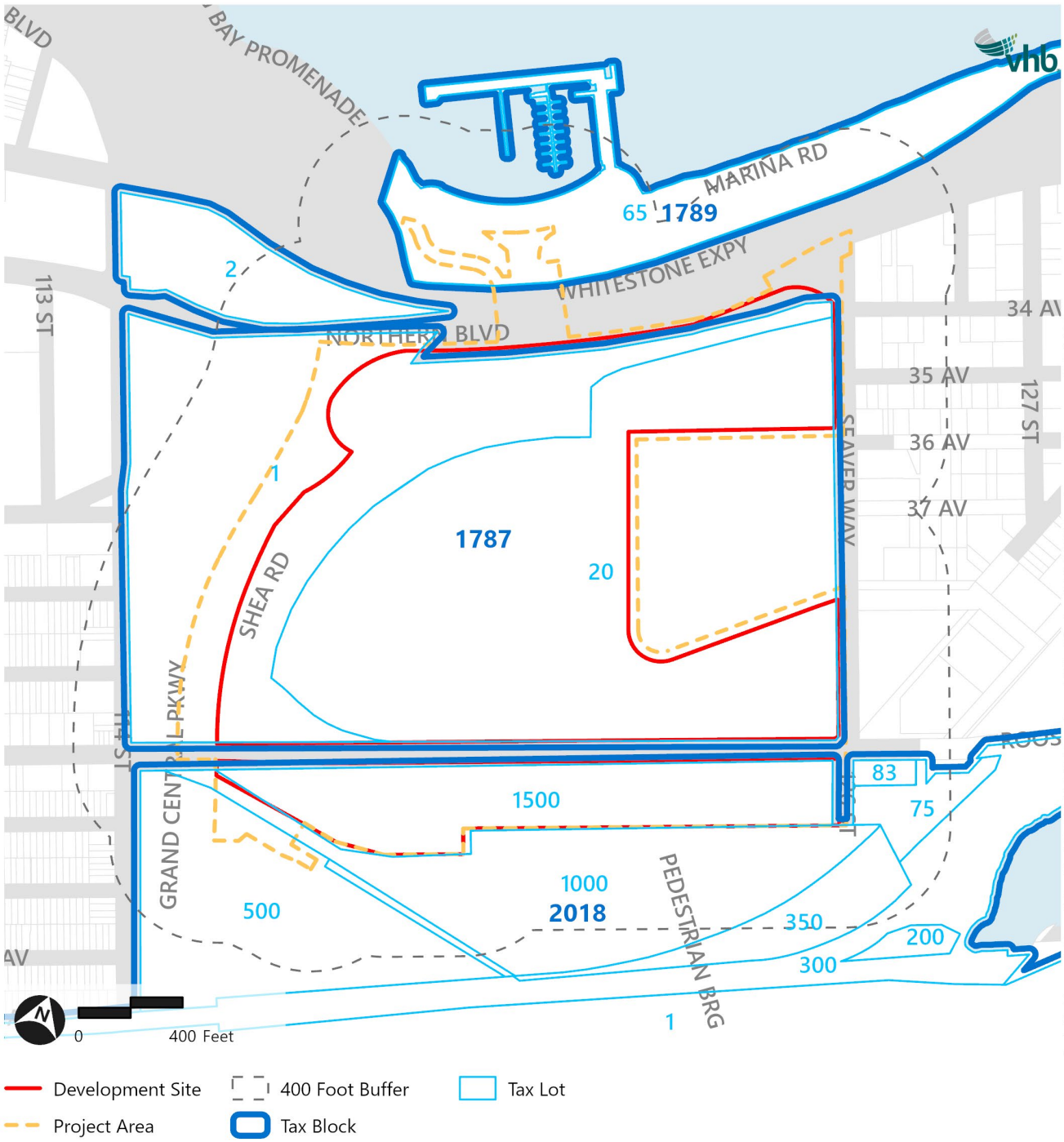


Photo 1-1 View Northwest from Mets-Willets Point NYCT No. 7 Train Subway Station



Photo 1-2 View West from Passerelle Pedestrian Bridge



The Development Site consists of the following Blocks and Lots:

- Queens Block 1787 - Portions of Lot 20 and Lot 1 east of Grand Central Parkway and South of Northern Boulevard. Lot 20 and Lot 1 are owned by the City, under the jurisdiction of New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks).
- Queens Block 2018 - A portion of Lot 1500, which is owned by the City, under the jurisdiction of NYC Parks
- An area not located within a tax lot in the area mapped as Northern Boulevard.

The Development Site contains surface parking lots (7,423 spaces), which are in mapped parkland. The lots have been used as parking areas for nearby entertainment uses, which historically have included the World's Fair and Shea Stadium, and now Citi Field. State legislation enacted in 1961 authorized the City to enter into agreements with private parties for the use of a stadium and parking lots on the Development Site and the current site of Citi Field. As authorized by the legislation, Ballpark, LLC leases the Development Site and operates the parking lots. The Development Site also contains three small MTA structures,[2] which are located south of Roosevelt Avenue and associated with the subway line. Existing conditions of the Development Site and Project Area are shown in **Figure 1-3**, with corresponding key in **Table 1-1**, below. The Development Site is bisected by the MTA 7 subway line along Roosevelt Avenue.

As shown in **Figure 1-4**, the Development Site and Project Area are mapped parkland and, therefore, zoning does not apply (indicated as "PARK" on the zoning map); additional areas that are not mapped parkland include a small MTA building that is mapped within an M1-1 zoning district and roadways—Grand Central Parkway, Northern Boulevard, and Whitestone Expressway—that are mapped within an R3-2 zoning district.

Project Area

The Project Area, as illustrated in **Figure 1-2**, extends slightly beyond the Development Site. These areas include additional parcels that would contain roadway improvements, highway access improvements, and improved connections to the Mets-Willets Point NYCT No. 7 Train Subway Station and Flushing Meadows Corona Park from the portion of the Development Site that lies south of the 7 Train station (see **Project Description** section below). Beyond the Development Site lots, the Project Area also includes portions of the following:

- Queens Block 1787 - Portions of Lot 1, west of Shea Road;
- Queens Block 2018 - Lot 1500 and portions of Lots 1000 and 500 surrounding Shea Road, east of the Grand Central Parkway;
- Queens Block 1789 - Lot 65, near intersection of Boat Basin Place;
- Area not located within a tax lot, along Boat Basin Place under Northern Boulevard and near the intersection of Northern Boulevard and Seaver Way.

The Project Area, including the Development Site, comprises parkland and roadway. Existing conditions of the Development Site and Project Area are shown in **Figure 1-3**, with corresponding key in **Table 1-1**. The Project Area is well served by mass transit, including the above-referenced Mets-Willets Point NYCT No. 7 Train Subway Station; the Mets-Willets Point Long Island Rail Road Station to the south; and the Q48 bus, which runs along Roosevelt Avenue from LaGuardia Airport to Flushing.

[2] The MTA structures would remain and are not proposed for redevelopment.

Figure 1-3 Project Area Existing Conditions



Table 1-1 Existing Conditions Map Key

ID	Description
1	Citi Field (excluded from Project Area)
2	New York Mets Game Day Parking
3	Mets-Willets Point NYCT No. 7 Subway Station
4	Passerelle Pedestrian Bridge
5	Grand Central Parkway Exit 9E Ramp
6	Boat Basin Place

History of Project Area and Surrounding Context

The Project Area, which is primarily part of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, is located west of a tidal expanse along the Flushing River and south of Flushing Bay. Before the 1900s, the Development Site and the surrounding area were primarily undeveloped marshland with a rail line that transected the southern portion of the Development Site. For most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Project Area was an industrial dumping ground and landfill.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a period when the City was investing in major municipal parks projects, the landfill was targeted for development as a large recreation area (NYC DPR, 2001).[3] In addition, the area was planned as the venue of the 1939 World's Fair (NYC DPR, 2001). The Development Site served as a parking lot in 1938 for the World's Fair and has remained in continuous operation as surface parking ever since. The construction of the World's Fair also acted as a catalyst for the construction of other municipal projects in the surrounding area, such as the development of the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, the Whitestone Expressway, the Grand Central Parkway (GCP) and a new No. 7 Flushing line station at Willets Point Boulevard (NYC DPR, 2001).

