1.0 Project Description

A. INTRODUCTION

Terra Cotta, LLC, the Applicant, proposes to expand and enhance the production operations of Silvercup Studios in Long Island City (Figure 1-1). Silvercup Studios is the Northeast's largest television and movie production studio facility. The expanded production studios would increase employment, enhance opportunities in one of New York City's key industries, and help to further establish New York City as the Northeast's premiere location for film and television production. The Proposed Action, through the development of "Silvercup West," would also provide for a mix of uses intended to further enliven the Queens waterfront with the development of new residential, office, cultural, and recreational uses, and the provision of improved access to the East River on the Project Site.

Provided in this chapter of the environmental impact station (EIS) is a description of the Proposed Action in sufficient detail to provide the public and decision-makers with a clear understanding of the full range of governmental actions required to implement the Proposed Action and to assess its impacts. Included is:

- A description of the Proposed Action (i.e., the discretionary public action(s) required to implement the Project).
- A detailed description of the proposed development project (the "Project") for which discretionary public actions would be required.
- A description of the planning rationale and purpose and need for the Proposed Action.

B. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

1. Overview

The Applicant seeks approval by the City Planning Commission (CPC) of an amendment to the zoning map for the area bounded by the northern boundary of the existing M1-4 district to the north at the northern limit of the Queensboro Bridge, the midpoint of Vernon Boulevard to the east, the midpoint of 43rd Avenue to the south, and the East River to the west (the Rezoning Area) (Figure 1-1). The Rezoning Area comprises Block 477, Lots 7, 13, 15, 20 and 24. In addition, the Applicant is seeking related CPC and Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) approvals to enable development of an approximately 2.77 million gross square feet (gsf) mixed-use development (Silvercup West) on Block 477, Lots 13, 15, 20, and 24 (the Project Site). The floor area ratio (FAR) of the proposed project would be approximately 8.0. The Project Site is bounded by the Queensboro Bridge on the north, Vernon Boulevard on the east, 43rd Avenue on the south, and the East River on the west. The Project Site (Block 477, Lots 13, 15, 20, and 24) is located within an M1-4 district, and is also located within the area covered by the Waterfront Access Plan Q-1 (WAP) for Northern Hunters Point. The Project would be privately financed by Terra Cotta, LLC, and require a number of City, State and federal approvals, as detailed in Section F of this chapter. The Build Year for the Proposed Action is 2009.

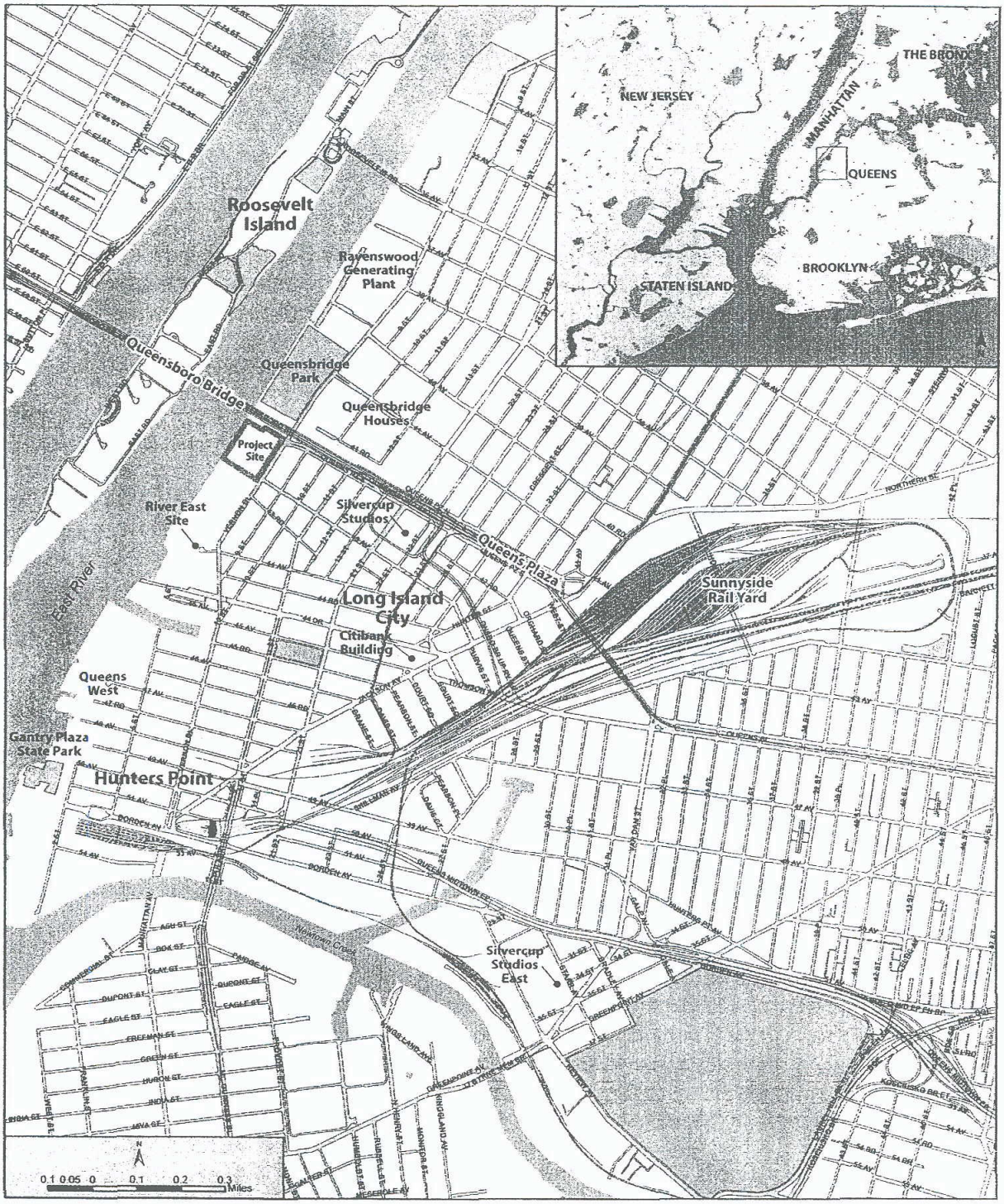
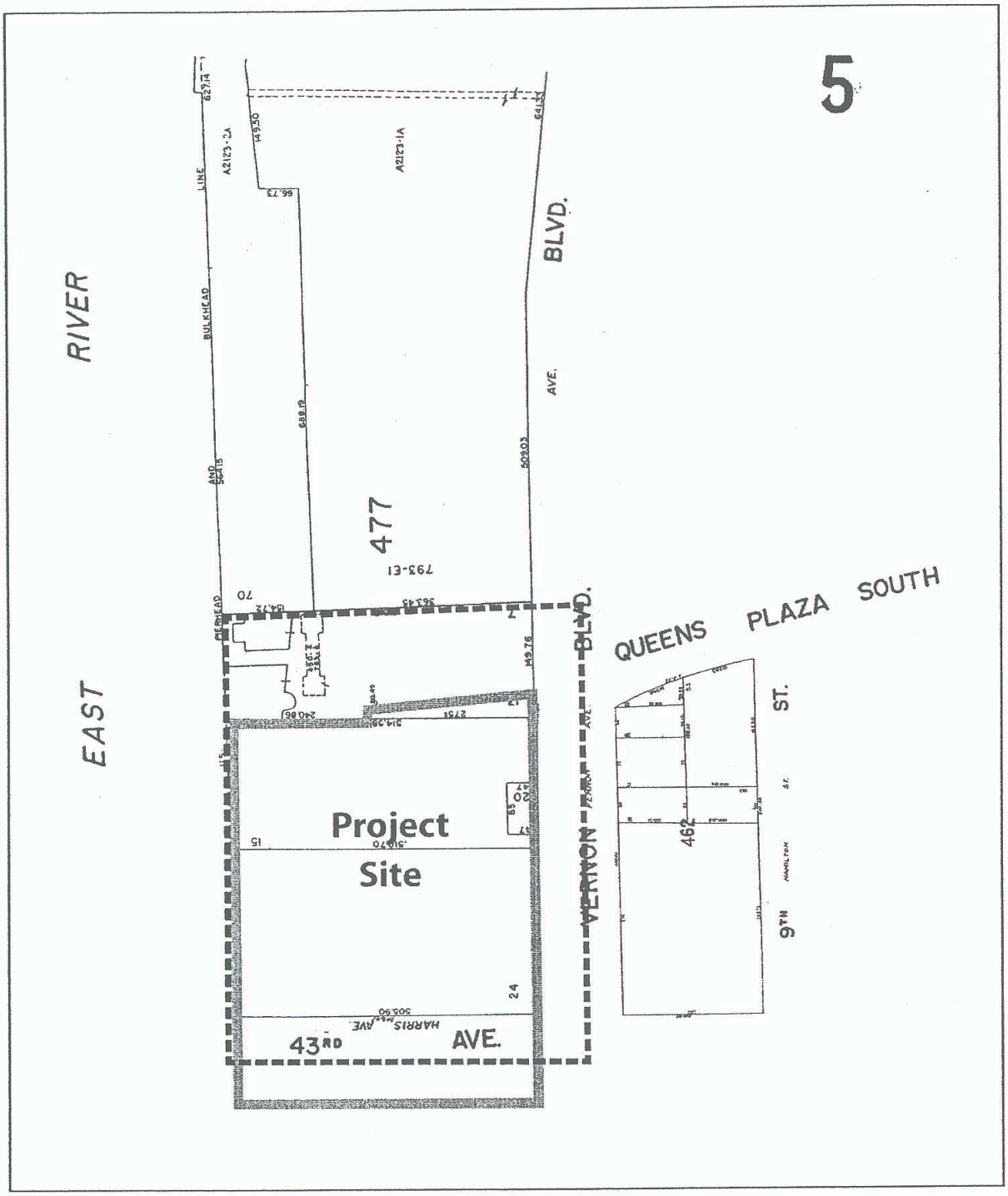


FIGURE 1-1:
PROJECT LOCATION



Project Site

Proposed Zoning District Boundary

FIGURE 1-2:
REZONING AREA AND PROJECT SITE

The Applicant intends to obtain Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for the Project. Several aspects of the Project would be important to achieving certification. These include the location of the Project Site in the vicinity of extensive public transit and existing utilities infrastructure, a carefully managed construction process, water and energy efficiency in building operations, the building materials selected, and efforts to achieve good indoor environmental quality. Identified and potential soil and water contaminants on-site would be managed in conformance with all local and state requirements (see Chapter 17, "Hazardous Materials"). Stormwater run-off would be appropriately managed to ensure that water quality and wildlife habitat would not be adversely affected (see Chapters 13, "Infrastructure"; 14, "Solid Waste"; 15, "Energy; "16, "Natural Resources"; and 20, "Waterfront Revitalization Program"). Further, there would be no significant adverse impacts to existing water supply or Water Pollution Control Plant operations. Through its location and design, Silvercup West would be carefully integrated into its surroundings to ensure its place as an environmentally sustainable part of Long Island City throughout the lifetime of the structure.

The approximately 6.0-acre Project Site is currently occupied, in part, by a temporary New York Power Authority (NYPA) facility on Lot 24, the former New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company building on Lot 20, and a New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) open storage pile of sand and salt located within the mapped but unopened segment of 43rd Avenue on the southern edge of the Project Site (Figure 1-3).

2. Preferred Development Program and Potential Variations

The proposed Project would be comprised of a broad range of uses, including television and film production studios, residential, office and retail uses, museum and/or other cultural or community facilities, a health club, a restaurant, and a catering facility. The Preferred Development Program represents the Applicant's current development plans for the Project Site.

The EIS would also evaluate three variations to the Preferred Development Program, in which the office space is replaced by an equivalent amount of residential space (Variation 1: Residential), the community facilities are replaced by an equivalent amount of studio uses (Variation 2: Studio), and the office space is replaced by an equivalent amount of residential space and the community facilities are replaced by an equivalent amount of studio uses (Variation 3: Residential and Studio).

These variations are assessed at the end of each chapter throughout the EIS. Table 1-1 provides a summary of the Preferred Development Program and the three potential variations. All three variations could be accommodated within the building envelope that has been designed for the Preferred Development Program and would, therefore, require the same land use-related approvals as those for the Preferred Development Program.

The variations provide the Applicant the flexibility to adjust the proportion of uses based on potential changes in market conditions and are analyzed in the DEIS to provide an assessment of the full range of potential impacts which could result from approval of the Proposed Action.

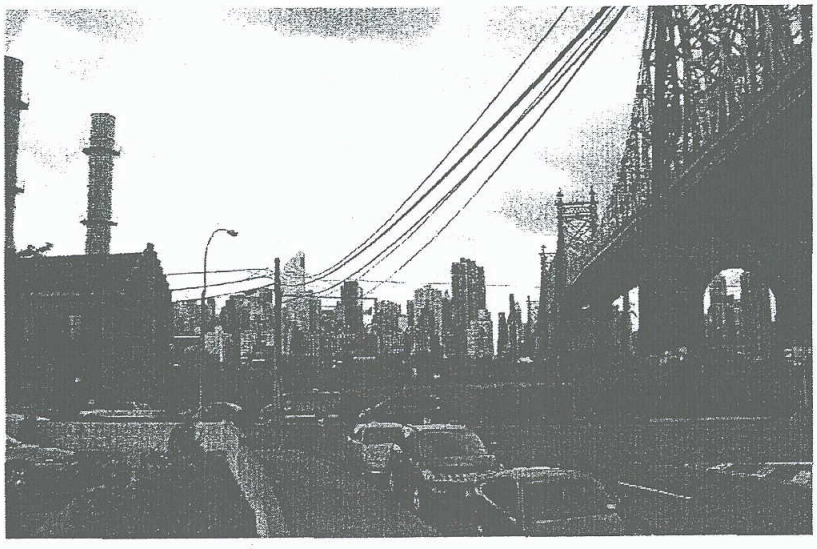


Photo 1

Project Site viewed from Vernon Boulevard with portion of former New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company building and adjacent Queensboro Bridge.

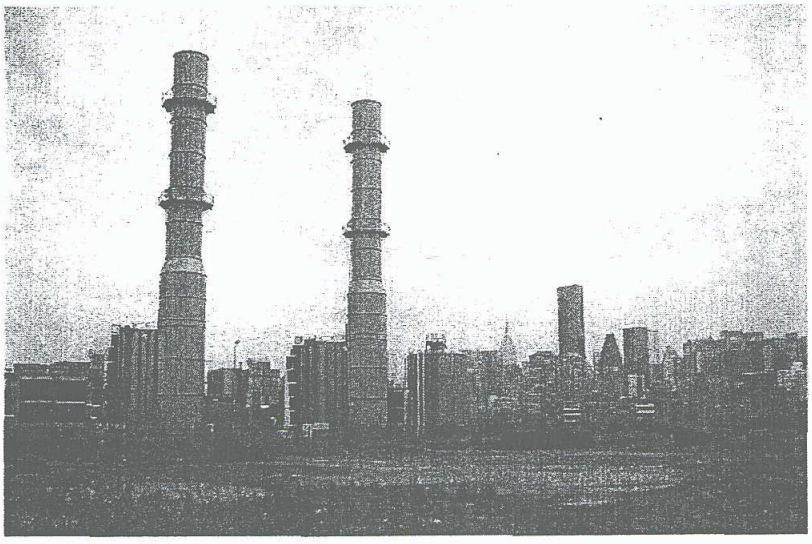


Photo 2

Southern portion of Project Site with NYPA temporary power plant looking southwest from Vernon Boulevard.