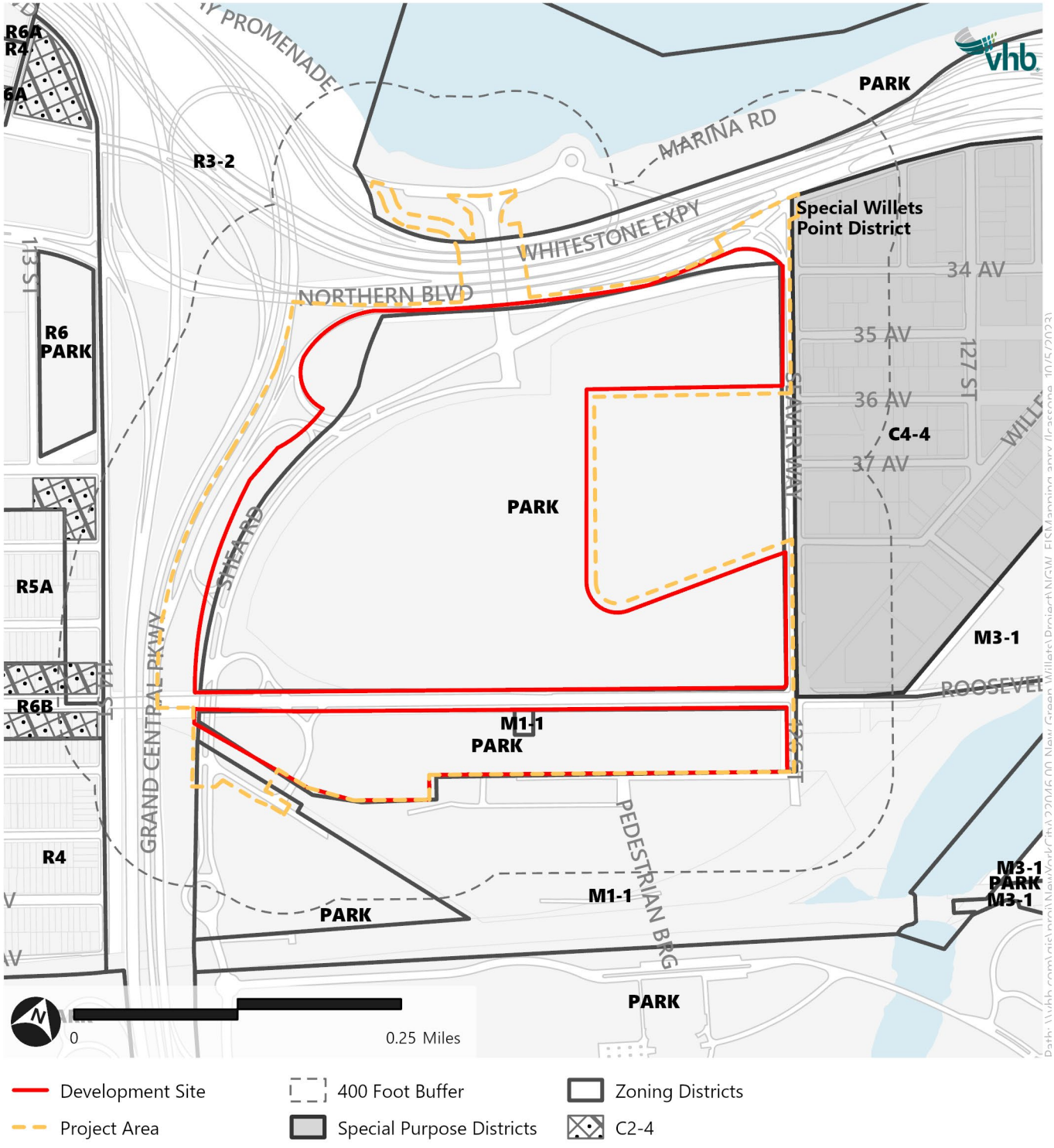
From 1946 to 1951, the United Nations convened at the New York City Pavilion, now the Queens Museum, one of the few remaining structures from the 1939 World's Fair (NYC DPR, 2001). The 1964 World's Fair was also held on the fairgrounds park site. On June 3, 1967, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park was established, encompassing the fairgrounds, the Development Site and the current site of Citi Field. (NYC DPR, 2001).

In 1961, the State enacted legislation (codified in Section 18-118 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York) that authorized the City to enter into agreements with private parties for the use of a stadium and parking lots on the Development Site and the current site of Citi Field. Shea Stadium opened on April 17, 1964, on the western portion of the Development Site, where the Citi Field parking lots are located today (NYC DPR, 2001). The stadium contained 56,000 seats for baseball and surrounding parking fields and was designed to be capable of converting from baseball to football use (NYC DPR, 2001).

In 2001, an FEIS was published by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC DPR) to allow for the construction of a new stadium for use by the New York Mets baseball team on a portion of the parking field adjacent to the existing Shea stadium (NYC DPR, 2001). The stadium was demolished in 2008, and the 42,000-seat baseball stadium that exists today was built on an adjacent portion of the site previously used for parking. The parking spaces were redistributed to the eastern and southern portions of the site.

[3] New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC DPR), (2001)."Shea Stadium Redevelopment FEIS". (CEQR No: 02DPR001Q). Dated December 17, 2001. (p. S-2)

Figure 1-4 Existing Zoning Map



In 2008, a Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) for the Willets Point Development Plan was issued, with the City's Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development (ODMED) as lead agency, in order to rezone, create an Urban Renewal Area, and redevelop the Willets Point Area east of Citi Field (ODMED, 2008).[4] The Willets Point Development Plan proposed a Willets Point Development District with residential, retail, hotel, a convention center, entertainment, commercial office, community facility, open space, and parking uses as well as a connection to the Van Wyck Expressway within the District. The plan was approved by the City Planning Commission on September 24, 2008 and the City Council on November 13, 2008.

A supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) was published in 2013 by ODMED to modify the previously approved Willets Point Development Plan and include a proposed Willets West development on a portion of the Development Site located on the surface parking lot west of the Citi Field baseball stadium (ODMED, 2013).[5] The FSEIS substantially analyzed the development in the Special Willets Point District as anticipated and analyzed in the 2008 FGEIS and subsequent technical memoranda as well as a major entertainment/retail and parking development adjacent to Citi Field totaling 2.65 million square feet and assumed to ultimately be completed in 2032. Subsequently, in 2017, the New York State Court of Appeals held that the Willets West portion of the Plan analyzed in the 2013 FSEIS required State legislation authorizing parkland alienation. Following the Court of Appeals decision, neither the Willets West program that was invalidated nor the overall 2013 plan moved forward. Most recently a Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSSEIS) for the Willets Point Development (Phase 2) was published in February 2024 (CEQR 23DME005Q).

In 2018, Flushing Meadows Corona Park was determined to be eligible on the State and/or National Register of Historic Places (S/NR) as the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Historic District by the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO).

Required Approvals

To facilitate the Proposed Project, a number of discretionary approvals subject to CEQR are required, including several approvals pursuant to the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The Proposed Actions consist of:

City Approvals

1. City map amendments, including:
   - Demapping of approximately 25 acres of parkland corresponding to Area of Development A, which would be leased to the Applicant, and a relocated ramp to the westbound Grand Central Parkway. The other areas in the Development Site currently mapped as parkland would remain as such.
   - Demapping of approximately 1.4 acres of streets corresponding to site access improvements (which would be leased to the Applicant) and park improvements within the existing boundary of the Grand Central Parkway.
   - Mapping of approximately 0.7 acres of streets corresponding to a relocated ramp to the westbound Grand Central Parkway.

[4] Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development (ODMED). 2008. "Willets Point Development Plan Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement", (CEQR No 07DME014Q). Dated September 2008.

[5] Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development (ODMED). 2013. "Willets Point Development Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement", (CEQR No 07DME014Q). Dated September 2008.

- Mapping of approximately 0.8 acres of parkland corresponding to park improvements within the existing boundary of Grand Central Parkway.

2. A zoning map amendment to map a C8-4 zoning district on the property bounded by the centerline of Northern Boulevard to the north, a line 970 feet parallel with and southwesterly of Seaver Way to the east, the centerline of Roosevelt Avenue to the south, and the centerline of the Grand Central Parkway to the west (see **Figure 1-5**). This rezoning area encompasses the western portion of the Development Site.
3. City approval of amendments to the stadium lease, project agreements, and other project documents including approval of business terms related thereto, relating to the Citi Field parking areas and new agreements in connection with the Proposed Project;
4. Approvals by the NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT), NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) and NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) and other city agencies for public improvements, as applicable; and
5. Authorization of potential financing by the NYC Industrial Development Agency or other agency.