FIGURE 1-3: VIEWS OF SITE

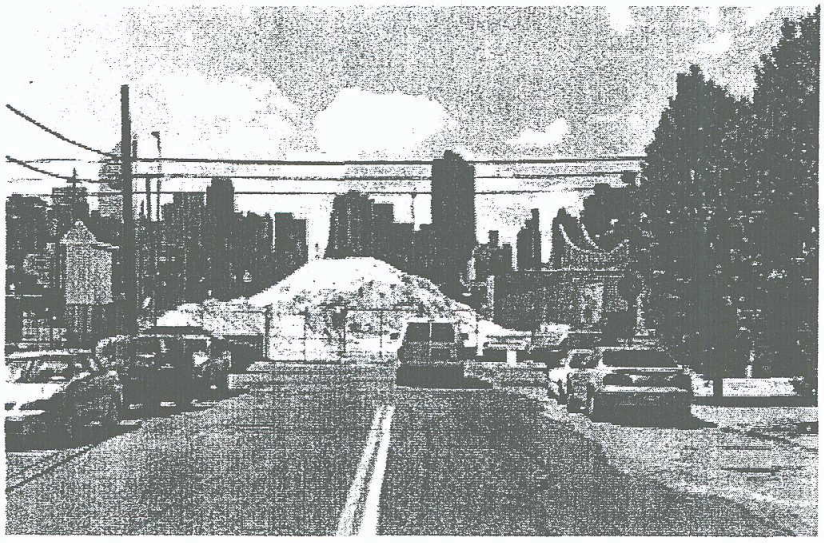


Photo 3

Manhattan skyline viewed from 43rd Avenue east of Vernon Boulevard, partly obscured by the DSNY salt and sand pile.

FIGURE 1-3: VIEWS OF SITE (CONTINUED)

TABLE 1-1: PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND POTENTIAL VARIATIONS

Use	Preferred Development Program (gsf)	Variation 1 *(Residential)* (gsf)	Variation 2 *(Studio)* (gsf)	Variation 3 *(Residential and Studio)* (gsf)
Residential	1,044,970	1,700,018	1,044,970	1,700,018
Commercial	816,538	161,490	816,538	161,490
Office	*655,048*	*0*	*655,048*	*0*
Retail	*76,581*	*76,581*	*76,581*	*76,581*
Health Club	*40,013*	*40,013*	*40,013*	*40,013*
Catering	*44,896*	*44,896*	*44,896*	*44,896*
Cultural/Community Facility	126,401	126,401	0	0
Studio/Studio Support	346,574	346,574	473,282	473,282
Loading/Parking	433,761	433,761	433,761	433,761
TOTAL Floor Area	**2,768,551**	**2,768,551**	**2,768,551**	**2,768,551**
Public Open Space (Upland Connection and Esplanade)	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000

Some aspects of the Preferred Development Program would stay the same in all three variations. These include the retail and restaurant space, the catering facility and the health club. However, as noted above, the variations include possible changes to the amounts of residential space, office use and studio and support space, and the community facility. Specifically:

- One variation ("Variation 1: Residential") replaces the 655,048 gsf of office space with an equivalent amount of residential space containing 655 apartments.
- A second variation ("Variation 2: Studio") replaces the 126,401 gsf cultural facility with an equivalent amount of studio and studio support space, including two additional studios.
- A third variation ("Variation 3: Residential and Studio") replaces the 655,048 gsf of office space with an equivalent amount of residential space containing 655 apartments and replaces the 126,401 gsf cultural facility with an equivalent amount of studio and studio support space, including two additional studios.

In all cases, the development would be subject to a Restrictive Declaration, described below, which would result in the same bulk and building envelope in the Preferred Development Program and the three variations. The Preferred Development Program and each of the three variations would also provide approximately 1,400 accessory parking spaces and new publicly accessible open space, and, although not subject to any action by the CPC, the restoration of the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company building on Lot 20 within the Project Site.

Both the NYPA power generating facility and the DSNY open storage pile of de-icing salt and sand located on the Project Site would be moved prior to construction of the Proposed Action under separate actions from those of the Proposed Action.

3. Restrictive Declaration

To ensure that the Project as constructed is within the building envelope shown on the drawings approved by the CPC and the City Council pursuant to the City Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP); that access to the Project is essentially at the locations analyzed in the EIS; and that the mix of uses in the Project is substantially consistent with either the Preferred Development Program

or one of the three variations described above, the Project sponsor would, at the time all land use-related actions required to authorize the Project's development are approved, execute and record against the Project Site a Restrictive Declaration that would:

- Provide design standards and requirements, and an envelope within which the Project's bulk could be arranged. The envelope, which is shown in Figures 1-4 and 1-5, would define (a) the maximum heights (inclusive of permitted obstructions) of each portion of the main roof and the towers, (b) the maximum outside dimensions in plan at each height, (c) and the minimum dimensions between the exterior walls of the building and the lot lines of its zoning lot.
- Delineate zones within which pedestrian and vehicular ingress to and egress from the building could be located and zones within which curb cuts or drop-off lanes could be located.
- Require that the Project be developed substantially in accordance with the Preferred Development Program or one of the three variations studied in this EIS.
- Describe for each variation any required mitigation measures for which the Project sponsor would be responsible and the time by which those measures are required to be implemented.
- Require that the landscaping of the Esplanade and Upland Connection conform to the design drawings approved pursuant to ULURP.

4. Special Permits

The Proposed Action would require Special Permits from the CPC and other discretionary public actions. The Special Permits would delineate, among other things, the two items listed below, which would also be included within the Restrictive Declaration, described previously, against the Project Site. The difference would be that the Restrictive Declaration would apply with or without use of the Special Permits. The Special Permits would:

- Provide an envelope within which the Project's bulk could be arranged. The envelope, which is shown as Figure 1-4, would define (a) the maximum heights (inclusive of permitted obstructions) of each portion of the main roof and the towers, (b) the maximum outside dimensions in plan at each height, (c) and the minimum dimensions between the exterior walls of the building and the lot lines of its zoning lot.
- Delineate zones within which pedestrian and vehicular ingress to and egress from the building could be located and zones within which curb cuts or drop-off lanes could be located.

In addition, the Special Permits would specify a generalized layout of the ground floor levels of the building, including frontage on streets, esplanade, and upland connection; roof plan, indicating areas of public access; and a detailed landscaping plan. The Special Permits would contain drawings of the accessory garage, showing reservoir spaces, attendant's booth location, and zones of ingress and egress; and zoning calculations including plans, sections, and elevations. The Special Permits would not contain the landscaping or treatment of private open spaces on the roof.

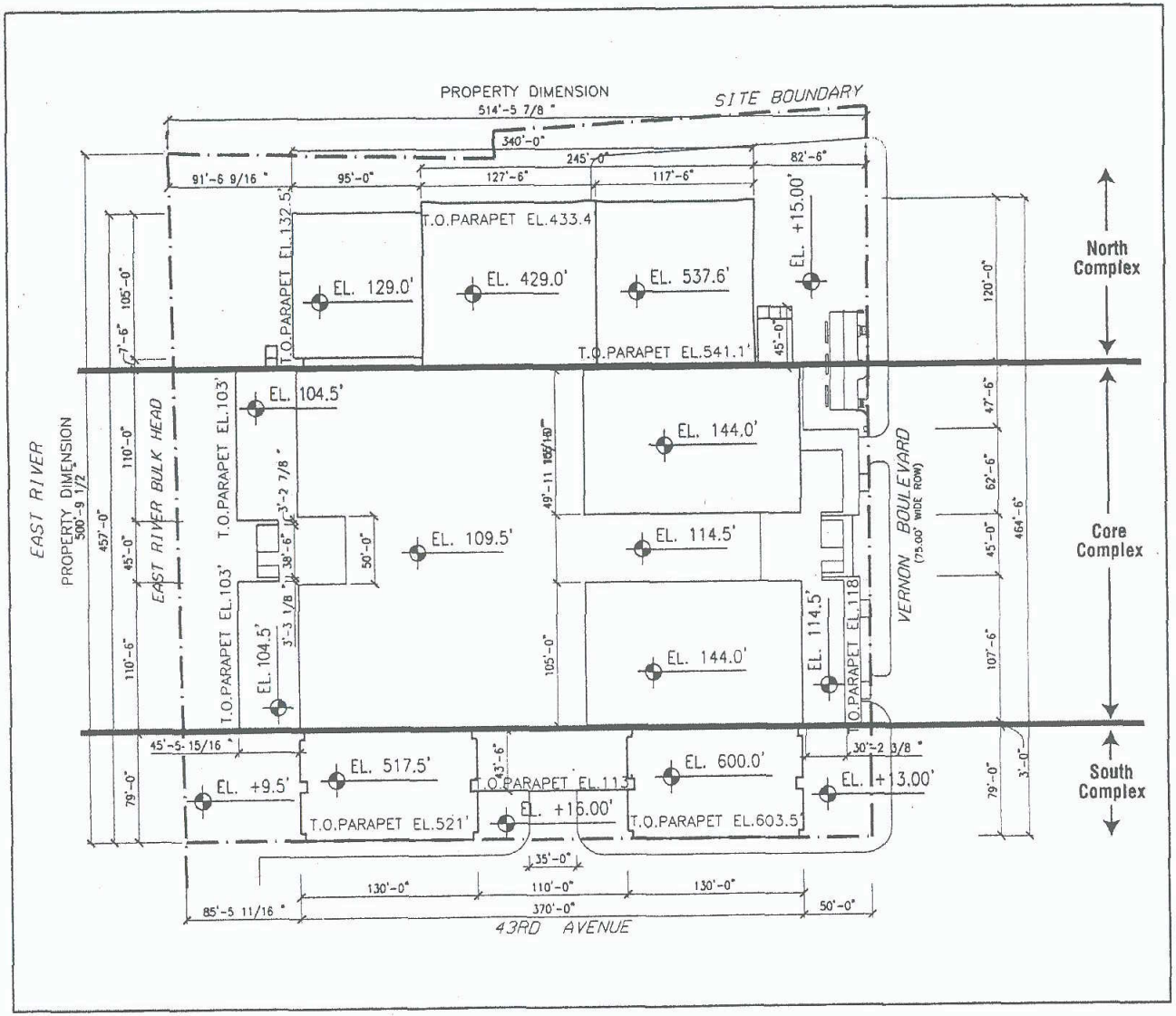


FIGURE 1-4:
MAXIMUM BUILDING ENVELOPE

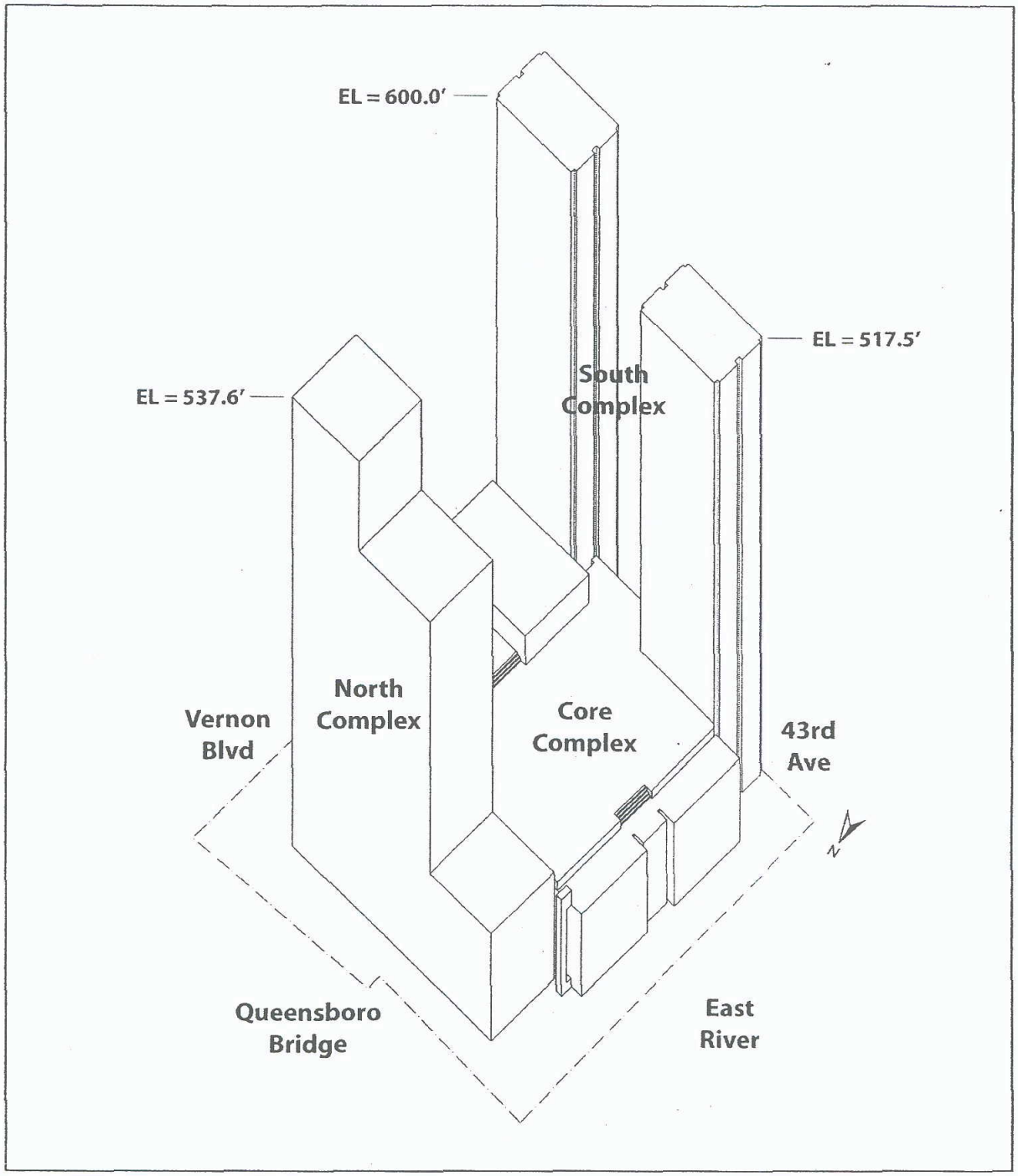


FIGURE 1-5:
AXONOMETRIC (3 DIMENSIONAL) SITE PLAN

C. BACKGROUND

Until the middle of the 20th Century, Long Island City was recognized as one of the City's most significant and important industrial and manufacturing areas. Since that time many of the traditional heavy manufacturing uses that predominated in Long Island City have been replaced by warehousing, automotive-related, light industrial, and service uses. Over the past several decades, the waterfront industrial uses that no longer required waterborne access for goods and materials have tended to relocate inland, where light manufacturing and warehousing uses predominate. Concurrently, office, educational and cultural uses have developed in Long Island City, including the Citibank Building, LaGuardia Community College, which is located within the former White Motor Company and Equitable Bag Company factory buildings on Thomson Avenue, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, and the SculptureCenter. Movie and television production studios have also located in the area, led by Silvercup Studios, whose principal facility is located in the former Silvercup Bakery. Although it continues to be home to manufacturing and transportation-related uses, including rail yards, the Queens–Midtown Tunnel, and the Queensboro Bridge, Long Island City is experiencing a significant change in land uses as exemplified by the 75-acre Queens West Waterfront Mixed-Use Development Project, the River East Development, and the City-approved Special Long Island City Mixed Use District and Expanded Hunters Point Subdistrict. Silvercup West would be consistent with this trend toward the creation of an active 24-hour mixed-use neighborhood along the East River waterfront in Queens.

Silvercup Studios' principal facility ("Main Lot") is located in the former Silvercup Bakery Company building, approximately one-half mile east of the Project Site. The first studio at the Main Lot was constructed in 1983 in what was the former flour silo room of the vacant Silvercup Bakery. Additional space within the former bakery building was converted into studio space through the 1990s. In 1999, Silvercup Studios acquired a former steel fabricating plant located at 34-02 Starr Avenue, approximately one mile east of the Main Lot, and converted it into an additional studio facility ("Silvercup East"). Silvercup Studios is currently comprised of thirteen studios ranging in size from 3,000 to 18,000 square feet at the Main Lot and five 16,000-square-foot studios at Silvercup East. In addition to providing production facilities, Silvercup has a fully-equipped on-site lighting and grip department as well as a lumber yard containing necessary building supplies for the construction of sets and scenery. It has been the home to such television shows as *The Sopranos*, *Sex and the City*, *Hope & Faith*, and many others. Over 400 commercials are produced at the Studios each year. Numerous major films have also been shot at the Studios, including *Uptown Girls*, *Birth*, *Godfather III*, and *When Harry Met Sally*. Silvercup Studios has worked closely with the City in its efforts to attract and retain the film and television production industry.

The Project Site is located south of the Queensboro Bridge on the Long Island City waterfront and the westernmost extension of Queens Plaza. It is currently located within an M1-4 light manufacturing district. M1 districts allow commercial uses as-of-right as well as a wide range of manufacturing and related uses that conform to a high standard of performance. As-of-right community facility uses are limited to open space uses listed within Use Group 4B of the Zoning Resolution. The maximum permitted FAR in an M1-4 District is 2.0 for commercial and manufacturing uses and 6.5 for community facility uses. Because the Project Site is located on a waterfront block, its redevelopment is governed by Section 62-00 of the Zoning Resolution, which establishes minimum setback, maximum building height, rear yard, waterfront public access, and visual corridor requirements for new development along the waterfront. Development of the site for Silvercup West would require that its zoning be changed to a M1-5/R10 Special Mixed Use District designation to permit development of a density and range of uses proposed.

D. PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need for the proposed Project are described below, and include:

- The need to meet current and anticipated demand for film and television production facilities that conform to industry standards;
- The need to compete against other venues offering film and television production facilities;
- The need to support the redevelopment of Long Island City as a "24-hour" neighborhood containing a mix of industrial, commercial, residential, retail, cultural and open space uses contributing to the vitality of Queens as a whole; and
- The need to provide improved access to the East River waterfront from locations in Queens.

Need to meet current and anticipated demand for film and television production facilities that conform to industry standards. Silvercup Studios is the largest independent full-service film and television production facility in the northeastern United States. Silvercup Studios does not produce films, television shows, videos or commercials itself, but instead, provides rental space and support facilities to the film and television industry. Silvercup is a significant and vital contributor to the City's $5 billion (annual) film and television industry. Expansion of Silvercup Studios is needed to meet current demand for production space and to maintain its place in the highly competitive film and television production market.

The City and State have made efforts to attract and retain film and television production businesses. Most recently, this has included State and City legislation that provides significant tax benefits to productions in New York City and State, thereby increasing the City's competitiveness relative to other production locations. In August of 2004 the State legislature approved and Governor Pataki signed into law a 10 percent tax credit for certain qualified productions working in New York State. The City Council passed and Mayor Bloomberg signed into law companion local legislation granting an additional 5 percent credit which became effective in 2005. The City has also instituted its "Made in New York Incentive Program" which, in addition to the tax credits, offers outdoor media equal in value to 1 percent of a production's total spend in New York City. Qualifying productions can make use of city-owned bus shelters and other media outlets owned by the City of New York for co-branded advertising related to the Made in NY production.

In addition to the direct and indirect economic activity they generate, television and film productions using New York City as a backdrop serve to enhance the City's tourist industry. The images of New York City in movies and on television shows have proven to be great marketing vehicles to domestic and foreign tourists.

The Project would enable Silvercup to meet needs not currently met by the City's inventory of studio space, thus enabling more production to come to New York. Silvercup's current inventory of 18 stages in two different locations was created by reutilizing existing industrial space. While Silvercup has been very successful in recent years new, wider stages with greater ceiling heights would allow the City to attract more television and movie production. In addition the television and movie industry requires a tremendous amount of support space (construction shops, set and prop storage, catering spaces, wardrobe, dressing rooms, production offices, etc.) which have not been sufficiently available as part of the existing New York City studio complexes.

The Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting estimates that the motion picture, video, broadcasting, and performing arts sectors employed approximately 100,000 individuals in the $5 billion production industry in New York City in 2004. This ranked 13th among 99 catalogued industries in the City that year. However, New York lagged significantly behind Los Angeles in the

film and television production market. Currently, New York City accommodates 12 percent of North American production compared to 60 percent in Los Angeles.

The need for new production space is likely to increase as a consequence of anticipated increases in the number of television programs, movies and commercials under production. As of March 2005, *Variety* lists 222 television shows for United States-based networks or syndication that are in production. As of the same date, Variety also lists over 2,300 feature-length movies as produced in the United States in addition to over 1,050 as produced outside the United States. These include projects in development and in pre-production "turnaround", in production, and in post-production, as well as released films. Of the United States movies, 86 were scheduled for filming or had been filmed in New York.

Need to compete against other venues offering production facilities. The marketing of film and television production space is highly competitive. In addition to major locations in Los Angeles, production space can currently be found in locations throughout the country and abroad. In addition, the new State and City legislation providing tax benefits to production facilities in New York has resulted in the planning and design of new facilities in locations in the State outside of New York City, including facilities in Westchester County. Many states (e.g., Florida, Arizona, and California) and foreign countries (e.g., Canada) have established programs dedicated to the marketing of available production space for use by the television, movie and advertising sectors. Although New York City's experienced and high quality labor, particularly in the areas of production crews, script writers and acting talent provides the City with a competitive edge in attracting productions, expanded state-of-the-art production facilities would be a key factor in selecting the City as the preferred location for future productions.

Furthermore, given increased global and domestic competition for film production the enhanced amenities that a full service studio complex such as Silvercup West provides would improve the City's competitive advantage. An industry often previously relegated to old warehouses and armories in New York City would now enjoy the 24/7 atmosphere of Silvercup West, the ability to take a break during production and take pleasure in the waterfront views and restaurants and the synergy created by the addition of an office complex promoted to media and advertising companies.

Need to support the redevelopment of Long Island City as a "24-hour" neighborhood containing a mix of commercial, residential, retail, cultural and open space uses contributing to the vitality of Queens as whole. The home to more than 89,000 jobs, Long Island City is one of the largest regional employment centers in the Tri-State area, comparable to Jersey City (61,000 jobs), New Haven (65,000 jobs) and Stamford (68,000 jobs). The Citibank Building is a highly visible center of financial services employment, while the Silvercup and Kaufman Astoria Studios have made the district the Northeast's center of television and film production and post-production. Finding opportunities to allow for growth in commercial office space is critical to the City's future. The Group of 35, a committee of City and State leaders appointed by Senator Charles Schumer to consider the future of New York City, in its report, *Preparing for the Future: A Commercial Development Strategy for New York City*, recommended the development of a central business district (CBD) in Long Island City given the available sites for development in the area, its proximity to Midtown Manhattan, the availability of transportation infrastructure to serve the regional workforce, and the presence of nearby business support services.

There is a strong and growing demand for housing in the City. The City's housing vacancy rate, which was approximately 3.8 percent in 1991, declined to approximately 2.9 percent in 2002. This is well below the City and State statutory benchmark of 5 percent, which defines a severe housing shortage. Appropriately zoned for space is hard to find for new residential development. Given the continued projected increases in population, new residential development would be required, including the need for additional market rate housing. In addition, planning experience in the past

few decades demonstrated the value of a mix of commercial and residential uses that creates a 24-hour community. Battery Park City is an example of such a wholly new, successful mixed-use community. Queens West, currently under development, is further recognition of the need for a mix of uses to create a vital 24-hour community. The purpose and need for residential development, therefore, has two components: provide enough space to accommodate anticipated population growth and housing demands, and to support commercial development in a lively, mixed-use, 24-hour community.

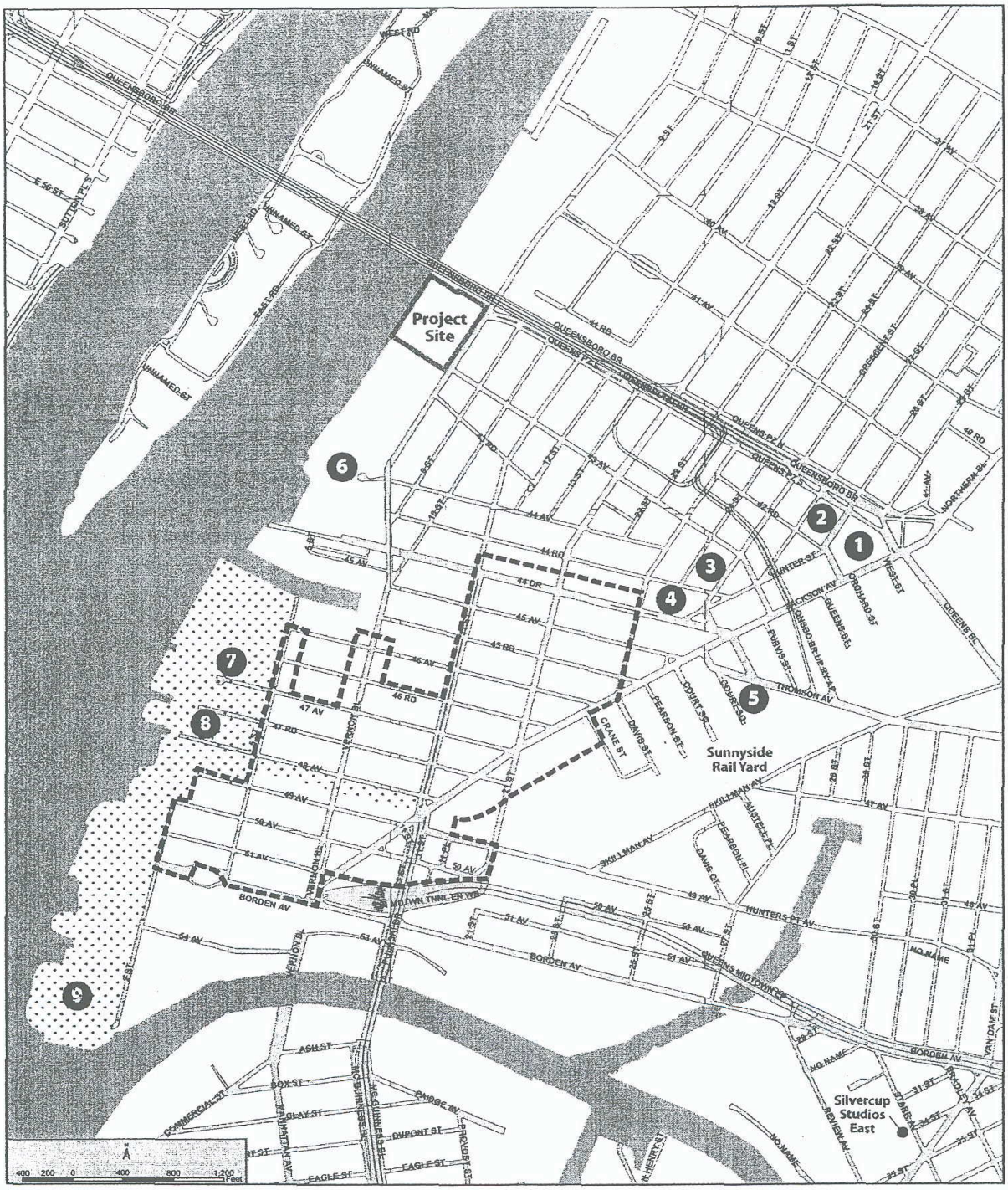
In addition, Long Island City has experienced the growth of a significant artist community and a number of related cultural institutions, including the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, the Museum for African Art, the Museum of the Moving Image, The Noguchi Museum, Socrates Sculpture Park, SculptureCenter, and the Fisher Landau Center for Art. The continued redevelopment of Long Island City for such uses is an acknowledged goal for the area.

Given this current mix of uses in the area, and recent approval of a similarly diverse group of uses along the Queens waterfront, further redevelopment of the area needs to include a variety of uses supportive of the overall plans for the development of Long Island City and the associated East River waterfront. This is evidenced by a number of City and State initiatives (Figure 1-6), including:

- Development of the 75-acre Queens West Waterfront Development Project, a public-private development project approved by the State and City in 1990 and currently under development by the Queens West Development Corporation, a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation. When completed, Queens West would contain over 6,400 residential units, 2 million gsf of commercial uses, 225,000 gsf of local retail, and 20 acres of public parks;
- The 1991 rezoning of the former East River Tennis Club site, permitting the current construction of approximately 960 apartments and related retail space as part of the "River East" development;
- City approval in 2001 of the Special Long Island City Mixed Use District, intended to promote the City's plan to create a fourth CBD in Long Island City and strengthen the mixed-use character of the area by stimulating new commercial and residential development; and
- City approval in 2004 of the approximately 43-block expanded Hunters Point Subdistrict intended to promote a mix of uses in the area, including up to 300 new residential units and mixed-use developments. It would contribute to the City's long-range plans to create a successful CBD in the Long Island City core centered around Queens Plaza and Court Square.

Silvercup West is intended to further meet the need for the continuing growth of Long Island City by providing a broad range of uses consistent with these public and private initiatives for the area, including uses supportive of the burgeoning arts, movie and television-related uses, in addition to commercial, residential, retail, and park uses intended to enliven the district.