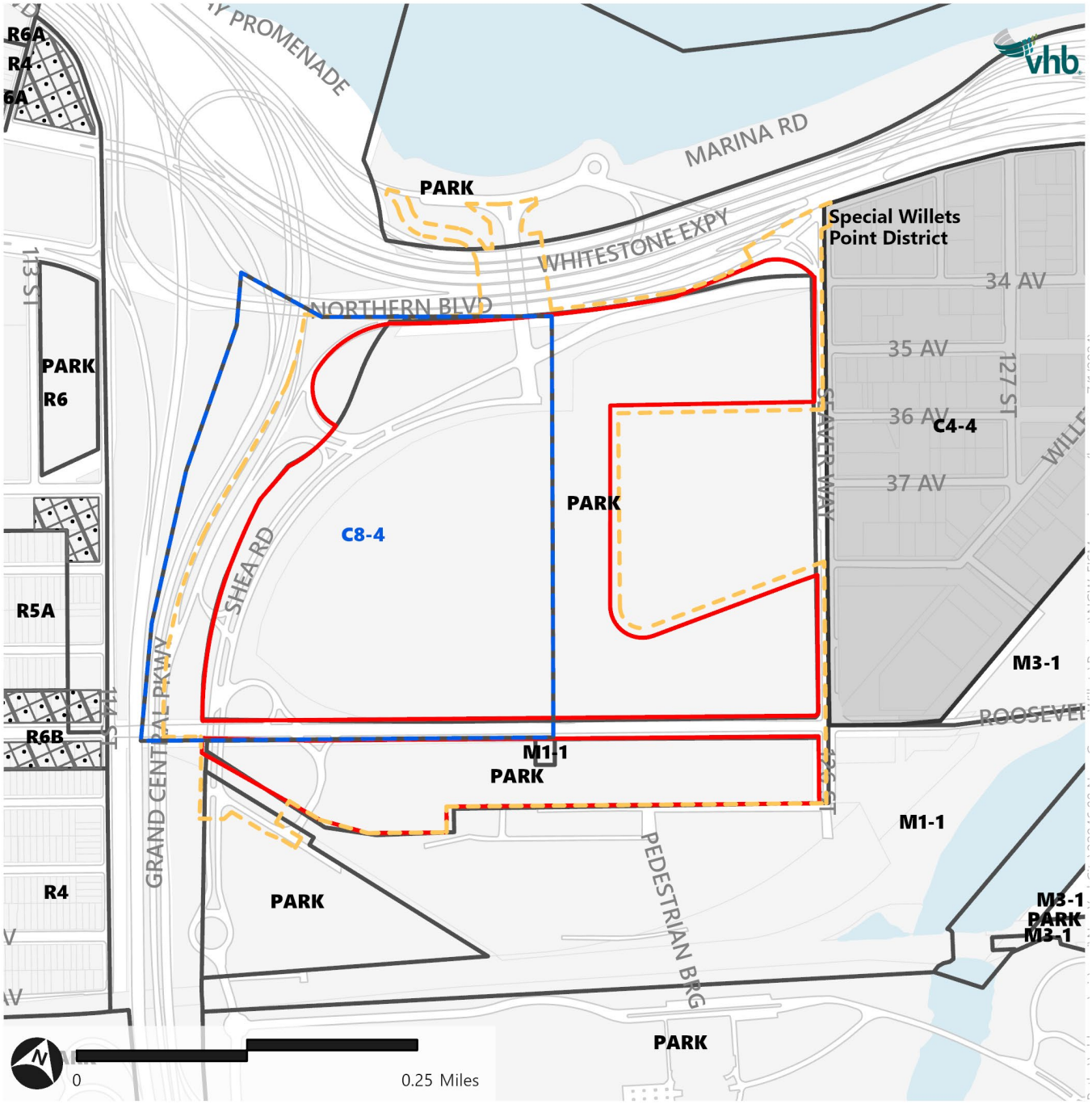
State Approvals

1. Approval of State legislation authorizing the alienation of portions of parkland to allow for the Proposed Project. State legislation is not subject to SEQRA.
2. NYSDOT approval for highway access improvements along westbound Grand Central Parkway Exit 9E to and from Shea Road and to the Whitestone Expressway. Additional NYSDOT and NYCDOT approvals as may also be required in connection with the roadway and other improvements. [6]
3. Approval by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for improved connections to the Mets-Willets Point No. 7 Train NYCT Subway Station.
4. Approval by the Gaming Facility Location Board and a license from the New York State Gaming Commission.

In addition, a State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit from NYSDEC will be required for stormwater discharges during the construction period. The Proposed Project would also include various ministerial actions, including design approval by the Public Design Commission, and additional approvals as may be necessary. The Development Site is located within the Notice Criteria area for LaGuardia International Airport; all proposed buildings fall within the jurisdiction of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and require approval of building heights.

[6] The proposed highway ramp (reviewed by New York State Department of Transportation) is necessary to enhance the safety and overall capacity of the ramp system. The National Park Service has determined that the construction of the proposed highway ramp would result in a conversion under the requirements of the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program. To satisfy the requirements of a conversion, the Applicant proposes providing as replacement property an area that is currently mapped street (within the Grand Central Parkway) that would be mapped as parkland under the Proposed Project and improved as part of the Open Space 2 (OS-2) passive recreational area. The determination whether the new parkland comprising part of (OS-2 would satisfy requirements for replacement property, will be subject to review by the National Park Service, with the involvement of the New York State Office of Parks and Recreation.

Figure 1-5 Proposed Zoning Map



Proposed Project

The Applicant is proposing to replace the underutilized parking lots on the Development Site with a mixture of commercial and other uses, structured parking, and public park to create a vibrant entertainment destination and provide to the local community needed amenities—including opportunities for recreation, work, dining, and entertainment in the area immediately surrounding Citi Field (see **Figure 1-6**). The Queens Future Project is anticipated to comprise up to approximately 3.7 million square feet of new construction, with destination entertainment that includes a gaming facility, music hall, a hotel with up to 2,300 rooms, convention and meeting space, restaurant and retail space, and office and community facility space. The Proposed Project would also include at least 20 acres of public park space, amenity space for the hotel, and structured parking facilities to accommodate up to 13,750 spaces. **Table 1-2** summarizes the total development projected for the Development Site and reflects the reasonable worst-case development scenario (RWCDS). The areas of proposed parkland demapping and those areas remaining parkland are shown and more fully described in **Chapter 5, Open Space**. The Proposed Project would provide approximately 7,400 new, full-time equivalent jobs to support the commercial, open space, and entertainment uses on site. Additionally, the Proposed Project would generate approximately 17,000 full-time equivalent construction jobs over the approximately five-year construction period.

Table 1-2 With-Action Condition

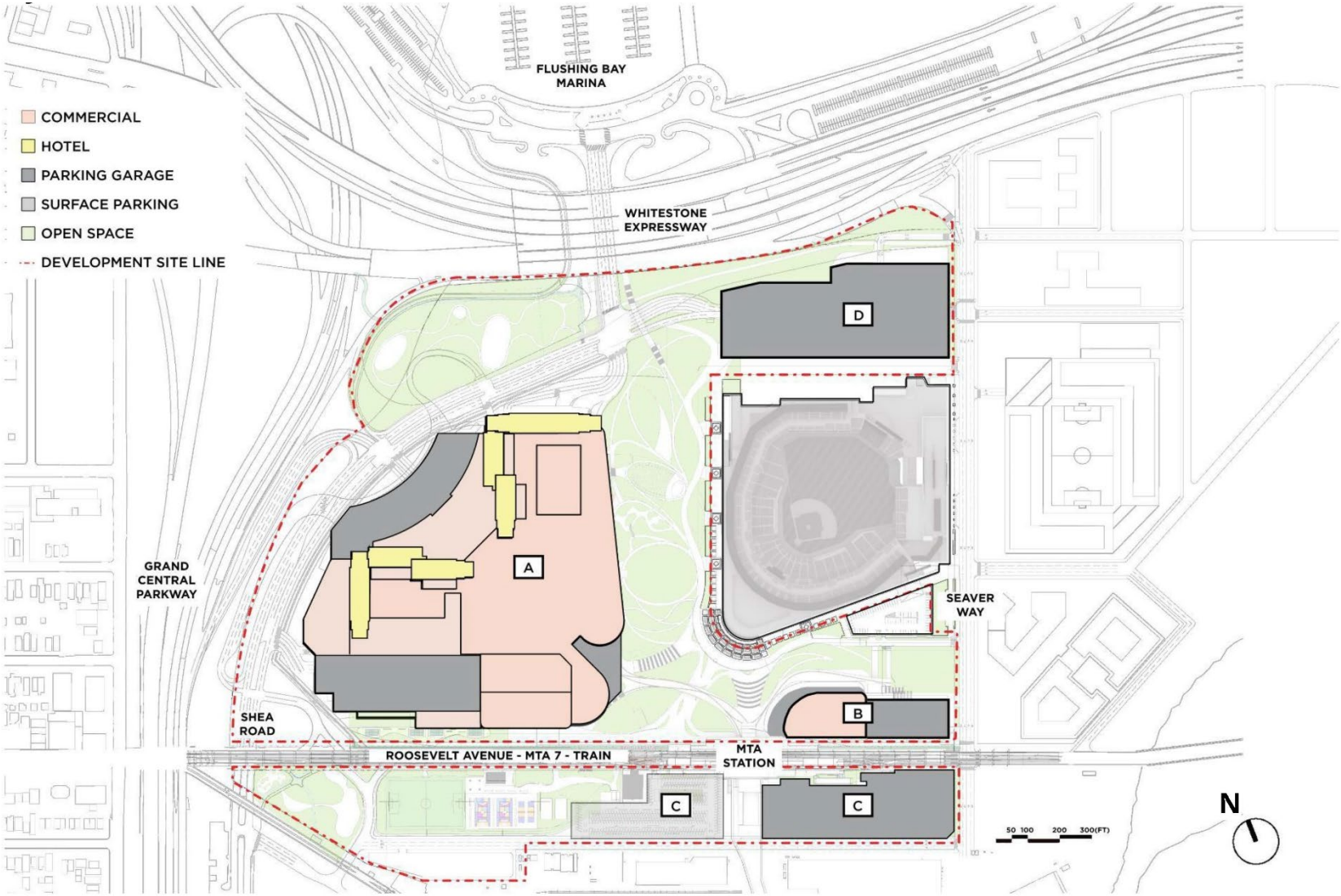
Area of Development	Use	Maximum (up to) GSF	Percent Floor Area	Percent Total Development	Notes
Area of Development A	Hotel[1]	2,118,000	57.8%	20.4%	Up to 2,300 hotel rooms
	Convention and Meeting Space[1]	150,000	4.1%	1.4%	-
	Gaming Facility[2]	352,000	9.6%	3.4%	-
	Gaming Facility Back of House	93,000	2.5%	0.9%	-
	Music Hall[1]	290,610	7.9%	2.8%	5,655 seats
	Retail	102,330	2.8%	1.0%	-
	Restaurants	198,790	5.4%	1.9%	-
	Amenities	149,270	4.1%	1.4%	Including spa, gym, pool, and entertainment spaces
	Area A Total	**3,454,000**	**94.2%**	**33.2%**	-
Area of Development B	Restaurants	118,000	3.3%	1.1%	-
	Retail	32,000	0.9%	0.3%	-
	Office	37,000	1.0%	0.4%	-
	Community Facility	25,000	0.7%	0.2%	-
	Area B Total	**212,000**	**5.9%**	**2.0%**	-
Parking	**Area A Total**	-	-	-	Up to 5,500 parking spaces
	Area B Total	-	-	-	Up to 899 parking spaces
	Area C Total	-	-	-	Up to 3,151 parking spaces
	Area D Total	-	-	-	Up to 4,200 parking spaces
Commercial Total		**3,641,000**	**99.3%**	**35.0%**	-
Community Facility Total		**25,000**	**0.7%**	**0.2%**	-
Mixed-Use Total		**3,666,000**	**100.0%**	**35.3%**	-
Parking/Loading/Mechanical Total		**6,726,785**	-	**64.7%**	**Up to 13,750 parking spaces[3] and central utility facility**
Public Park		**20 acres**			

[1] Includes associated back of house space

[2] The potential gaming use would require a license from the New York State Gaming Commission

[3] There are currently 7,423 parking spaces on the existing Development Site parking lots and therefore there would be an incremental increase of 6,327 parking spaces.

Figure 1-6 Proposed Project Site Plan



Source: SHoP Architects, Field Operations

Mixed-Use Development - Areas of Development A and B

As mentioned above, the Development Site is currently mapped parkland and part of Flushing Meadows Corona Park. The development of up to approximately 3.7 million gross square feet (gsf) would be located in two areas within the Development Site—Areas of Development A and B, which are discussed further below. The public park space totaling at least 20 acres would consist of various landscaped areas and other recreational outdoor spaces.[7]

The first occupiable floor in Areas of Development A and B would be designed to an elevation of 20 feet NAVD88, which is 12 feet above site elevation. The uses located in the Areas of Development A and B that are located at or below the design flood elevation would be restricted to parking and loading.

Area of Development A

Area of Development A is situated on the western portion of the Development Site, which would be improved with a development including a hotel with up to 2,300 rooms, gaming, retail, restaurants, amenities for the hotel and gaming facility (e.g., pool, gym, spa, and entertainment space), a music hall, and convention and meeting space. Area of Development A, along with the roadways serving such development, would be demapped as parkland. The areas of proposed parkland demapping are shown in **Figure 1-7**. The western portion of the Development Site would be improved with a development including a hotel with up to 2,300 rooms, gaming, retail, restaurants, amenities for the hotel and gaming facility (e.g., pool, gym, spa, and entertainment space), a music hall, and convention and meeting space. The first two levels would include parking for cars and buses. The uses above the parking would rise to a range of heights. The tallest portions of the development would range in height from 280 to 344 feet and contain hotel rooms, which would be located from level 2 to level 25 of the building towers (see **Figure 1-8**).[8] A section of Area of Development A would also include a six-level parking structure that would rise to a height of approximately 120 feet. Area of Development A would further include back-of-house space to support the gaming facility, hotel, entertainment, and convention and meeting space in addition to mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and infrastructure space such as a central utility facility. Three private outdoor spaces are planned within Area of Development A—one activated commercial balcony covered with a canopy structure on the first occupied floor at an elevation of 38 feet and another activated commercial balcony on the rooftop of the building podium at a height of approximately 72 feet. The remainder of the rooftops of Area of Development A would be largely covered with photovoltaic solar panels.

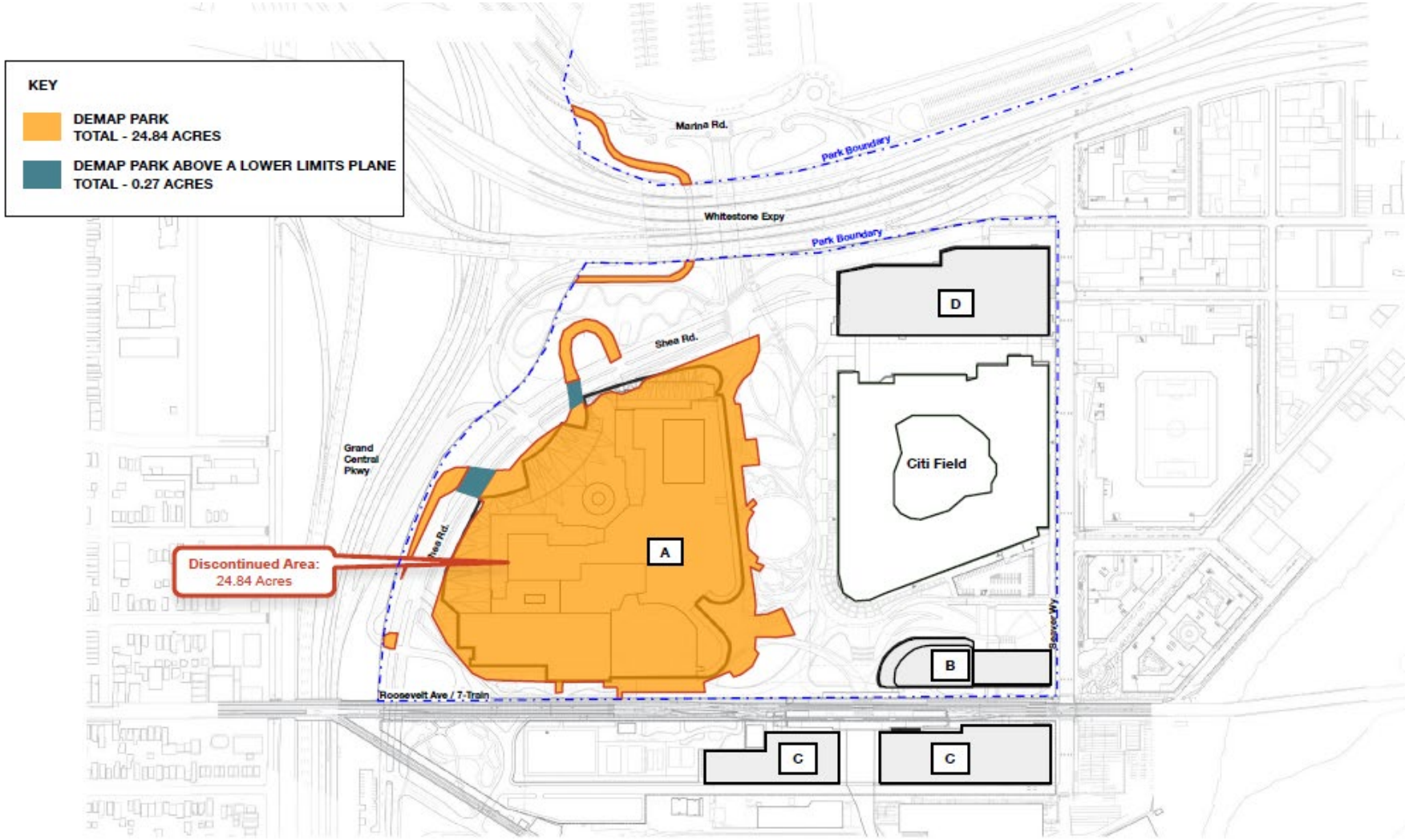
Area of Development B

Just south of Citi Field, a development is proposed to contain uses geared towards Mets fans and local visitors. It would contain restaurant space, including a "Taste of Queens" local food hall, and local retail, community facility, and administrative office space (ancillary offices to support the Area of Development B and stadium uses). The buildings within Area of Development B would be approximately 114 feet tall inclusive of up to nine levels of parking.

[7] The small portions of the Development Site not mapped as parkland—the area within Grand Central Parkway and Northern Boulevard—would also be improved as public open space. Areas of proposed parkland demapping and areas that would remain mapped parkland are shown and more fully described in **Chapter 5. Open Space**.

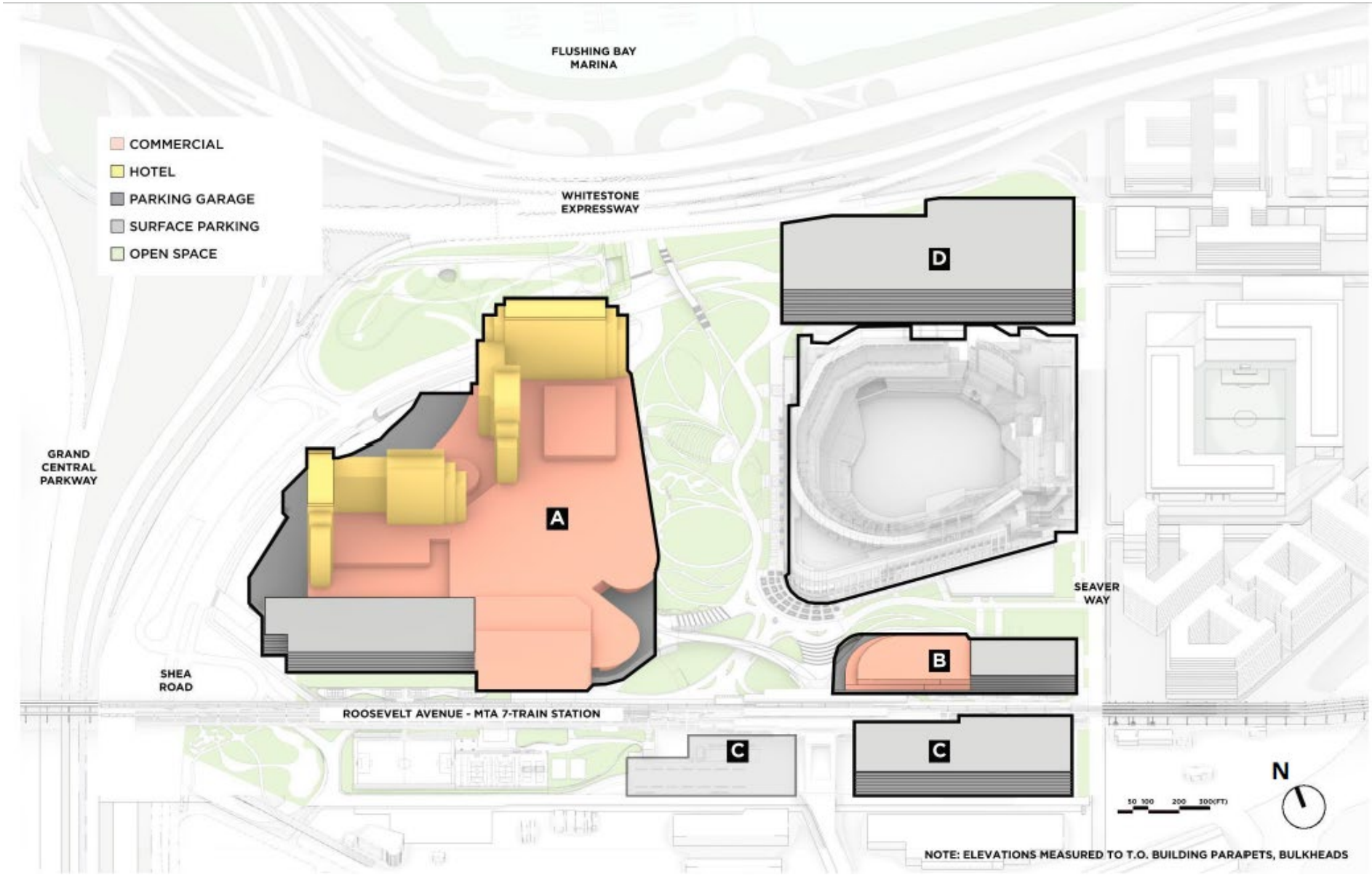
[8] All heights are given in NAVD88/Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL). At the location of the Development Site, the minimum ground elevation is AMSL 8'.