Need to provide improved access to the East River waterfront from locations in Queens. The Queens waterfront along the East River in Long Island City was historically one of the City's most significant industrial areas. Public access to the waterfront has been limited due to the broad range of industrial uses located along the East River. Many of these uses have now left the area, providing opportunities for the establishment of new park land and improved public accessibility to the waterfront. Queens Community Board Number 2 in the Queens Community District Needs Statement for Fiscal Year 2004, has indicated that "open space and waterfront access continues [sic] to be a priority of this Board." More broadly, the creation of vibrant waterfronts and public open space is one of the guiding principles outlined in the *Strategic Plan* (2005), prepared by the New York City Department of City Planning (NYCDCP). A key element in revitalizing the City's waterfront is to provide improved access to the Hudson and East Rivers, including the development of public esplanades and associated public open space.



Long Island City Mixed Use District (Expanded Hunters Point Subdistrict)

Queens West Project Area

1 Municipal Garage Site Office Building
2 Block 422 Office Building
3 UN Federal Credit Union Office Building
4 Citibank-Court Square Two
5 Eagle Electric Site Residential Conversion (Andalex)
6 River East
7 Queens West: Parcels 3-7 (Rockrose)
8 Queens West: Parcels 8 & 9 (Avalon Bay)
9 Queens West: Parcels 17-20

FIGURE 1-6:
INITIATIVES IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROJECT SITE

E. PROPOSED BUILDING PROGRAM AND DESIGN

The proposed Project would include approximately 2.77 million gsf of production studio, commercial, residential, cultural, community facilities, retail, health club, and restaurant and catering uses within a central core structure and three high-rise towers (Figure 1-7a through Figure 1-7g and Figure 1-8).

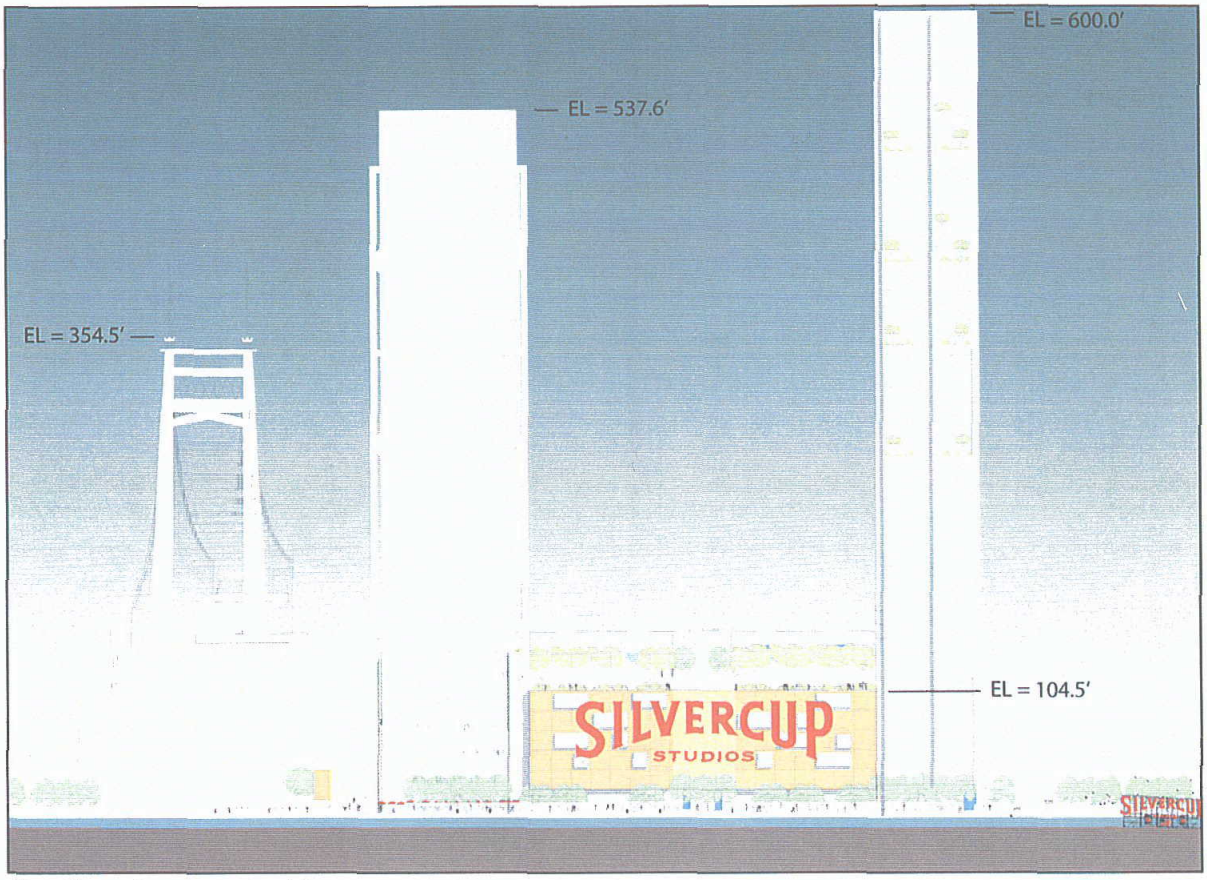
Consistent with urban design patterns of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island, where tall structures stand near the Queensboro Bridge, Silvercup West would establish a formal "gateway" to Long Island City, as approached via the bridge from Manhattan. Existing residential buildings on the Manhattan side of the bridge are positioned 80-90 feet south of the bridge. A Con Edison chimney is positioned between the 59th Street extension south of Sutton Place and the Queensboro Bridge, rising 20 feet from the bridge structure. As the Queensboro Bridges passes over Roosevelt Island, other chimney structures are within 50 feet of the roadway edge.

Silvercup West would be set back further from the bridge than these existing structures (approximately 80 feet at the northwest corner and 100 feet at the northeast corner), but the towers, which would stand at different heights, would be positioned across the site to complement the catenary arch of the historic structure. It is the Applicant's intention that steel x-bracing on the tower nearest the bridge would reflect similar structural forms integral to the Queensboro Bridge.

The central component of the proposed building program ("Silvercup West") would consist of a 114-foot-high central core structure ("Core Complex") that would cover approximately 40 percent of the Project Site (approximately 95,000 of surface square footage). The Core Complex would include television and film production studio space and a catering facility. To the north of the Core Complex, a mixed commercial office tower ("North Complex") would be constructed, with portions of the lower levels reserved for cultural/community facility space and a restaurant. To the south of the Core Complex, two residential towers above retail space and a health club are planned ("South Complex"). The uses contained within the three Complexes have been selected to complement each other and create a 24-hour environment. For example, proposed television and film production studio space would be supported by studio-related office uses; the health club would serve on site and off site residents, and cultural/community facility uses would draw the community to the publicly accessible open space that would be provided along the waterfront.

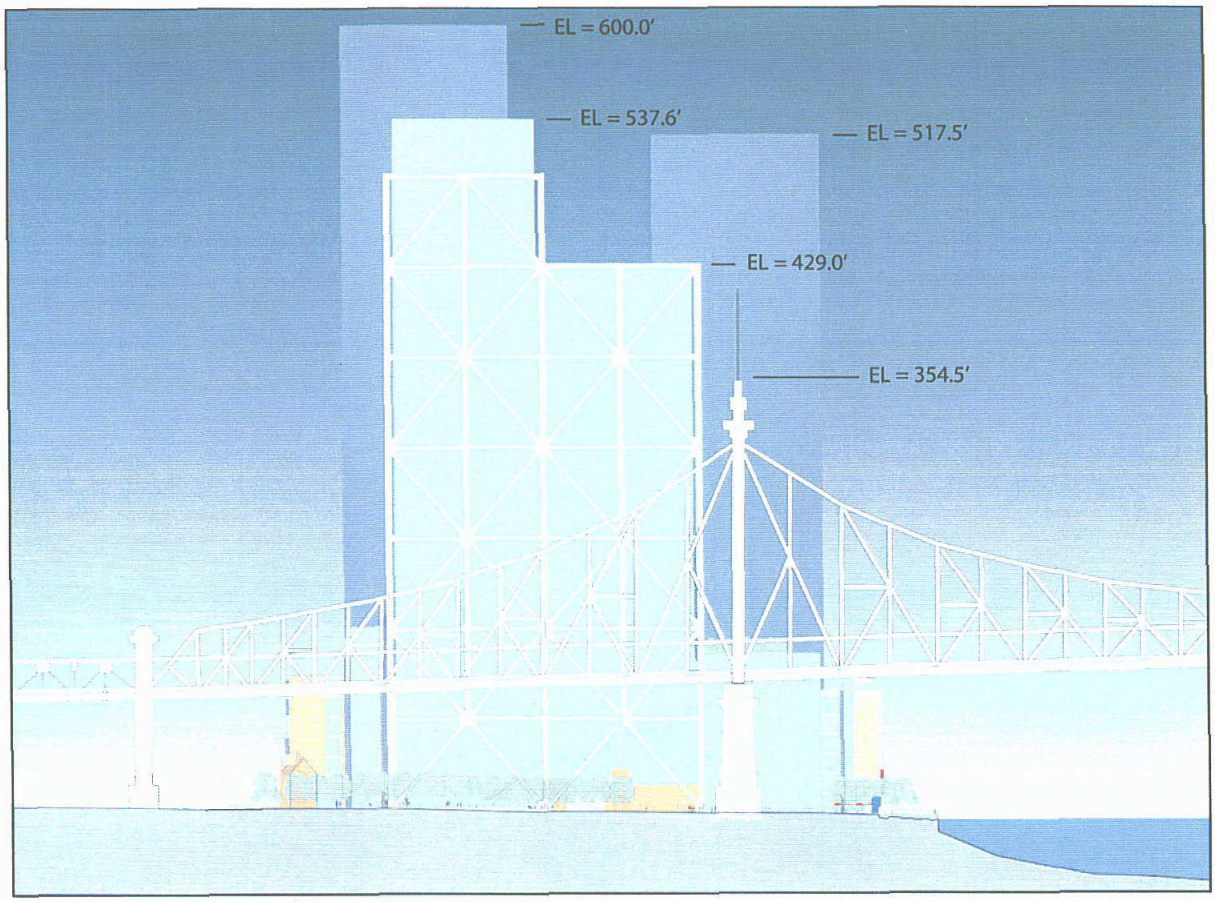
With the studios at the heart of the Project, Silvercup West seeks to solidify New York's position in the vital industry of film and television production. The eight stacked studios would meet both current and anticipated industry demands for high-volume and column-free spaces. The requisite support spaces, such as dressing rooms, company offices and storage rooms would bookend the studios, activating the east and west facades of this studio core. The office and residential buildings would be situated on the studios' northern and southern sides, respectively. Oriented with their long axes perpendicular to the East River, the office and residential towers would allow for maximized view corridors to the river and Manhattan from vantage points within Queens.

Silvercup West would enhance the experience of public space in Long Island City with careful site planning and attractive landscaping. Pathways and spaces integrated into the extension of Queens Plaza would lead pedestrians through the site to the East River Esplanade (Esplanade) constructed as part of the Project. The Esplanade, with pedestrian circulation paths, landscaping, and bulkhead balustrade is intended to rival the success, popularity, and importance of the Brooklyn Heights promenade. While highways disconnect Manhattan from its valuable waterfront areas, Silvercup West would reconnect the upland area of Long Island City to the East River and also spur other efforts to provide a continuous promenade experience along the East River.



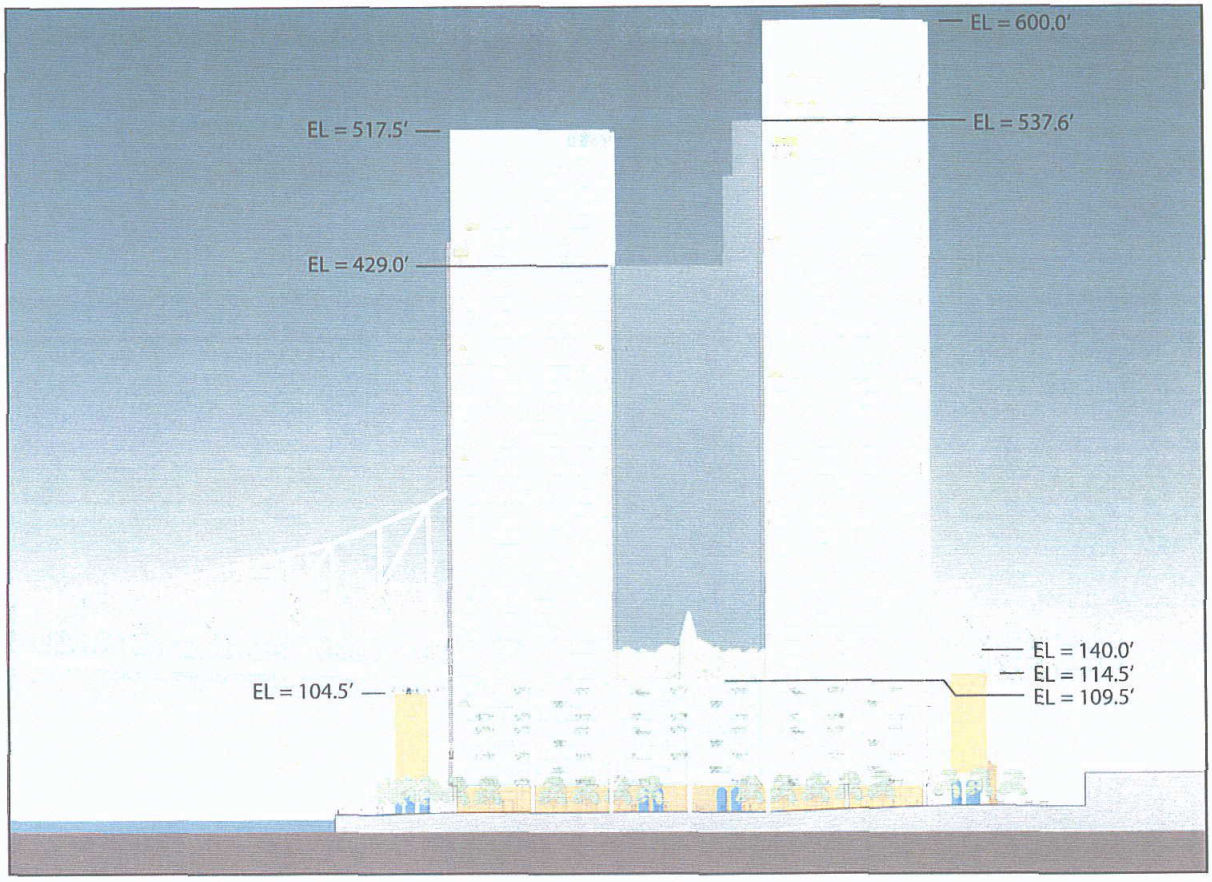
(For illustrative purposes only)