Figure 1-7 Proposed Parkland Demapping



Source: SHoP Architectects and Field Operations

Figure 1-8 Illustrative Massing of Proposed Development



Source: SHoP Architects, Field Operations

Parking

The 13,750 parking spaces are required to accommodate both the parking needed by the Mets to continue operating at Citi Field and the parking needed to support the new development. The parking would be located primarily within structures in Areas of Development A, B, C, and D as well as on a surface parking lot within Area of Development C. This parking includes the full replacement of existing Mets parking within the Development Site necessary to satisfy operational and visitor needs. It also includes parking to support the proposed commercial development. **Table 1-3** includes the number of parking spaces per structure.

Table 1-3 Proposed Project Parking Supply

Location	No. of Parking Spaces
Area A	**5,500**
Parking Structure	1,595
Podium	3,905
Areas B, C, and D	**8,250**
Area D - Northfield Parking Structure	4,200
Area C - Southfield Parking Structure	2,901
Area C - Southfield Surface Lot	250
Area B	825
Area B Player Lot	74
Total	**13,750**

In Area of Development A, parking and loading areas within the new building would be located at the first two building levels. Parking on the ground level would be accessed through three entrances along Shea Road. This ground level parking would contain areas designated for buses and rideshare. The parking on the second level would be accessed via internal vertical circulation in the podium structure. In addition, valet parking would be provided via two access points on the port cochere, a covered elevated entrance intended to facilitate drop offs. Area of Development A would also include a six-level parking structure on the south side of the building. This parking would be accessed through a separate entrance on Shea Road. The roof of this parking structure would contain photovoltaic solar panels as well as private open space for visitors to Area of Development A. The parking within the building in Area of Development B would also be located at the first two building levels, as well as within a connected parking structure to the east. This structure would have one access point along the existing curb cut off of Seaver Way. In Areas of Development C and D, the parking would be located in new standalone elevated parking structures.

Area of Development C, located south of Roosevelt Avenue and north of the MTA Corona Yard, includes one parking structure with up to ten levels of parking rising to approximately 100 feet in height and one surface lot. The parking within the structure would be accessed from entrances along the southern edge of the structure, where a new internal roadway will provide access from both Stadium Place South and from Shea Road. The parking structure roof would contain photovoltaic solar panels. The surface lot would also be accessed via the new internal roadway along the south edge of the site. The existing MTA buildings in the Area of Development C would remain. Area of Development D, located just north of Citi Field, includes a parking structure with up to twelve levels

of parking rising to a height of approximately 142 feet. The parking in this structure would be accessed from entrances along Shea Road, which would pass through the parking structure at ground level. An additional exit from the parking structure will be provided on Seaver Way. The roof of the structured parking in Area of Development D would contain photovoltaic solar panels.

Patrons of the new development at Area of Development A would use the structured parking within Area of Development A on both gamedays and non-gamedays. Patrons of the new development at Area of Development B would use the structured parking within Area of Development B and Area of Development C on non-gamedays and the structured parking within Area of Development A on gamedays. On non-gamedays, the structured parking at Area of Development C would be open to commuters (continuing the use of commuter parking currently in the Southfield Lot in existing conditions). On gamedays, Mets patrons would park in the structured parking in Areas of Development B, C, and D.

Throughout the construction period, parking for existing uses such as Mets games would be accommodated. Construction period parking is discussed in **Chapter 20, Construction**.

Public Realm Improvements

Open Space and Landscaping

The Proposed Project would include at least 20 acres of new public park space. The public park space would include passive open space, landscaped areas, walking paths, and active open space such as athletic fields and other sports facilities. The park space would replace portions of the Development Site that are comprised almost entirely of paved parking and associated circulation spaces which are not accessible to the public (see **Figure 1-9**).

See **Figure 1-10** through **Figure 1-15** for illustrative images of some of the open spaces. The open spaces would be open to the public every day during daytime as well as nighttime, with the exact hours of operation to be determined with the City. Improvements along the pathways to the waterfront as well as new pathways in the proposed park area would strengthen connections to and from the Development. All newly constructed park areas will be ADA accessible. These proposed open spaces include:

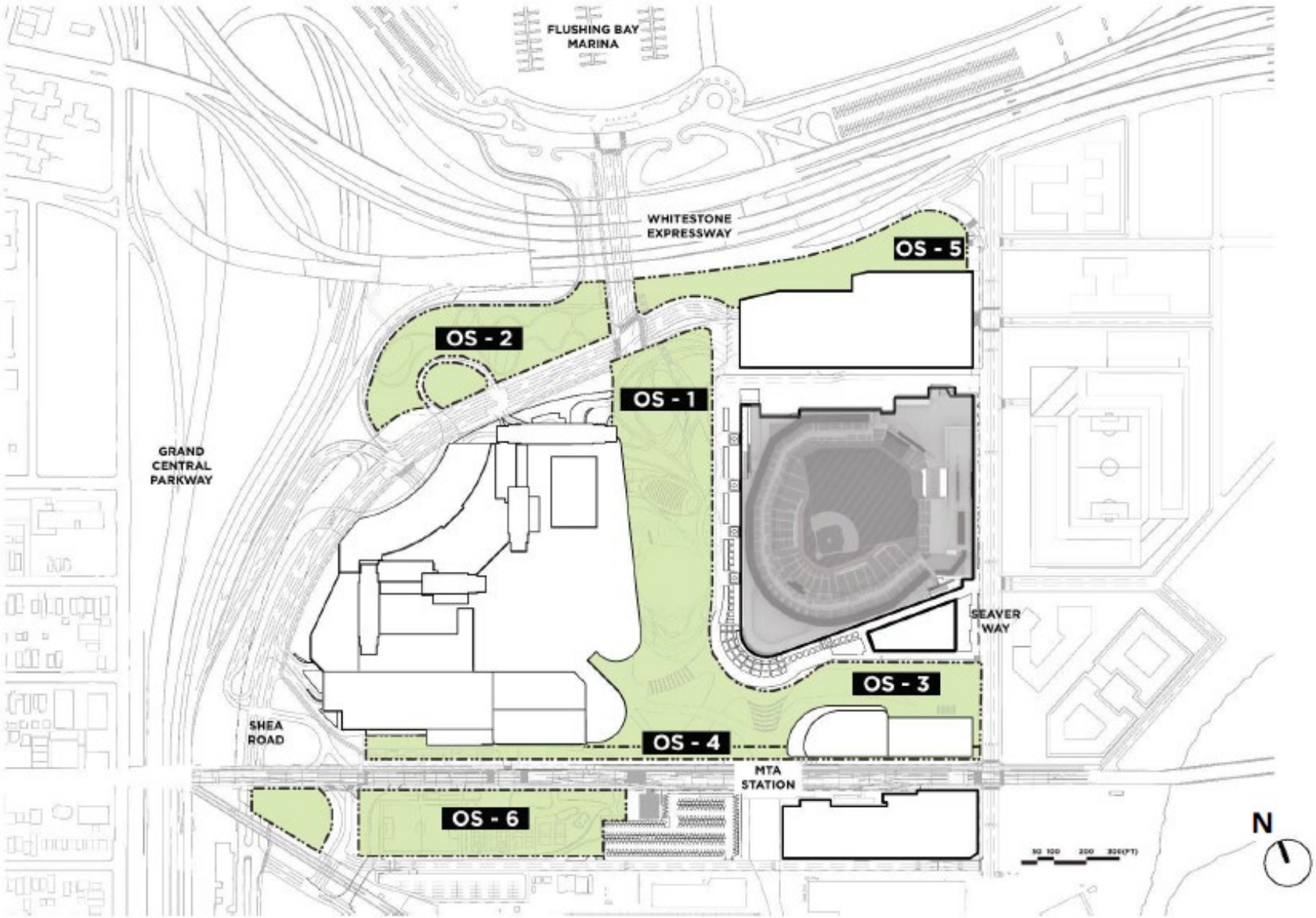
- **OS-1:** The proposed open space identified as OS-1 would be located between Citi Field and the east side of Area of Development A in an area that is currently a surface parking lot. There would be a collection of multipurpose areas within OS-1. Although the details of the proposed design have not been finalized at this time, it is anticipated to include an outdoor event space, gardens, moveable seating, picnic areas, open lawns, promenades, and landscaped pathways. OS-1 is approximately 10.5 acres.
- **OS-2:** The proposed open space identified as OS-2 would be located at the north side of Area of Development A in an area that is currently covered with an asphalt bus parking lot and trees. OS-2 would maintain many of the existing trees. The existing paved bus parking lot would be removed and OS-2 would be improved with a dog run, passive recreation spaces, picnic areas and seating, and bike and pedestrian connections, amounting to 1.70 acres.
- **OS-3:** This open space would be located along the perimeter of the Area of Development B and would feature landscaping, walkways, eating areas, event space, and seating amounting to 1.60 acres of passive open space. An open plaza space at the corner of Seaver Way and Roosevelt Avenue would support events throughout the year, such as farmers' markets, community events,

and gatherings in conjunction with events at Citi Field. Pathways would provide additional connections to OS-1 and Areas of Development A and C.

- **OS-4:** Roosevelt Avenue would be lined with a combination of passive and active recreation space amounting to 1.20-acres. This would include sports courts, walkways, seating, planting, bike lanes, and bike parking. Amenities to facilitate pedestrian circulation and transit access would also be included within this area.
- **OS-5:** Located to the north of Area of Development D, OS-5 would be a 1.20-acre space that would connect pedestrians from Seaver Way to the Project Area and Boat Basin Place. The open space would feature passive recreation spaces, seating, and bike and pedestrian connections.
- **OS-6:** Located south of Roosevelt Avenue to the west of the surface parking area of Area of Development C, would be a 3.80-acre space dedicated to active recreation with a variety of activities and attractions. It is anticipated to include spaces for sports such as basketball, racket sports, soccer, playgrounds, and fitness areas.

In addition to these open spaces, new landscaping would be provided throughout the other areas of the Development Site. Along Shea Road, sidewalks and bike facilities would be added in addition to new landscaping and stormwater gardens. As many existing trees as possible along Shea Road would be maintained. Trees and plants across the site would be chosen to ensure resiliency to diseases, climate change, and pests while contributing to local and regional biodiversity. Rain gardens and planting beds would contribute to stormwater management across the site. Green roof systems would be added on the building rooftops of Area of Development A to enhance the energy efficiency of the buildings and further reduce water runoff.

Figure 1-9 Proposed Open Space Plan



Source: SHoP Architects Field Operations

Figure 1-10 Illustrative Image of Open Space (OS-1) Looking Northwest



Source: SHoP Architects, Field Operations

Figure 1-11 Illustrative Image of Open Space (OS-1)



Source: SHoP Architects, Field Operations

Figure 1-12 Illustrative Image of Open Space (OS-1) Looking East



Source: SHoP Architects, Field Operations

Figure 1-13 Illustrative Image of Open Space (OS-2) North of Shea Road



Source: SHoP Architects, Field Operations

Figure 1-14 Illustrative Image of Open Space (OS-3) near Area of Development B



Source: SHoP Architects, Field Operations

Transit and Pedestrian Improvements

More detailed information on transit and pedestrian improvements is discussed in **Chapter 14, Transportation**.

Active Transportation: Bike and Pedestrian Improvements

A number of pedestrian improvements are proposed as part of the design of the Proposed Project . Promenades and landscaped pathways are proposed throughout OS-1 to connect pedestrians from the Marina and Seaver Way through the Development Site and to the transit and open spaces within and south of the Project Area. A pedestrian bridge would be provided over Shea Road and connect to a protected bike and pedestrian way underneath the Whitestone Expressway on the western side of Boat Basin Place. In addition, a pedestrian/bike bridge over the highway ramps would replace the existing at-grade crosswalk at the ramp from the westbound Grand Central Parkway to the eastbound Whitestone Expressway, enhancing pedestrian and cycling safety. This bridge would enhance the connection between the Development Site, the pathways along the waterfront, and the North Corona neighborhood to the west and connect to the existing bicycle paths at 34th Avenue. Improvements to the crosswalks would also enhance safety and would accommodate the higher number of expected pedestrian crossings at these locations due to the Proposed Project. Sidewalks would be added along Shea Road and widened along Roosevelt Avenue. The mid-block crosswalks connecting the north and south sides of Roosevelt Avenue at the Mets-Willets Point NYCT No. 7 Train Subway Station would be widened and enhanced. In addition, a new crosswalk would be added across Roosevelt Avenue at Stadium Place South. Lighting improvements and a protected zone for bikes and pedestrians along Roosevelt Avenue under the elevated No. 7 Subway tracks would improve the pedestrian experience and safety (see **Figure 1-15**).

Figure 1-15 Illustrative Image of Open Space (OS-4) North of Roosevelt Avenue



Source: SHoP Architects, Field Operations

Bicycle lanes would be included along Roosevelt Avenue, Shea Road, near Stadium Place North and under the Whitestone Expressway to create a protected bike lane connection along the northern, western, and southern edges of the Development Site. A shared path is proposed from Boat Basin to Seaver Way within the northeastern portion of the Development Site to connect to the proposed bike lanes in the Willets Point neighborhood. At major intersections and high-traffic areas, dedicated bike signals would ensure that cyclists can navigate the streets safely and without interruption. Bicycle amenities, including bike parking, would also be provided throughout the Development Site to encourage cycling.

Transit Improvements

The Proposed Project would include improvements within the area of the Mets-Willets Point NYCT No. 7 Train Subway Station that would strengthen connections to and from the Development Site.

Improvements to the MTA station are part of the Proposed Project. The proposed improvements would enhance the connection between the Development Site north of Roosevelt Avenue, and the Passerelle structure south of Roosevelt Avenue, thereby enhancing the pedestrian connection from the southern portion of Flushing Meadows Corona Park to the Development Site and the waterfront beyond. This enhanced connection would be achieved through modifications to the station structure, including enhancements to the vertical circulation elements within the station and expansion of key corridor and turnstile elements. With these modifications, the main mezzanine area would be permanently outside of the fare zone. By making this change, the main mezzanine would serve as a direct connection between Flushing Meadows Corona Park to the south and the development to the north.

On the north side of the station, the mezzanine level would provide direct access to a central entrance to the public park and the Citi Field rotunda as well as elevated pedestrian bridge structures leading to Areas of Development A and B and the public park. New staircases and elevators would

also provide access to the park and stadium to the north. As a key benefit of these enhancements, the station would be made fully ADA accessible, with elevator connections between the ground and mezzanine levels, and also between the mezzanine and platform levels. This ADA access would support MTA's accessibility plan for the station (see **Figure 1-16**).

The Mets-Willets Point NYCT No. 7 Train Subway Station as well as the Passerelle Bridge are contributing resources to the S/NR-eligible Flushing Meadows Corona Park Historic District. The Applicant has consulted (and will continue to consult) with NYSHPO on the subway renovations, and the interaction with the Passerelle Bridge.

Figure 1-16 Illustrative View of MTA Station Improvements



Source: SHoP Architects

Roadway Improvements

Within the Development Site and Project Area, improvements would include highway access improvements for Grand Central Parkway, and other roadway improvements along Shea Road and Seaver Way. These proposed improvements require review and approval by NYSDOT and the NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT). Proposed network changes are illustrated in **Figure 1-17** below. More detailed information on roadway improvements is discussed in **Chapter 14, Transportation**. These include the following:

› Modifications and reconfigurations to the ramps connecting Shea Road and Grand Central Parkway—This change would include the relocation of a ramp off of the Grand Central Parkway immediately adjacent to the Grand Central Parkway and replacement of such ramp north of Northern Boulevard. This improvement would enhance the safety of the ramps by physically separating traffic entering and exiting GCP to and from Shea Road and thereby eliminating a substandard weaving section.