FIGURE 1-7A:
PROPOSED SILVERCUP WEST – WEST ELEVATION



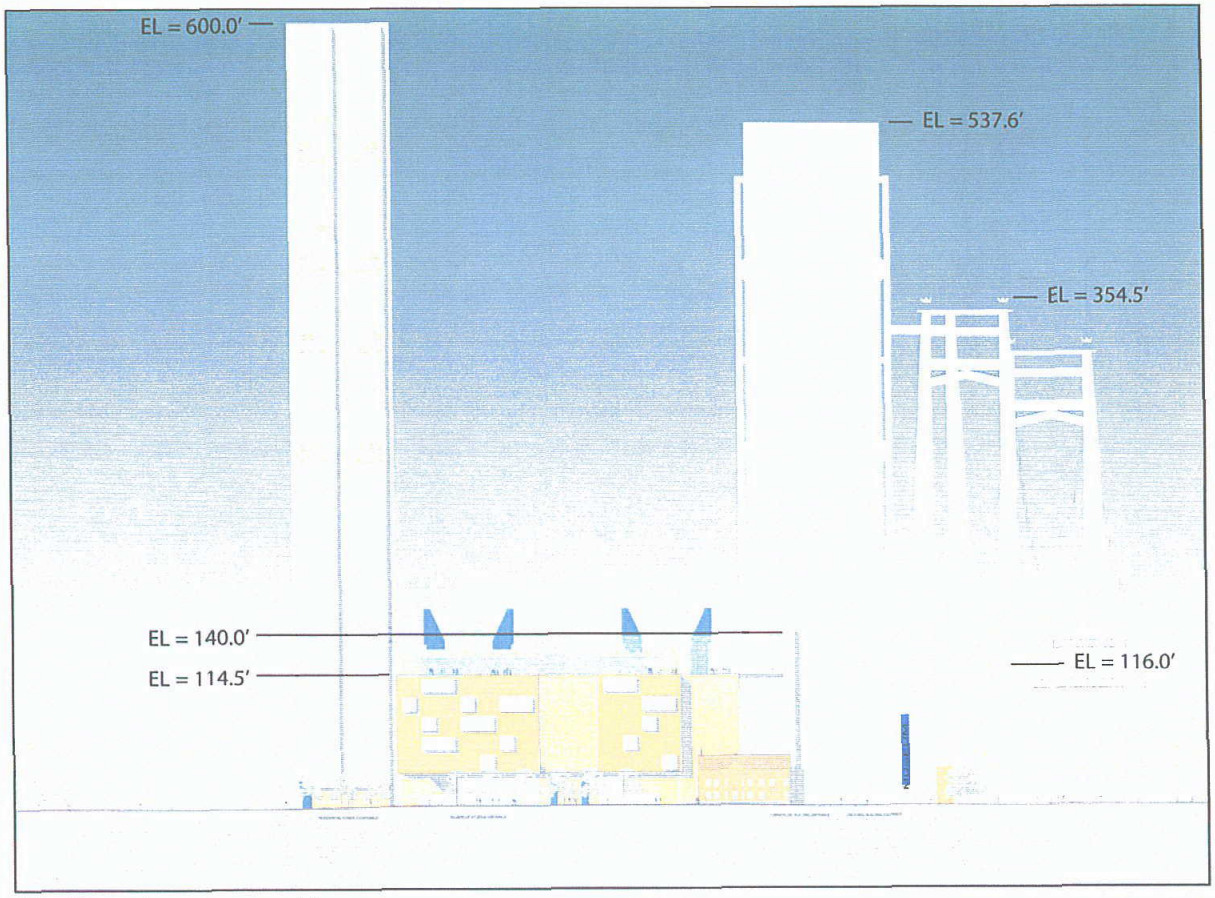
(For illustrative purposes only)

FIGURE 1-7B:
PROPOSED SILVERCUP WEST – NORTH ELEVATION



(For illustrative purposes only)

FIGURE 1-7C:
PROPOSED SILVERCUP WEST – SOUTH ELEVATION



(For illustrative purposes only)

FIGURE 1-7D:
PROPOSED SILVERCUP WEST – EAST ELEVATION



RENDERING 1-7E:
PROPOSED SILVERCUP WEST – WEST VIEW



RENDERING 1-7F:
PROPOSED SILVERCUP WEST – SOUTHWEST VIEW



RENDERING 1-7G:
PROPOSED SILVERCUP WEST – PANORAMIC AND NORTHWEST VIEWS

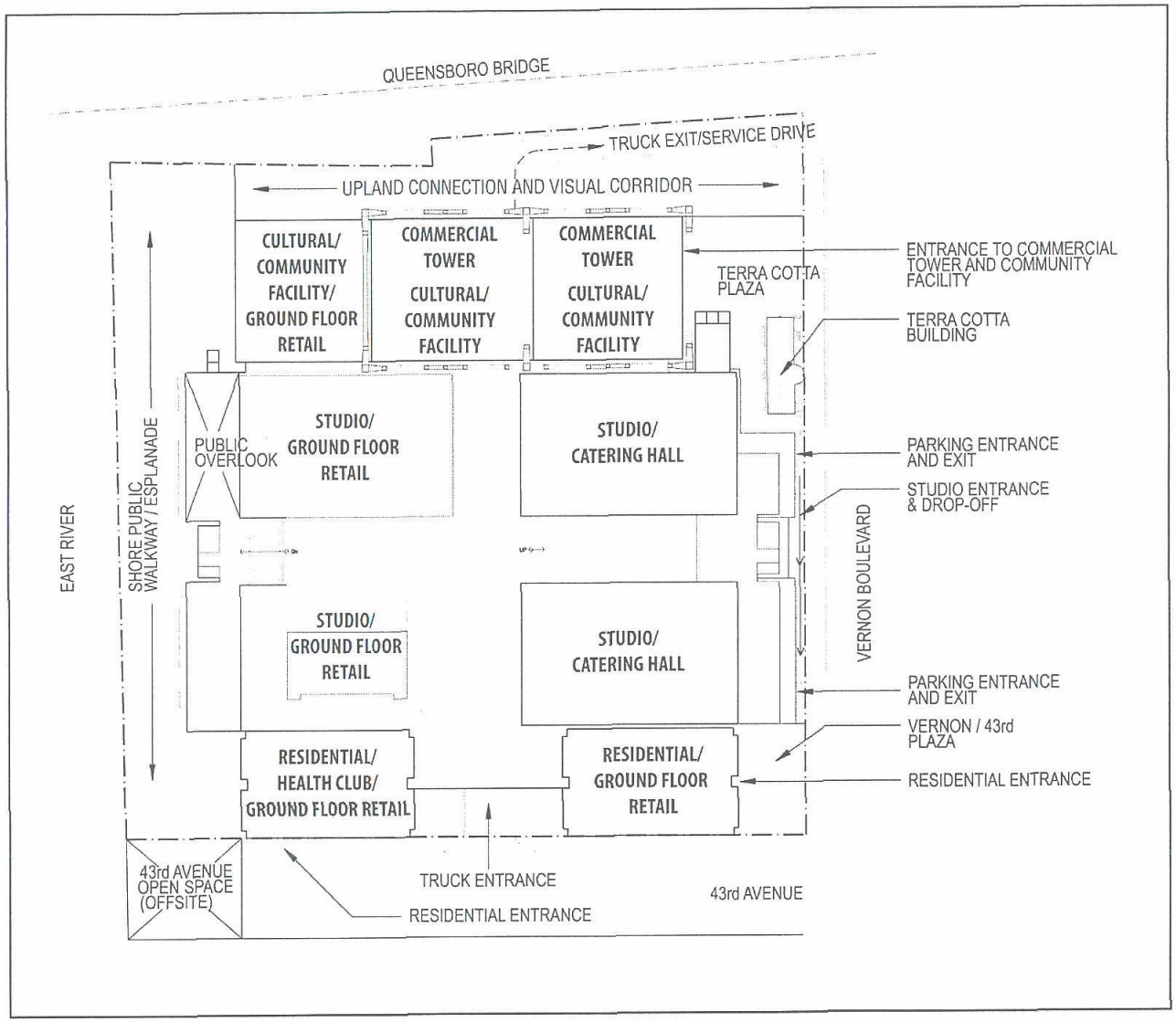


FIGURE 1-8:
PROPOSED SILVERCUP WEST – SITE PLAN

Silvercup West would enliven Vernon Boulevard and the Queens Plaza extension. Commercial uses would be anchored in 25 stories of Class-A office space above a community facility space at the northeast corner of the site, with its main entry lobby located at the corner of Queens Plaza and Vernon Boulevard. A six-story community facility component, retail, and studios would form a base for the office and residential towers and would be arranged to offer a suitable pedestrian scale in outdoor spaces surrounding ground-floor retail uses, office lobbies and residential entries. Tree-lined sidewalks on Vernon Boulevard would create a green edge to the Project Site, and the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company building, set against the new Silvercup West building, would be featured as an attractive enhancement to the streetscape as well. The Applicant intends to reference the history of the area by incorporating terra cotta building materials into the building façade. Terra cotta pavers and other details inspired by the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company works would also be used in the landscaping plan included in the Special Permits.

The outdoor public space arranged along the northern edge of the Project Site, with clear pathways and seating areas, would provide vantage points from which to appreciate striking, up-close views of the Queensboro Bridge. In addition, it is the Applicant's intention to include a series of escalators located behind a transparent wall to bring people up and along the space of the Queensboro Bridge, to a promontory overlooking the East River, the bridge, and the Manhattan skyline. The rooftops above the studios spaces (between the office and residential buildings), would include several commercial amenities: a catering facility, a health club, a restaurant, and a series of outdoor terrace gardens, one of which would be fully accessible to the public.

The residential towers would be situated along the southern edge of the site with front entries on 43rd Avenue and Vernon Boulevard. Comprised of one 49-story and one 57-story tower, the residential component would help to meet the increasing demand for housing in New York City. Additionally, a plaza-like space at the end of the 43rd Avenue view corridor at the southern face of the residential towers would provide an additional point by which to access the Esplanade and enjoy panoramic views of Manhattan.

Access to each Complex has been designed to encourage the mixing of uses and to animate the street along the perimeter of the building. For example, the office and cultural/community facility uses in the North Complex would share a common entrance, while the studio space in the Core Complex would have its own entrance, as would each of the residential towers. Each of the three complexes would include direct access to both Vernon Boulevard and the Esplanade. The North Complex would also be accessed from the Upland Connection (along the northern border of the Project Site) and the South Complex would also be accessed from 43rd Avenue (along the southern border).

The Project design balances pedestrian ingress and egress, automobile access, and truck access for studio and general deliveries. To minimize disruption to the site and to alleviate potential congestion on surrounding roadways, the Silvercup West design provides easy circulation of vehicles. Since normal production studio activity would require that trucks service the site, the Project design allows for truck access within the studios' core complex: trucks would maneuver, park, load, and unload all within the building. Trucks would enter the site on 43rd Avenue, at approximately mid-block. They would exit the site through the north end of the building and move along the Queens Plaza roadway extension. Automobiles would enter and exit on Vernon Boulevard, at approximately the mid-point between Queens Plaza South and 43rd Avenue. These vehicle access schemes would facilitate safe, easy, and coordinated access to Silvercup West.

From north to south, the following summarizes the major elements of each Complex.

1. North Complex

The commercial and community facility uses of the Project would be located to the north of the Core Complex (North Complex). The intended design of the North Complex would consist of an approximately 118-foot-high (el. 129) base structure that would contain glass atriums to the west, north and east. The atriums would rise directly from the ground without providing the required setback at 110 feet on the north façade, which is the subject of one of the waivers requested. A stepped commercial tower would rise from the eastern half of the base. The multiple levels within the base structure would be interleaved in order to provide for a mix of uses and users to animate the lobby throughout the day and week.

The base of the North Complex would be approximately 340 feet by 120 feet in dimension and would have a maximum base elevation of 129 feet. The floorplate of the commercial tower above the base would be 24,215 square feet to an elevation of 429 feet and 11,500 square feet from that point to the roof at elevation 537.6 feet. The roof surface of the tower at elevation 429 feet is intended to be treated as a green roof, which would be comprised of a thin layer of vegetation intended to absorb particulate matter and CO_2 and release oxygen, while also managing stormwater runoff.

The building would contain approximately 650,000 gsf of office space (2.31 FAR). This office space, while not restricted, would be specifically marketed to users who are related to the entertainment and media industries. Entrance to the commercial tower would be at Vernon Boulevard and Queens Plaza South, at the western end of Terra Cotta Plaza, the landscaped public open space that would surround the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company building. Office users would be permitted to access the elevators that would bring them directly to the skylobby located at the level of approximately 110 feet.

Community facility space (Community Facility) would be located within the western half of the lower levels of the North Complex to the west of and beneath the office tower. It would contain approximately 126,401 gsf of area (0.41 FAR), a portion of which would be used as screening rooms. including a 30,000 zsf movie theater. The Community Facility would be located on five levels, all accessed from the multilevel northern lobby and linked by a series of open escalators. There is no currently identified tenant for this space. However, the Applicant is speaking to a number of Queens and Citywide cultural institutions, many of which have expressed interest in the space. The building design provides for maximum flexibility in fitting out the Community Facility to meet the needs of one or multiple tenants.

2. Core Complex

The operational and physical center of Silvercup West would be the Core Complex, which would contain the expanded facilities for Silvercup Studios. Eight motion picture and television studios would be located in the center of the Core Complex. The studios would be accessed by a two-story lobby located on Vernon Boulevard. A vehicular drop-off would be provided at the entrance. The four studios on the ground floor would be directly accessed by trucks entering from 43rd Avenue. The studios would each be approximately 18,000 zsf in area and approximately 30–40 feet in height, and would be stacked on two levels, with each level containing four studios. The studios and their accessory space would comprise approximately 347,000 gsf of area (1.04 FAR).

Accessory studio support uses, such as carpentry shops, production offices, dressing rooms, and storage space, would be located on the studio levels and intermediate levels to the east and west, fronting on Vernon Boulevard and the East River.

Above the studios in the Core Complex would be an approximately 44,000 gsf catering facility. The catering facility would be accessed from a dedicated entrance adjacent to the North Complex lobby. The catering facility is designed to meet a need for event locations in Western Queens and would support the growing office and residential population in Long Island City.

The roof of the Core Complex would be stepped down from east to west, providing views of the East River, the Manhattan skyline and the Bridge, and a private open area. The elevation of the eastern street wall fronting on Vernon Boulevard would be 114.5 feet, and would step down to a roof terrace at 109 feet in the western half of the roof and then further step down to a public terrace at 104.5 feet overlooking the East River. The public terrace would be accessible by the public by an elevator from the Esplanade. The western roof of the Core Complex would be improved with a series of private open spaces, designed for passive recreational use by residents, visitors to the cultural/community facilities, and customers of the catering facility. At this time, it is anticipated that the design of the rooftop gardens would include lawns, trees and a reflecting pool. The eastern portion of the roof is intended to be a green roof in its anticipated design, and would not provide for resident or visitor access.