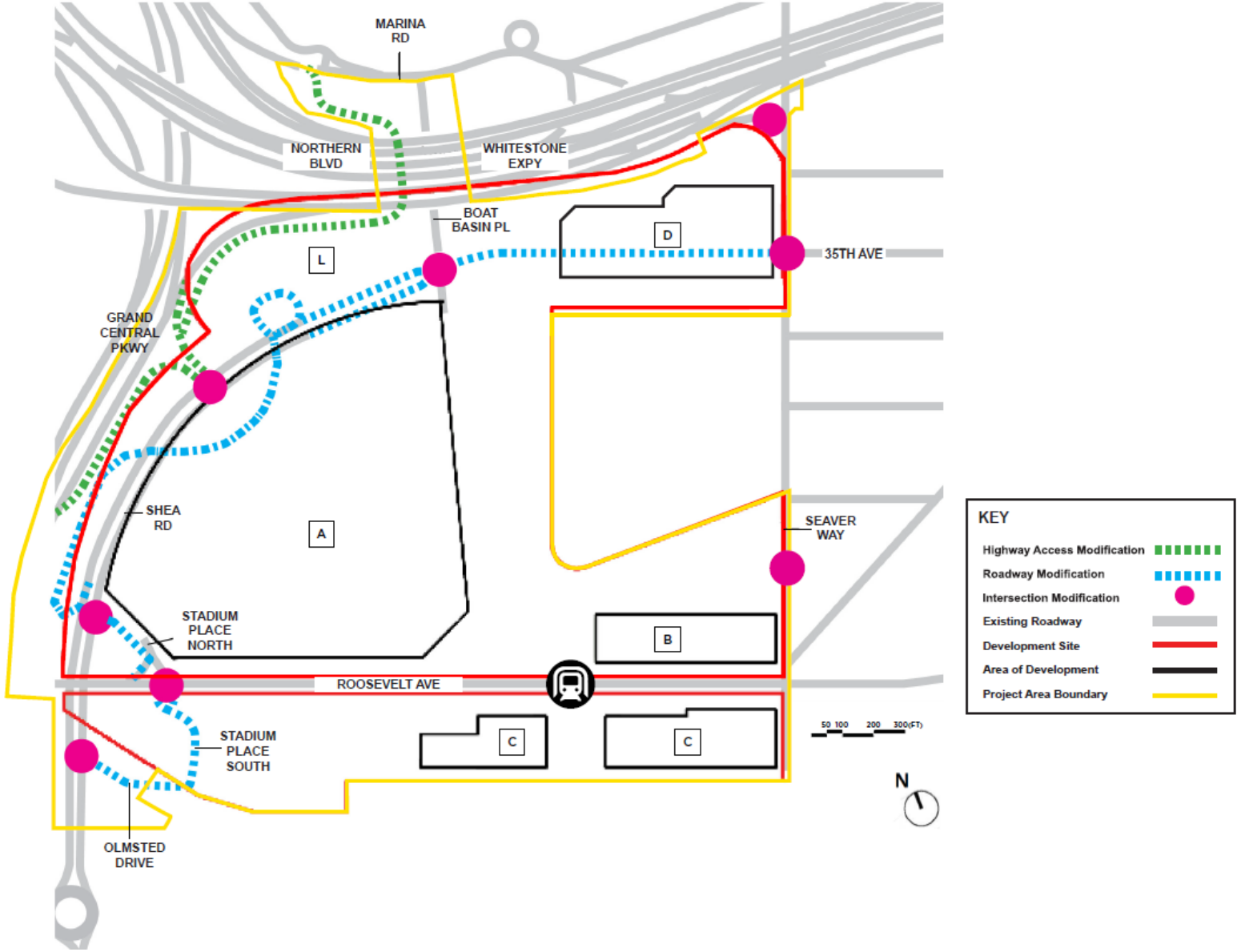
- Reconfiguration of ramp to Whitestone Expressway—Realignment of this ramp is required to accommodate the improvement to the entrance ramp to the GCP described above.
- Modifications to the intersection of Northern Boulevard and Seaver Way—This improvement would enhance the safety of the approaches to Seaver Way by eliminating the substandard stop control of the Northern Boulevard eastbound right turn where it crosses the Whitestone Expressway off-ramp. This movement would instead be accommodated within revised traffic signal operations at Northern Boulevard and Seaver Way.
- Modifications to Shea Road—Shea Road would be realigned to intersect with Seaver Way at 35th Avenue instead of at 34th Avenue to allow for enhanced safety and higher throughput at the intersection of Seaver Way and 34th Avenue. These modifications are being incorporated as part of the Proposed Action in order to keep Shea Road open to non-Mets related traffic even during pre-game ingress and post-game egress.
- Modifications to Stadium Place North—This modification would improve safety and visibility by realigning the intersection and normalizing it.
- Modifications to Olmsted Drive and Stadium Place South—This modification would enhance access to the garages in Area of Development C, expanding capacity for gameday traffic. These modifications will also enhance access to the Olmstead Center for NYC Parks Department vehicles during pre-game ingress and post-game egress, an improvement over the No-Action condition.

Signalization, modifications to existing signals, or other enhancements to intersection control are proposed at the following locations: Marina Road and Boat Basin Place; Seaver Way and Shea Road/35th Avenue; Seaver Way and 34th Avenue; Shea Road and Boat Basin Place; Shea Road and Port Cochere exit; Shea Road and GCP off ramp/White Stone Expressway on ramp; Shea Road and Stadium Place north; Shea Road and Olmsted Drive; and Roosevelt Avenue and Stadium Place South.

New curb cuts to allow access to the Proposed Project would be located along Shea Road, Stadium Place South, Seaver Way, and Roosevelt Avenue. These curb cuts would provide access to/from the new structured parking for the Proposed Project as well as dedicated areas for taxi, transportation network company, bus, and truck operations.

Finally, new lighting under Northern Boulevard along Boat Basin Place and on Roosevelt Avenue would be added to enhance safety.

Figure 1-17 Proposed Network Changes



Source: SHoP Architects, VHB

Project Purpose and Need

The surface parking surrounding Citi Field is used only on game days during baseball seasons (generally April through October), for other private events held at Citi Field, and for certain other scheduled events in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, including the U.S. Open. Up to 1,795 spaces are designated for commuter parking on business days. Otherwise, this approximately 53 acres of asphalt parking is underutilized and not available to the public.[9] As a result, the site currently provides limited amenities to the local community, with few opportunities for recreation, dining, or entertainment in the area immediately surrounding Citi Field. Beyond attending events at the existing stadium, the site provides visitors with few options to remain in the area, failing to deliver on the tourism and economic development potential a major sporting facility offers to Queens.

The Queens Future Project is an opportunity to transform these underutilized parking lots into a unique mixed-use recreational, commercial, and entertainment hub with extensive, landscaped public park space and other amenities for public recreation. The redevelopment would promote economic development, enhance the visitor experience, increase tourism, and create thousands of quality jobs for area residents. Furthermore, the Proposed Project would include the many infrastructure improvements described above that would facilitate public enjoyment of the new development and complement the existing major public and private investment in Willets Point and surrounding neighborhoods. New public park space, transit and highway improvements, and other public amenities proposed as part of the Queens Future Project are made possible with the creation of the mixed-use recreational and entertainment hub.

Furthermore, the Applicant would partner with local suppliers and vendors to maximize positive spillover effects into the local and regional economy from visitors to the Queens Future Project. The Applicant would also work to maximize local hiring for the over 7,000 jobs created by the project and prioritize opportunities for unemployed or underemployed individuals from the surrounding communities, including through outreach and partnerships with local organizations. In addition, the Proposed Project may contribute to the growth of small businesses in adjacent neighborhoods through business-to-business interactions and by providing access to expanded clienteles and spillover visitor spending, including through partnerships and promotion of local businesses.

In addition, the creation of significant new public open spaces would provide a major new amenity to visitors and local residents alike, including residents of Flushing, Corona, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and the Willets Point neighborhood. The replacement of impermeable surface parking with a mix of at-grade landscaped open space as well as photovoltaic solar panels and softscape on top of floodplain-compliant structures would also help reduce stormwater runoff and improve the site's resiliency by enhancing biodiversity and mitigating the heat-island effect. The proposed realignment of roadways, traffic management measures, and improvements to waterfront pathways would enhance connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and other resources. Replacing an expanse of asphalt surface parking with new open space, dining, and entertainment uses would create jobs and benefit local residents, workers, sports fans, the broader Queens neighborhoods, and New York City as a whole.

[9] There are temporary pop-up events that operate in the parking lots of Citi Field on a seasonal basis under temporary agreements such as outdoor movie nights and carnivals. None of these events have long term contracts, nor are there other standing businesses within the Development Site.

Analysis Framework

The *2021 CEQR Technical Manual* will serve as guidance on the methodologies and impact criteria for evaluating the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Project that would result from the required approvals. As the Proposed Project would be complete and operational in 2030, the environmental setting for analysis is not the current environment, but the future environment. To the extent that the Proposed Actions allows for a range of possible scenarios that are considered reasonable and likely, the scenario with the worst environmental consequences is chosen for CEQR analysis. This is considered to be the reasonable worst-case development scenario (RWCDS), the use of which ensures that, regardless of which scenario actually occurs, its impacts would be no worse than those considered in the environmental review. The CEQR assessment examines the incremental differences between the RWCDS of the future without the proposed actions in place (No-Action condition) and the future with the proposed actions in place and the associated development operation (With-Action condition).

For the purpose of the environmental analyses, the No-Action condition represents the future absent the proposed actions and serves as the baseline by which the proposed project (or With-Action condition) is compared to determine the potential for significant environment impacts. The difference between the No-Action and With-Action conditions represents the increment to be analyzed in the CEQR process.

Future No-Action Condition

Absent the Proposed Actions, it is assumed that the Development Site would continue operating under existing conditions; it would remain as a paved parking area for Citi Field under the current lease agreement with the City, which runs through 2105. The surface parking lots within the Development Site currently contain 7,423 parking spaces. **Appendix A** identifies the No-Build projects anticipated to be completed by 2030 in the study areas to be considered in the various technical analyses of the EIS.