A large illuminated accessory sign ("Sign") would be installed on the western façade of the Core Complex above the Esplanade. The Sign would not flash. The Sign, which would consist of letters made of a perforated metal screen outlined in red lights, would depict the familiar "Silvercup Studios" logo. The Sign would be approximately 195 feet in length and 46 feet in height; the largest letters - the initial "S" and terminal "P" - would be approximately 46 feet in height and the smallest would be approximately 25 feet in height. The surface area of the Sign would be approximately 3,422 square feet. The lowest point of the Sign would be almost 45 feet above the Esplanade. It would not project above the Building but would be contained within the western façade of the Core Complex. The letters for "Studios" beneath "Silvercup" would be 8 feet 3 inches in height.

The proposed Sign would be consistent with the historic visual character of the Long Island City waterfront, which is characterized by the existing Silvercup sign on the Main Lot and the Pepsi Cola sign at Queens West.

3. South Complex

The two residential towers would be located in the South Complex, the southernmost portion of the Project Site. The placement of the towers was selected to provide for the maximum visibility of the bridge from the surrounding community. The treatment of the South Complex would be in keeping with high-density residential waterfront developments, with a base containing retail uses that would serve residents, workers, and visitors.

The lower floors of the South Complex would contain residential lobbies and storage areas, retail space, and a public health club. Ground-level retail and cafes, the health club, and the western residential tower would be entered from the Esplanade on the western side of the South Complex. The higher Vernon Boulevard frontage, which would function as the ground floor for the eastern portion of the South Complex, would contain ground-floor retail along 43rd Avenue and an eastern residential lobby and retail space on Vernon Boulevard. The base of the South Complex would be approximately 80 feet by 370 feet with a maximum base elevation of 119 feet.

Two residential towers would rise above the South Complex base. The eastern residential tower would rise to an elevation of 600 feet and the western residential tower would be at elevation 517.5 feet. The floorplate of each residential tower above the base would be 10,012 zsf. The South Complex would contain approximately 1,045,000 gsf of residential floor area (3.58 FAR), with

approximately 1,000 residential units, based upon an assumption at this time of 1,000 square feet per unit, which is typical of new construction in the area.

4. Accessory On-site Parking and Loading Berths

A 1,400-space (approximately 288,000 gsf) accessory parking garage would be located at grade and below grade on four levels (Parking Garage), at the sub-cellar, cellar, mezzanine and ground-floor levels. The Parking Garage would provide accessory parking for residents; office, health club, and catering visitors; studio employees and audiences, and visitors to the community facilities and waterfront open space. Vehicular access to the Parking Garage would be by means of two entrances and exits on Vernon Boulevard. As required pursuant to Section 13-561 ZR, 50 reservoir spaces would be provided. The Parking Garage would be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and would be fully attended.

Pedestrian access to the Parking Garage would be via: (i) a dedicated walkway from Vernon Boulevard; (ii) a dedicated elevator to each of the two residential towers; and (iii) a dedicated elevator to the catering hall. Studio visitors and staff would be able to walk directly up the ramps from the Parking Garage to the Studio lobby on Vernon Boulevard.

In addition, off-street loading berths for 12 trucks would be located within the Building, six more than the number required by the Zoning Resolution. Trucks servicing the retail and studio uses would enter from 43rd Avenue and would either go down a ramp to serve the retail and studio uses or go up a ramp to serve the studios only. An internal north-south drive would run through the Building at the ground-floor level and serve the retail and studio levels. The two delivery ramps would merge at grade within the North Complex before exiting onto the private drive located within the Upland Connection.

5. Open Space

Approximately 55,000 sf of publicly accessible open space would be provided in accordance with Article VI Chapter 2 of the Zoning Resolution (Special Regulations Applying in the Waterfront Area, or "Waterfront Zoning") as modified by the WAP for Northern Hunters Point (Sect. 62-851 ZR). In addition, 4,500 square feet of publicly accessible outdoor open space would be provided in a public overlook on the northwestern area of the roof terrace of the Core Complex. The Project would also provide over 10,000 square feet of private roof terrace open space for residents, workers, and museum and catering facility visitors. Private open space would be located on the roof of the Core Complex. The Project would also provide over 12,000 sf of additional at-grade open space along Vernon Boulevard and 43rd Avenue (Terra Cotta Plaza and Vernon/43rd Avenue Plaza) that, although not required, would nevertheless provide a visual and passive recreational amenity to the Project and the surrounding neighborhood.

a) Public Open Space (Waterfront Zoning Requirements)

i. Background

The Site is located on a waterfront block as defined by the Zoning Resolution. Consequently, development of the proposed Project must provide waterfront access areas in conformance with requirements of Waterfront Zoning, as modified by the WAP Q-1 for Northern Hunters Point. The requirements include a pedestrian link (Upland Connection) at least 30 feet in width connecting the nearest upland street to the waterfront, a 40-foot-wide shore public walkway and an 80-foot-wide Visual Corridor. The Visual Corridor would primarily be located on the Project Site; however, a portion of it would also be located within the City-owned property to the north of the Project Site.

For this Project, the shore public walkway must be improved to the level of an esplanade (Sections 62-61 and 62-631 ZR).

ii. Visual Corridor

A visual corridor is defined as a public street or tract of land that provides a "direct and unobstructed" view to the water from a public street or other public place. Visual corridors to the waterfront must be provided for all developments on zoning lots within waterfront blocks. In general, the location of a visual corridor is the seaward prolongation of a street shown on the City Map. The required minimum width of a visual corridor is set as the greater of the width of the mapped upland street or 50 feet. The maximum distance permitted between visual corridors is 600 feet. The only obstructions permitted within a visual corridor are: (i) moving or parked vehicles and (ii) street furniture such as benches, seats, kiosks, lighting fixtures, fences and planting areas. In order to preserve views to the water, no shade trees may be planted within 15 feet of the center line of the visual corridor.

The location and dimensions of a visual corridor may be modified by means of a Waterfront Access Plan, which may modify the general Waterfront Zoning requirements to reflect specific site conditions. The WAP for the Northern Hunters Point waterfront designates the location of the visual corridor required on the Project Site as the westerly prolongation of Queens Plaza South. Queens Plaza South is 80 feet in width. In addition, the WAP requires that a visual corridor must be provided at 43rd Avenue.

A visual corridor would be provided at the northern portion of the Project Site as a prolongation of Queens Plaza South. The visual corridor would be 80 feet in width, and would be located primarily on the Project Site, but would also fall at certain portions within the City-owned property to the north, reflecting the property boundary between the parcels. Benches, lights, trees and planting areas, and a proposed sculpture would be located within the visual corridor.

iii. Upland Connection

An Upland Connection to the waterfront would be provided along the northern boundary of the Property, at the prolongation of the southern line of Queens Plaza South and running to the shoreline (Section 62-851) (Figure 1-9). The Upland Connection would provide almost 25,000 square feet of landscaped open space between the North Complex and the Property's northern boundary. A private drive servicing internal on-site loading berths would be 20 feet in width and run along the northern boundary of the eastern half of the Upland Connection. A driveway would be located north of the Building delivery egress and would be delineated from the pedestrian circulation zone by bollards, earthen berms, and a different pavement treatment.

The proposed Upland Connection would be over 500 feet in length and would maintain a minimum of 30 feet in width at its narrowest point (at the "notch" in the Property's northern boundary). The width of the Upland Connection would range from over 90 feet at Vernon Boulevard to approximately 70 feet at the northeastern corner of the Building to over 40 feet where it meets the waterfront Esplanade. The Upland Connection would preserve a wide view corridor and provide a physical link to the East River.

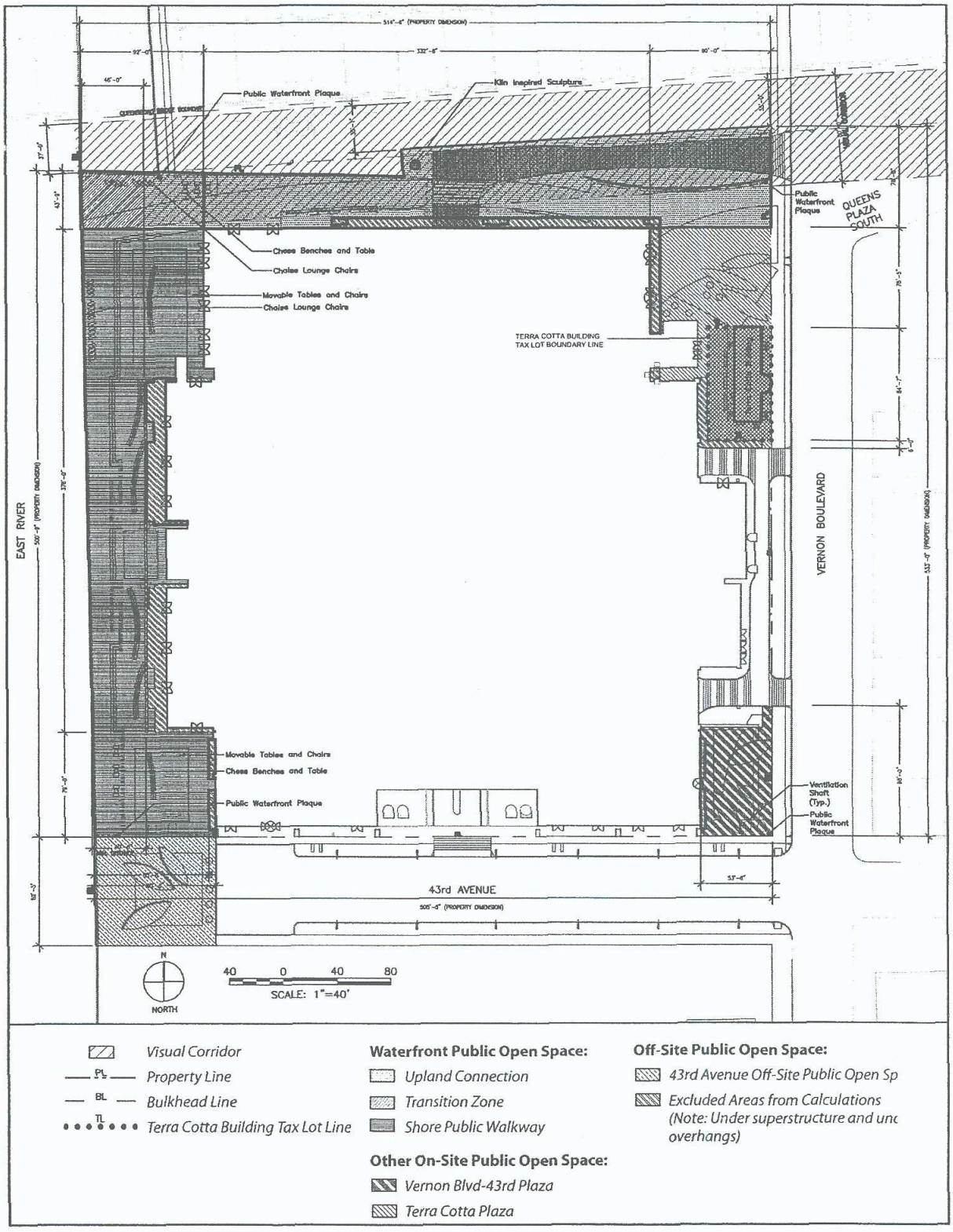


FIGURE 1-9:
LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

A gently curved 16-foot wide pedestrian path would extend along the length of the Upland Connection. Approximately 144 linear feet of seating would be provided in benches that reflect the curve of the path. At the western portion of the Upland Connection, eight chaise lounges and three chess tables with benches would be arranged along the northern property line. Approximately 132 linear feet of seating would be provided in this portion of the Upland Connection. A sculpture, inspired by the many pottery kilns that were used on the Site at the turn of the last century, would be located within the northern buffer just west of the driveway. This sculpture, which is not yet designed, would serve to link the new open space to Long Island City's industrial past while providing visual interest to the Upland Connection.

The pedestrian circulation zone would be flanked by over 6,500 sf of low beds planted with decorative native grasses. The eastern segment of the northern boundary of the Upland Corridor would be planted with a single row of 6 black tupelo or similar trees which would mask a retaining wall that would be required due to the grade change at the City-owned property under the Queensboro Bridge. The plantings have been specifically chosen to provide as little visual obstruction as possible to the waterfront in the west.

iv. Esplanade

The proposed Project would provide a shore public walkway that meets all of the dimensional requirements for an esplanade (Section 62-61 ZR) along the Property's entire riverfront. This 500-foot long Esplanade would connect the Upland Connection at the Site's north to the City-owned property at the foot of 43rd Avenue to the south. The total area of the Esplanade would be approximately 30,000 sf (about two-thirds of an acre). Consistent with the WAP, the northern end of the Esplanade is designed to permit the continuation of the public walkway in the future to City-owned property under the Queensboro Bridge, currently under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation.

At its widest two points, the Esplanade would be 90 feet in width at the northwestern corner of the Building and 89 feet in width at the southwestern corner. At all locations, the width of the Esplanade would meet or exceed the minimum requirement of 40 feet.

The Esplanade would provide two pedestrian circulation zones parallel to the river's edge. The upland or landward pedestrian path would be of varying widths, with a minimum of 12 feet. The width of the lower or seaward pedestrian path would vary from 13 to over 19 feet. The two circulation zones would encourage a variety of passive recreational experiences along the waterfront: the upland path would be more shaded, adjacent to tables and chairs, and related to the building's ground floor and cultural uses, while the seaward path would be in a more exposed, sunny location, directed more to the north-south flow of pedestrians and to water-viewing.

Three expanded areas along the upward or landward circulation path would be heavily planted with trees: one bosque each at the northern and southern corners of the building and a double row of trees at the center of the Esplanade. The northern bosque would have a depth of over 90 feet approximately in dimension, with 17 trees, 10 movable tables, 40 movable chairs, and a backed bench. The southern bosque would have a depth of almost 89 feet, with 12 trees, 10 movable tables, 40 movable chairs, and a curved backed bench. The central area would contain six trees. This area would be flanked to the north and south by groups of plantings, each containing 6 smaller ornamental trees and two curved benches.

In order to provide for a visually uncluttered view of the East River and Manhattan skyline beyond, the Applicant proposes to restrict the use of lighting fixtures on poles along the Esplanade, as

required. Instead, illuminated bollards, uplights and lights integrated into benches and railings would provide for a minimum of 2-foot-candles of light without impeding views with raised fixtures.

b) Additional Public Open Space

i. Terra Cotta Plaza

The easternmost portion of the Upland Connection would connect to Terra Cotta Plaza, a plaza area in front of and surrounding the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company building at Vernon Boulevard. This plaza, which would be approximately 8,630 square feet in area, would be provided in addition to the required waterfront access open space areas. It would wrap around the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company building, extending in front of the Core and North Complexes. Public seating, plantings of native grasses and trees, including a grove of three dawn redwoods, would frame and visually tie the landmarked two-and-a-half-story structure to the new development to its west. This plaza area would welcome pedestrians as they walk west from Queens Plaza along Queens Plaza South. It would signal, to pedestrians and drivers to the east, the presence of an attractive open space resource at the river.

ii. Vernon/43 Plaza

An additional public area, approximately 4,200 square feet in area, would be located at the southeastern corner of the Project Site, in front of the entrance to the eastern residential tower on Vernon Boulevard north of 43rd Avenue. This area would be improved with seating, plantings of native grasses, and flowering trees.

iii. Foot of 43rd Avenue

Concurrent with this Project, the Applicant would create a 40-foot-wide transitional area (approximately 7,000 square feet) consisting of attractively paved circulation space and plantings of native grasses on the City-owned property at the end of 43rd Avenue. The design and treatment of this transitional area would be coordinated with the treatment of the Upland Connection and Esplanade. The Applicant would work with New York City Department of Transportation to obtain any permits or approvals require for this element of the project.

iv. Public Overlook

A public overlook almost 4,500 square feet in area would be located at the western façade of the Core Complex. The public would be able to access this terrace by two means: from the Esplanade by means of a dedicated elevator and from the community facility space within the North Complex by means of one of the exposed escalators. The public overlook would provide an accessible sitting area with movable tables and chairs. It would provide expansive views of the East River and the Manhattan skyline to the west. This area would be available to the public for water viewing, eating and relaxation.

c) Private Open Space

i. Roof Terrace

The top of the Core Complex would be landscaped to provide approximately 10,000 sf of private passive open space on terraces on the western half of the roof of the Core Complex. This roof garden, which is not yet fully designed, is intended to be improved with planting beds, an alley of mature trees, a reflecting pool, and seating.

6. Vehicular Access

Multiple access points would be provided to minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts, and to accommodate the vehicular demands of separate uses. Vehicular access to the Project Site would be provided via Vernon Boulevard and a newly opened 43rd Avenue, offering access from Queens Plaza, the Queensboro Bridge, and Long Island City to the north and east, and Hunters Point to the south.

Three drop-off/pick-up locations have been included in the site design. One drop-off/pick-up would be located along the eastern side of the Core Complex, which would provide access for the studio space and the catering hall. This area could also be used for the community facility and office space in the North Complex. Two drop-off/pick-up sites would be located along 43rd Avenue serving the South Complex: one on the east providing access to the residential lobby and retail use, and one on the west providing access to the second residential lobby, health club, and western retail uses. The drop-off/pick-up area at the Core Complex would also serve as the entrance and exit to the on-site parking levels (below).

As part of the Proposed Action, 43rd Avenue would be re-graded and constructed to provide access to the South Complex. The street would provide a second publicly accessible link to the Esplanade.

Loading berths would be located within the structure of the Core Complex, and would not be visible from the street or from any on site uses. Vehicular ingress to the loading space would be via 43rd Avenue, with a driveway located between the eastern and western portions of the South Complex. The driveway would divide into two ramps; the upper ramp would lead directly to berths between the four studios on the lower studio space, allowing for direct servicing of the studio space. The downward ramp would lead to berths on the western side of the Core Complex, which would provide direct loading and unloading services for the studios, retail, catering, and health club space. One separate loading berth would serve the Community Facility and be located on this lower level, at the base of the North Complex. Separating the loading space for the different uses, would avoid conflicts between deliveries.

Vehicles leaving the studio loading space would drive down a ramp, while vehicles leaving the lower level loading space would drive up. Both ramps would exit via a combined driveway separating the east and west portions of the North Complex. Vehicles would cross over the Upland Connection to a truck egress route along the northern border of the Project Site. This route would lead to Vernon Boulevard, where vehicles could access the local street network.

7. Shoreline Restoration

The Applicant has obtained the necessary permits to replace a deteriorating bulkhead along the northern portion of the Project Site. NYPA has applied for permits to reconstruct the bulkhead along the southern portion of the Project Site. Reconstruction of the southern and northern portions of the bulkhead would be completed as separate and independent actions from the Proposed Action, and, consequently, are considered to be part of the Future without the Proposed Action. However, in the event that NYPA fails to receive the necessary permits for the reconstruction of the bulkhead along the southern portion of the Project Site, that work would be undertaken as part of the Project. Therefore, the potential impacts of its reconstruction are assessed in this DEIS.

F. REQUIRED ACTIONS AND APPROVALS

The following discretionary approvals are required to implement the Proposed Action:

- **Zoning text amendments to (i) Section 123-90 to create a special mixed-use district and (ii) to permit an accessory sign (See Appendix A for proposed text).** The Applicant is requesting an amendment to Section 123-90 of the Zoning Resolution to create a new Special Mixed Use District for Northern Hunters Point ("Mixed Use" or "MX-9" District). The boundaries of the proposed Mixed Use District would be coterminous with the existing M1-4 District's northern boundaries, the midpoint of Vernon Boulevard, the midpoint of 43rd Avenue and the pierhead line of the East River (see Figure 1-2.) This amendment is needed to allow for the proposed mix of uses. The Applicant is also requesting an amendment to Section 123-40 of the Zoning Resolution to create, in the MX-9 District, a special permit to modify the applicable provisions of Sections 32-64 (Surface area and illumination) and 32-65 (Height of Signs). These modifications would facilitate the proposed illuminated "Silvercup Studios" sign as designed, to be incorporated into the western façade of the Core Complex.
- **Amendment to the Zoning Map changing from an M1-4 district to an MX-9 (M1-5/R10) special mixed-use district.** The Site's current zoning designation is currently an M1-4 District (2.0 FAR); this is proposed to be changed to an MX-9 (M1-5/R10) Special Mixed Use District. Zoning Map 9b would be amended for the area generally bounded by the northern boundary of the existing M1-4 district to the north, the midpoint of Vernon Boulevard to the east, the midpoint of 43rd Avenue to the south and the bulkhead line of the East River to the west. The Applicant requests a change in zoning to an M1-5/R10 Special Mixed Use District in order to enable the development of a mixed-use development containing production studios and support space and residential, retail, office and cultural uses, many of which are not now permitted as a matter of right. The maximum FAR allowed in an M1-5 district is 5.0 FAR; the maximum FAR allowed in an R10 district is 10 FAR. A proposed restrictive declaration would restrict the maximum FAR on the Site to 8.0.
- **Special Permit pursuant to Section 13-561 for an accessory off street parking garage.** Article I, Chapter 3 of the Zoning Resolution regulates the development and operation of parking facilities in certain high density areas, including Long Island City. Within Long Island City, accessory parking for a mixed-use development is limited to 225 parking spaces. Parking facilities that exceed that number are permitted by special permit pursuant to Section 13-561 of the Zoning Resolution. A special permit is needed for the Project's proposed parking garage, which would have approximately 1400 parking spaces.
- **Special permit pursuant to Section 123-40 to modify sign regulations of Sections 32-64 and 32-65.** This permit is needed to construct a sign of the proposed dimensions in a Special Mixed Use District, in derogation from the size limitations set forth in Sections 32-64 and 32-65.
- **Special permit pursuant to Section 62-736 to modify Sections 62-341 (a) 2 and 62-341 (c) 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 on waterfront blocks.** The Project as designed would not strictly conform to certain of the height and setback requirements contained within Section 62-341 ZR. Accordingly, the following waivers or modifications of provisions of Section 62-341 are requested:
  - *The Building would not provide for a 30-foot initial setback distance on the shore public walkway or 15 feet from the Upland Connection (defined as a narrow street, due to its width or 10 feet from 43rd Avenue and Vernon Boulevard (defined as wide streets)) (Section 62-341(a)(2)).* At its western façade, the Building would not provide for the required 30-foot-deep setback at a maximum elevation of 110 feet at the northern portion of the façade (the community facility/office tower) and the southern portion of the façade (the residential tower). At the South Complex, the west residential tower would rise without a setback for its entire height. The northern portion of the façade (the community facility/office tower) would

rise to an elevation of 117.64 feet and then set back 102.5 feet. In addition, the 118.64-foot-high elevator that would provide public access to the rooftop would exceed the 110-foot setback. The Building would not provide the required setbacks at its northern and southern walls but would instead rise directly up from the ground for the full height of the Building without setbacks. Therefore, the required 15-foot setback on the northern façade fronting on the Upland Connection and the 10-foot setback on the residential façade, fronting on 43rd Avenue, a wide street, would not be provided. The southern portion of the façade would rise to an elevation of 506.4 feet without setback.

- *The Building's base would exceed the maximum base heights of 65 and 110 feet (Section 62-341(c)(1)).* The Building's northern and southern faces would exceed the maximum base heights of 65 and 110 feet. The western face of the Building would exceed the 65- and 110-foot maximum base height at three points: (i) the west face of the North Complex, which would be 117.64 feet in height; (ii) the public access elevator in the Core Complex, which would be 118.64 feet in height; and (iii) the west face of the South Complex, which would rise without a setback. The eastern facade of the Building would comply with the maximum base height requirements and setback of Section 62-341 (c) (1) ZR. The southern portion of the façade would rise to a height of 506.14 feet without setback.
- *The Building would exceed the maximum building heights of 185 and 350 feet (Section 62-341 (c)(2)).* The Building would contain 3 towers, all of which would exceed the maximum building heights of 185 and 350 feet. The residential towers on the South Complex would be 506.14 and 588.64 feet in height; the commercial tower on North Complex would be stepped at 417.64 and 526.24 feet in height.
- *The residential floor sizes above the maximum base height would exceed 8,100 zoning square feet (Section 62-341(c)(4)).* The residential floor plates of both towers above the maximum base height would each be 10,012 zoning square feet in area.
- *The floorplates above 150 feet would be greater than 85 percent of the floorplates below 150 feet. (Section 62-34 (c)(5)).* The Building would not provide setbacks at 150 feet in any of the three towers. Floors above 150 feet in both the residential towers would be of the same area and configuration as that of the floors directly below 150 feet. The commercial tower would have a floor plate of 24,150 zoning square feet from an elevation of 117.64 feet to 417.64 feet. At that level, the tower floor plate would be reduced in area to 11,550 zoning square feet and would rise to an elevation of 526.24 feet.
- *The length of the building wall facing the shore line would exceed 100 feet (Section 62-341 (c)(6)).* The length of the western building wall (facing the East River) of the commercial tower would be 120 feet.

- **Authorization pursuant to Section 62-722 (b) to modify waterfront public access and visual corridor design requirements of Section 62-60.** In order to facilitate development of a shore public walkway and upland connection, substantially in conformance with the landscape plan for the Project, an authorization pursuant to Section 62-722 for waivers from the locational requirements for lights, buffers and trees is requested. The requested waivers are:
  - *Section 62-622: Upland Connections.* Two continuous buffers of 7 feet each bordering the single pedestrian circulation zone along both sides are required, but only one would be provided. Due to the curve of the proposed pedestrian path, the depth of planted buffers between the Building's external support pillars and the path would vary with over 12 feet in depth at the widest, central point. In addition, no buffer would be provided at the northwest edge of the Upland Connection. This would permit, in the future, a connection to any waterfront public walkway that may be provided under the Queensboro Bridge, thus linking the Project Site to the Queensbridge Park to the north.

- *Section 62-626 (2): Permitted obstructions.* Sculptures are not listed as permitted obstructions in waterfront public open space. The open space design for the Upland Connection calls for a sculptural form, as yet undesigned, to be placed at the "notch" in the northeastern property line. The design of the sculpture would be inspired by the kilns that previously were located on the site.
- *Section 62-631(a): Special design requirements for public access prototypes: Shore Public Walkway Prototype 1: Esplanade: Circulation and access.* A continuous landward circulation path of a minimum of ten feet is proposed as part of the Esplanade plan. However, approximately 220 feet of the circulation path would be located under the overhang of the Core Complex in the central portion of the Esplanade. This portion of the circulation path would not lie within open space as defined by the Zoning Resolution and, therefore, would not be in strict conformance with the requirements of Section 62-631.
- *Section 62-631(c)(2)(i): Special design requirements for public access prototypes: Shore Public Walkway Prototype 1: Esplanade: Trees.* A continuous tree pit planted with a single row of shade trees is required within the pedestrian circulation zone of an esplanade but would not be provided. The proposed Esplanade would be over 500 feet in length. In order to avoid a monotonous or rigid plan, to create a variety of experiences and to enhance the design of the Building, two massings of large shade trees (bosques) would be placed at the north and south with a grove of six trees in the center. Between the bosques and the central grove would be softly curving benches set off by lower flowering ornamental trees. In place of the 18 large shade trees that would be planted in a single continuous row, the proposed site plan contains 35 large trees and 10 ornamental trees.
- *Section 62-642(b): Design requirements for visual corridors: permitted obstructions: sculpture.* Sculptures are not listed as permitted obstructions in visual corridors. As described above, the proposed site plan includes a sculpture within the northern buffer area in the "notch" created by the irregular property line between the Project Site and the city-owned land to the north.
- *Section 62-642 (d): Design requirements for visual corridors: permitted obstructions: trees in visual corridors.* A row of 6 shade trees is proposed to be located within the 15-foot–wide area along both sides of the centerline of the visual corridor (the prolongation of Queens Plaza South), within which trees are not permitted.
- *Section 62-673: Lighting.* Section 62-673 requires that all waterfront public access areas provide illumination in light posts of a minimum of 12 feet that are spaced at a maximum of 40 feet apart. The lighting must be located within 5 feet of a circulation path (Section 62-673 (a) ZR). The proposed lighting plan does provide light poles along the circulation path of the Upland Connection. However, the Esplanade would be illuminated by a combination of lighting fixtures instead of 12-foot high light poles. The lights would be integrated into the railing at the water's edge and in bollards and benches. Uplights would be placed beneath the trees in the north and south bosques. The end result of the proposed Esplanade lighting plan would conform to the appropriate illumination standards contained within Section 62-673 (b) ZR.

- **Certification pursuant to Section 62-711(c) that a site plan conforming to Section 62-80 has been submitted.** Publicly accessible open space would be provided in accordance with Article VI Chapter 2 ("Waterfront Zoning") as modified by the Waterfront Access Plan Q-1, for Northern Hunters Point (Section 62-851 ZR). The proposed Visual Corridor, Upland Connection and Esplanade would conform to all requirements within Section 62-80 ZR.