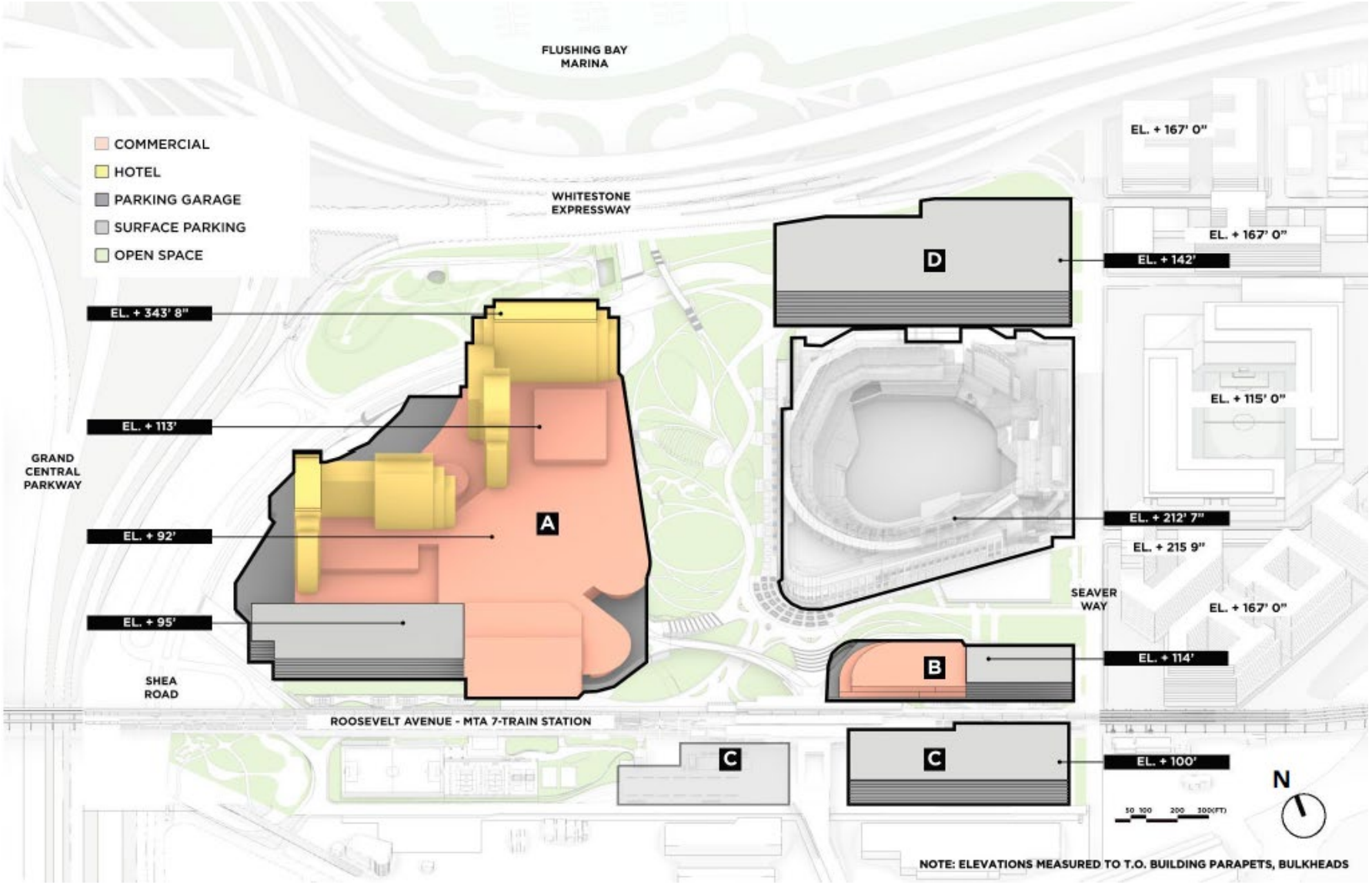
Future With-Action Condition

The Proposed Actions would establish the use, size, building location and other key features of the Proposed Project. The With-Action condition program is shown in **Table 1-2** and reflects the reasonable worst-case development scenario that can be developed in accordance with the Proposed Actions described above.

For purposes of analyzing a reasonable worst-case development scenario in terms of the proposed massing and heights, a maximum envelope for each Area of Development has been established, aspects of which are shown in **Figure 1-18**. The maximum height would be 344 feet for the tallest portions of Area of Development A, 114 feet for Area of Development B, 100 feet for Area of Development C, and 142 feet for Area of Development D. The Proposed Actions would establish the use, size, building location, and other key features of the Proposed Project. The With-Action condition program is shown in **Table 1-2** and reflects the reasonable worst-case development scenario that can be developed in accordance with the Proposed Actions described above. In particular, this program represents the maximum amount of development that the Gaming Facility Location Board may authorize in its approval of a gaming facility license application. A license issued by the New York State Gaming Commission to operate a gaming facility would be conditioned upon and require construction in accordance with the specific development program authorized in the application. As a result, the Applicant would not be permitted to exceed the amounts listed in **Table 1-2**.

As noted in **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy**, a soccer-specific stadium is proposed in the future No-Action condition as part of the Willets Point-Phase 2 Development. The Willets Point-Phase 2 Development Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (CEQR No. 23DME005Q) dated February 23, 2024, states that parking for attendees of events at the soccer-specific stadium would be on the Development Site via an agreement with Ballpark, LLC. Standards for the timing of events at the soccer-specific stadium and Citi Field will be established to ensure parking spaces are not required for both venues at the same time.

Figure 1-18 RWCDS Building Envelopes



Source: SHoP Architects

Analysis (Build Year)

It is assumed that all elements of the Proposed Project would be completed and operational in 2030. It is anticipated that the Proposed Project would be constructed in several stages (see **Chapter 20, Construction**), during which time Citi Field would remain operational. The staged construction approach would allow for the availability of parking for Citi Field patrons during the baseball seasons throughout the entire construction program. The new developments at Areas of Development A and B would not open to the public until 2030. The structured parking and development within Development A would be constructed between 2026 and 2030 and operational in 2030 when the full development is open to the public. The structured parking and development within Development B would be constructed between 2028 and 2030 and operational in 2030 when the full development is open to the public. The balance of the parking on site would be constructed and delivered in phases prior to 2030. It is anticipated that the parking structure within Development D would be constructed between 2026 and 2028, and operational beginning in early 2028. The parking structure at within Development C would be constructed between 2026 and 2027 and operational beginning in late 2027.

Environmental Review Process

City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR)

CEQR is a process by which agencies review discretionary actions for the purpose of identifying the impacts those actions may have on the environment. The City of New York established CEQR regulations in accordance with SEQRA. Pursuant to the SEQRA (Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law) and its implementing regulations found at 6 NYCRR Part 617, New York City has established rules for its own environmental quality review in Executive Order 91 of 1977, as amended, and 62 RCNY Chapter 5, the Rules of Procedure for CEQR. The environmental review process provides a means for decision-makers to systematically consider environmental effects along with other aspects of project planning and design, to propose reasonable alternatives, and to identify, and when practicable mitigate, significant adverse environmental impacts. CEQR rules guide environmental review, as follows:

- **Establish a Lead Agency**. Under CEQR, the "lead agency" is the public entity responsible for conducting environmental review. In accordance with CEQR rules (62 RCNY §5-03), MOEC is serving as the CEQR lead agency for environmental review.
- **Environmental Review and Determination of Significance**. The lead agency determines whether a proposed action(s) may have a significant impact on the environment. To do so, MOEC, in this case, evaluated an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) dated November 8, 2023, for the Proposed Actions. Based on information contained in the EAS, and as the Proposed Actions are classified as a "Type I Action," MOEC determined that the Proposed Actions may have a significant adverse impact on the environment, as defined by statute, and issued a Positive Declaration requiring that an EIS be prepared in public open conformance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- **Scoping**. Along with its issuance of a Positive Declaration, MOEC issued a Draft Scope of Work for the EIS, dated November 21, 2023, marking the beginning of the comment period on the Draft Scope. "Scoping," or creating the scope of work, is the process of identifying the environmental impact analysis areas, the methodologies to be used, the key issues to be studied,

and creating an opportunity for others to comment on the study areas, methodologies, and areas of analysis presented in the scoping document. CEQR requires a public scoping meeting as part of the process. A public scoping meeting was held on December 21, 2023, at 4 PM. The public review period for agencies and the public to review and comment on the Draft Scope of Work was open through January 12, 2024. Modifications to the Draft Scope of Work for the project's EIS were made as a result of public and interested agency input during the scoping process. A Final Scope of Work document for the Proposed Project was issued on September 20, 2024.

- **Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)**. This DEIS was prepared in accordance with the Final Scope of Work and followed the methodologies and criteria for determining significant adverse impacts in the *CEQR Technical Manual*. The lead agency reviewed all aspects of the document, calling on other City and state agencies to participate where the agency's expertise is relevant. Once the lead agency was satisfied that the DEIS was complete, it issued a Notice of Completion and circulated the DEIS for public review.
- **Public Review.** Publication of the DEIS and issuance of the Notice of Completion signals the start of the public review period. During this time, the public has the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS either in writing or at a public hearing convened for the purpose of receiving such comments. When the CEQR process is coordinated with the ULURP process, the public hearings are held jointly. All substantive comments received at the hearing become part of the CEQR record and must be summarized and responded to in the FEIS.
- **Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)**. After the close of the public comment period for the DEIS, the FEIS is prepared. The FEIS must address relevant comments on the DEIS, either in a separate chapter or in changes to the body of the text, graphics, and tables. Once the lead agency determines the FEIS is complete, it will issue the Notice of Completion and circulate the FEIS.
- **Findings**. To document that the responsible public decision-makers have taken a hard look at the environmental consequences of a proposed project, agencies taking discretionary actions regarding the project must adopt a formal set of written findings, reflecting their conclusions about the significant adverse environmental impacts of the project, potential alternatives, and potential mitigation measures. The findings may not be adopted until ten (10) days after the Notice of Completion has been issued for the FEIS. Once findings are adopted, the lead and involved agencies may take their actions.