- **Amendment to the City Map for 43rd Avenue between Vernon Boulevard and the East River.** The Applicant proposes to modify the elevation of this mapped but unimproved portion of 43rd Avenue so as to provide for better site design and drainage. The existing mapped elevation at the intersection of Vernon Boulevard and 43rd Avenue would remain unchanged at 12.33 feet. However, the mapped elevation at the foot of 43rd Avenue at the water's edge would be raised from 5.5 feet to 7.5 feet.
- **Special Permit by the Board of Standards and Appeals for a Physical Culture or Health Establishment**: A public health club is defined by the Zoning Resolution as a "physical culture or health establishment" and requires a Board of Standards and Appeals special permit pursuant to Section 73-36. There is no operator identified at this time for the health club.
- **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC): Tidal Wetlands Permit (6NYCRR Part 661):** This permit would be needed for construction of a portion of the Esplanade within the regulated tidal wetlands Adjacent Area.
- **NYSDEC Tidal Wetlands Permit, Protection of Waters Permit (6NYCRR Part 608) and US Army Corps of Engineers permits pursuant to Section 10 (Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act:** These permits would be needed if NYPA does not secure the necessary approvals to reestablish the bulkhead along the Project Site's western boundary where the temporary NYPA power generating facility is located. The permits would be needed for filling and other work within state regulated tidal wetlands, and navigable waters of the United States.
- **NYSDEC (6NYCRR 602) Long Island Well Permit:** This permit would be needed for dewatering during construction in excess of permit threshold withdrawal rates specified in the regulations.

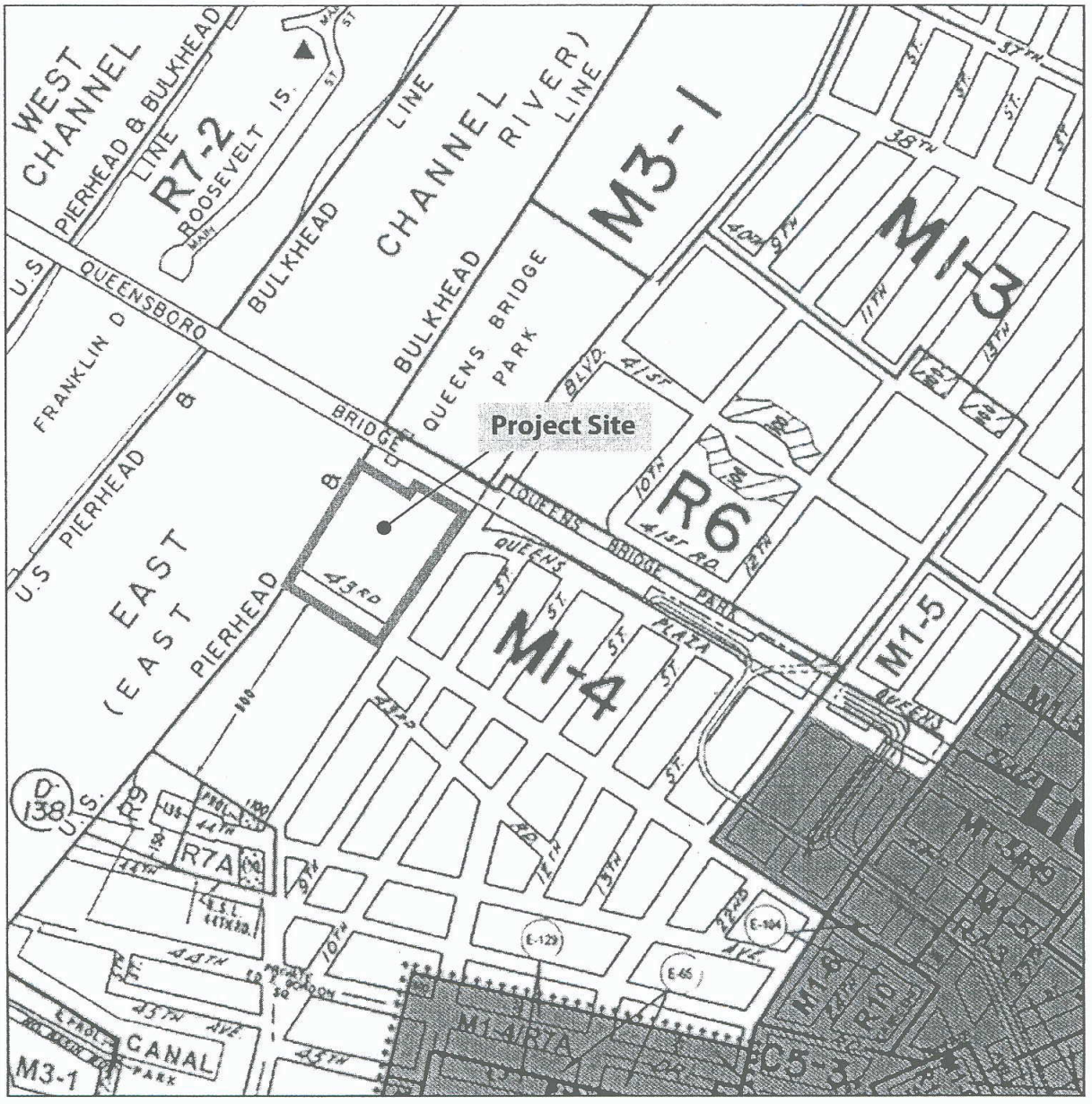
G. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS AND RELATED LAND USE REVIEWS

The proposed amendments to the Zoning Resolution and Map, and related land use actions are subject to review under the ULURP, the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) requirements, as described below.

1. Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

As established under Sections 197-c and 197-d of the City Charter, ULURP establishes a standardized procedure whereby applications affecting land use in the City are publicly reviewed at four levels: Community Board, Borough President, CPC, and the City Council. The procedure sets time limits for review at each of these levels to ensure a maximum total review period of approximately seven months, as detailed below:

- Community Board - 60 days
- Borough President - 30 days
- CPC - 60 days
- City Council - 50 days (may be extended if City Council seeks modifications to the Proposed Action)



300 0 300 600 900 FEET N

Source: NYC Zoning Resolution, available online at www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/zone/map9b.pdf, July 2005

Commercial Overlay Districts

C1-1 C1-2 C1-3 C1-4 C1-5 C2-1 C2-2 C2-3 C2-4 C2-5

Special Long Island City Mixed Use District

FIGURE 1-10:
EXISTING ZONING

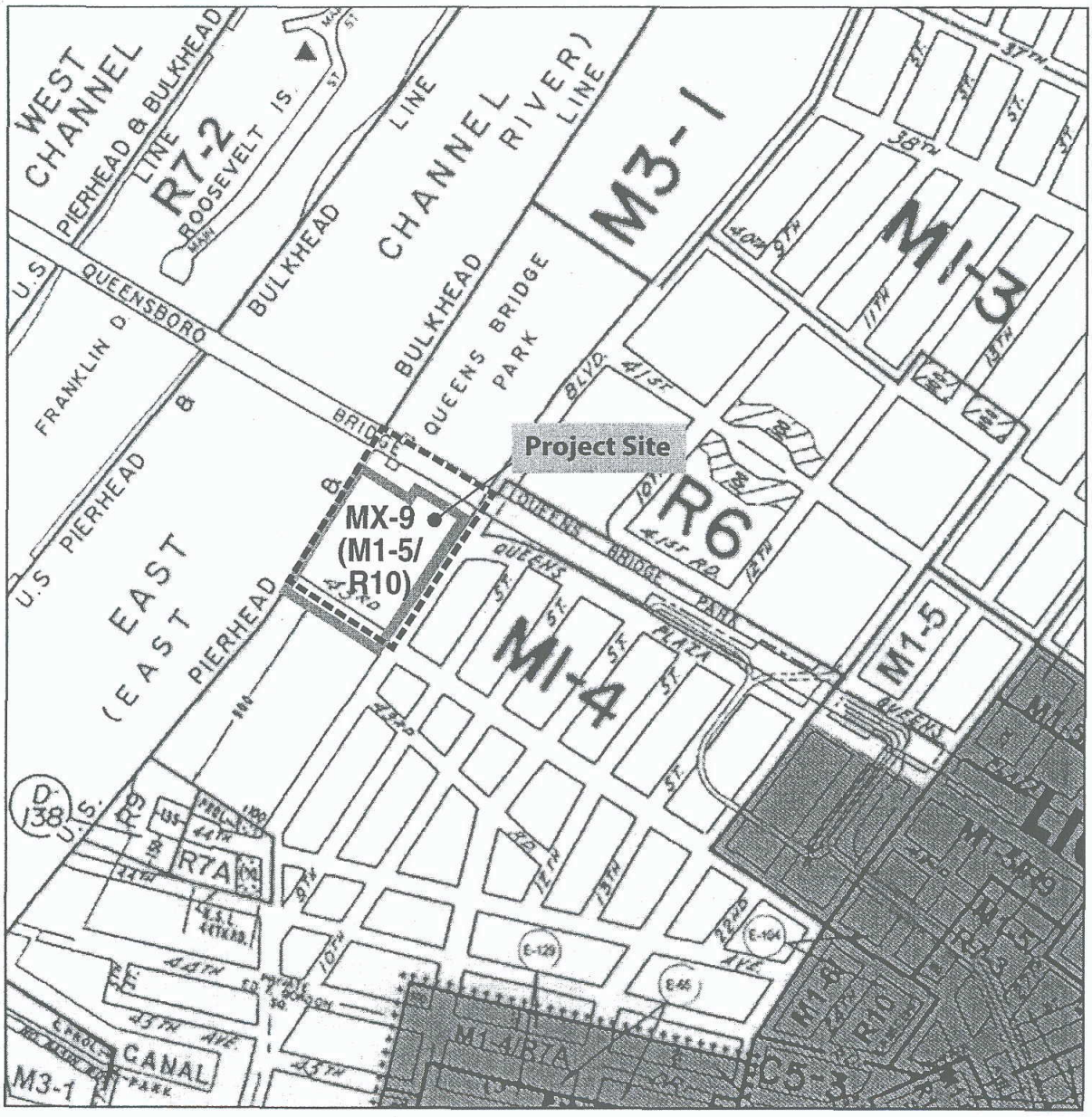


FIGURE 1-11:
PROPOSED ZONING

The process begins with certification by the CPC that the ULURP application is complete; certification would be made when there is compliance with SEQRA/CEQR, through issuance of a Negative Declaration (i.e., a determination of no significant impact), issuance of a Conditional Negative Declaration, or upon issuance of the Notice of Completion for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The application is then referred to the relevant Community Board (in this case Queens Community Board 2). The Community Board has up to 60 days to review and discuss the proposal, hold a public hearing, and adopt a recommendation regarding the actions. Once the community board has taken its action, the Borough President has up to 30 days to review the ULURP application and issue a recommendation. The CPC then has up to 60 days to review the application, during which time a public hearing is held. Typically, this hearing also serves as the required hearing on the DEIS under CEQR. Comments made on the DEIS are incorporated into a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). In compliance with the requirements of SEQRA/CEQR that findings and decisions cannot be issued until 10 days after the Notice of Completion of an FEIS, the FEIS must be completed at least 10 days before the CPC can make any decision. In the event that the CPC votes to approve the application or to approve it with modifications, the CPC files its decision with the City Council and sends copies to the affected community board (i.e. Queens Community Board 2) and Borough President. Within 50 days of filing with the City Council, the City Council holds a public hearing and takes final action on the decision. As outlined in Section F, "Required Actions and Approvals," there are a number of actions associated with the Proposed Action that are subject to ULURP.

2. Waterfront Revitalization

The City has adopted a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) pursuant to the New York State Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act. The CPC serves as the City's Coastal Commission under the LWRP. Actions that are subject to ULURP Section 200 and 201 of the New York City Charter are also reviewed by the CPC in its capacity as the Coastal Zone Commission for consistency with the program's policies. The City Council approved a revised LWRP in October 1999, which replaced 56 City and State policies with 10 policies designed to simplify and clarify the consistency review process. Discretionary actions subject to CEQR and occurring within the program's boundaries are to be reviewed by the lead agency for consistency with the program's policies. Since the Proposed Action is located within the boundaries of the designated Coastal Zone of New York City, an assessment must be made of its consistency with the LWRP.

3. SEQRA/CEQR Compliance

All agencies of government at the State, county and local level within New York, except the State Legislature and the courts, must comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law, and its implementing regulations (6NYCRR Part 617). The City has further promulgated local regulations, the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), to specifically implement the SEQRA for actions within the City, to take into account the special circumstances of the City. Requirements under CEQR are established in Executive Order No. 90, 1977, and are set forth in its implementing Rules and Procedures, Title 62, Chapter 5, of the Rules of the City of New York.

To understand the environmental consequences of their decision-making, and to afford the public an opportunity to participate in identifying such consequences, all discretionary decisions of an agency to approve, fund, or directly undertake an action are subject to review under SEQRA/CEQR, unless explicitly excluded or exempted under the regulations. The anticipated discretionary approvals for

the Proposed Action are identified in Section F, "Required Actions and Approvals." This DEIS has been prepared pursuant to SEQRA/CEQR.

Under SEQRA and CEQR a "lead agency" is identified, which is responsible for conducting the environmental review of a proposed action. The CPC has been identified as the lead agency for review of the Proposed Action evaluated in this DEIS. Additional agencies have also been given opportunity to participate as involved or interested agencies. Involved agencies are those with discretionary decisions to make regarding some aspect of the proposed action. Interested agencies are agencies without jurisdiction to fund, approve, or undertake an action, but that wish to comment during the review process.

The first step subsequent to establishing a lead agency is to determine where an action is subject to environmental review. If the lead agency determines that an action may result in one or more significant adverse impacts, it issues a "Positive Declaration," establishing the need to prepare an EIS. This determination is made based on an evaluation of the potential impacts of the Proposed Action as document in an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS). Based on the evaluations included in the EAS for the Proposed Action, the CPC issued a Positive Declaration on May 20, 2005, creating the need to prepare an EIS. At that time the EAS and Scoping Document were circulated to the public.

Once the lead agency issues a Positive Declaration, the scope of the environmental studies to be undertaken as part of the EIS is established and shared with interested and involved agencies and the public. "Scoping" is mandated under CEQR and is the process of focusing the environmental impact analyses on the key issues that are to be studied and creating an opportunity for the public to comment on the intended effort. The lead agency provides a draft scope to all involved agencies and makes it available to anyone who has written to express interest in the Project. A public scoping meeting is then held during which comments are received from interested parties. After considering such comments, the lead agency prepares and issues a final scope of work. For this DEIS, a Draft Scoping Document was issued on May 20, 2005, a public scoping meeting was held on June 28, 2005, the public comment period on the Draft Scoping Document was held until July 8, 2005, and a Final Scoping Document was issued on February 15, 2006.

This DEIS has been prepared in accordance with the Final Scoping Document and presents analysis of the potential impacts of the Proposed Action, including assessments of a Preferred Development Program and three variations to the Preferred Development Program. A Notice of Completion for the DEIS was issued on February 17, 2006 and has been distributed for public review. The analyses included in this DEIS conform with the requirements for preparing an EIS under CEQR as detailed in the *City Environmental Quality Review Technical Manual* (City of New York. October 2001). The information and evaluations included in this DEIS are intended to provide decision-makers and the public with an understanding of the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action, so that an informed decision about the actions they are asked to undertake can be made.

This DEIS has been prepared to be circulated for public review concurrently with related applications for consideration under the City's ULURP. A public hearing on this DEIS will be held at a later date to be announced. Written comments on the DEIS submitted no later than ten calendar days after the public hearing would be considered in preparing an FEIS for the Proposed Action.