18.0 Neighborhood Character

A. Introduction

This chapter assesses the Proposed Actions' potential effects on neighborhood character. As defined in the *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, neighborhood character is an amalgam of various elements that give a neighborhood its distinct "personality." These elements may include a neighborhood's land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, and/or noise conditions; but not all of these elements contribute to neighborhood character in all cases. An assessment of neighborhood character per the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual* first identifies the defining features of the neighborhood and then evaluates whether the project or action has the potential to affect these defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical analysis areas. Thus, to determine the effects of a proposed action on neighborhood character, the salient features of neighborhood character are considered together. According to the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character impacts are rare, and it would be unusual that, in the absence of a significant adverse impact in any of the relevant technical areas, a combination of moderate effects to the neighborhood would result in an impact to neighborhood character. Moreover, a significant impact identified in one of the technical areas that contribute to a neighborhood's character is not automatically equivalent to a significant impact on neighborhood character, but rather serves as an indication that neighborhood character should be examined.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Midtown South Mixed-Use (MSMX) Plan consists of a series of land use actions, including zoning map amendments and zoning text amendments that would implement land use and zoning changes to nurture a more vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood, create opportunities for new housing through ground-up development and conversions, support critical commercial activity and job growth, stabilize the commercial real estate market in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and shifting work patterns, and reflect the historical architectural legacy and industrial character of the neighborhood.

The area affected by the Proposed Actions (Affected Area) includes approximately 141 total acres, consisting of all or parts of 42 blocks of the Midtown South neighborhood, and is roughly bounded by 40th Street to the north, Fifth Avenue to the east, 23rd Street to the south, and Ninth Avenue to the west. The Affected Area is comprised of Subdistrict A-2 in the Special Garment Center District, and the "Rezoning Area" -- an approximately 127-acre area consisting of all or parts of 42 blocks of the Midtown South neighborhood. Most of the Rezoning Area (all or portions of 35 blocks) is in Manhattan Community District 5, while the balance (all or portions of seven blocks) is located in Manhattan Community District 4. The Rezoning Area consists of four noncontiguous manufacturing-zoned areas roughly bounded by 40th Street to the north, Fifth Avenue to the east, 23rd Street to the south, and Eighth Avenue to the west.

Subdistrict A-2 of the Special Garment Center District (GC) encompasses approximately four blocks, bounded by a line 100 feet east of 9th Avenue to the west, 35th Street to the south, a line 100 feet west of 8th Avenue to the east, and 39th Street to the north. The Special Midtown South

Mixed-Use District created by the Proposed Actions and described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, will not be mapped on Subdistrict A-2 of the Special Garment Center District (GC).

The Reasonable Worst-Case Development Scenario (RWCDS) for the Proposed Actions identified 61 projected development sites, as well as 1,093,808 gross-square-feet (gsf) of nonresidential floor area likely to be converted to residential uses within the Affected Area. On these projected development sites and in the eligible conversion area, the Proposed Actions are expected to result in a net (incremental) increase of approximately 9,676 dwelling units (DU), including 1,940 to 2,890 permanently affordable units; 462,129 gsf (402,300 zoning square feet [zsf]) of projected retail space (local retail), 81,755 gsf (71,125 zsf) of community facility use, a decrease of 732,619 gsf of commercial office space (651,316 zsf), and a decrease of 69,782 gsf of industrial/warehouse space (62,103 zsf). The RWCDS also identified seven potential development sites that are considered less likely to be developed by the 2034 analysis year. On these sites, the Proposed Actions may result in a net increase of approximately 781 DU, including 156 to 234 permanently affordable units.

The RWCDS modeled the potential for the conversion of existing nonresidential floor area to residential use. The nonresidential area modeled as eligible residential conversion gross square footage was informed by DCP's understanding of historical conversion patterns from 2010 to 2020 and the potential for conversions in the study area under the RWCDS With-Action condition. DCP's model for assumed residential conversions in the Affected Area excluded projected and potential development sites and recent hotel development, the latter of which is unlikely to convert to residential use. The conversion analysis resulted in a net loss of 1,093,808 gsf of nonresidential floor area and a net increase of approximately 781 DU, including 156 to 234 permanently affordable units through the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) program. Development on some of these sites, due to their location within historic districts, would be subject to future review and approval by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). These units are included in the totals above.

This chapter includes a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character, which was prepared in accordance with the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual.* This chapter describes the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Actions on these defining features. The assessment relies on the technical analyses presented in the other chapters of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

B. Principal Conclusions

The Proposed Actions would alter neighborhood character in the primary study area but would not result in a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character. The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; or urban design and visual resources. Although the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse impacts with respect to open space, historic resources, shadows, transportation (traffic pedestrians), and noise, these impacts would not result in significant adverse impact to determining elements of neighborhood character.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate an area-wide rezoning that would expand the allowable uses and increase density to spur the growth of jobs and housing in a transit-rich area accessible to both the local subway system, regional rail (PATH, NJ Transit, Metro North, LIRR, Amtrak), and regional buses via the Port Authority Bus Terminal. The zoning changes would replace outdated manufacturing with new zoning that promotes a greater mix of uses, including residential uses, and supports growth and development in appropriate locations. Without the zoning changes, the primary Study Area would remain unchanged, underdeveloped and underutilized, and any future development that will occur would do so in a piecemeal manner without the benefit of a comprehensive plan to coordinate appropriate densities and urban design controls across the area. Absent the Proposed Actions, the lack of residential zoning would exacerbate the lack of housing in surrounding areas, especially for lower income populations.

The Proposed Actions would result in several adverse impacts related to Open Space, Shadows, Historic and Cultural Resources, Transportation, Noise and Construction. However, none of these impacts, on their own or in tandem with one another, would result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character. Rather the Proposed Actions would serve to enhance neighborhood character by supporting the development of new housing, spurring a wider range of uses and additional space for jobs, and by promoting a new vibrant, mixed-use, and inclusive community while striking an appropriate balance among residential and non-residential uses. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.

C. Methodology

The 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual* states that an assessment of neighborhood character is needed when a proposed action has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts in any of the following technical areas: land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, or noise. The 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual* states that, even if a proposed action does not have the potential to result in a significant adverse impact in any specific technical area(s), an assessment of neighborhood character may be required if the project would result in a combination of moderate effects to several elements that may cumulatively affect neighborhood character. A “moderate” effect is generally defined as an effect considered reasonably close to the significant adverse impact threshold for a particular analysis area. Based on the methodology provided in the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*, a screening analysis was conducted to determine the Proposed Actions’ effects on neighborhood character.

Study Areas

According to the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study area for a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character is typically consistent with the study areas in the relevant technical areas assessed pursuant to CEQR that contribute to the defining features of the neighborhood. In the context of an area-wide rezoning, the study area boundaries of the preliminary assessment of neighborhood character are generally coterminous with those used in the analyses of land use and urban design. As shown in **Figure 18-1**, the study area for this assessment of neighborhood character comprises an area within a quarter mile (0.25-mile) radius around the Project Area.

Primary Study Area

This chapter identifies a primary study area and secondary study area; the primary study area consists of the directly affected area, The primary Study Area is where the potential effects of the Proposed Actions would be directly experienced; it consists of the 42-block Affected Area in the Midtown South neighborhood. Most of the primary Study Area (all or portions of 35 blocks) is in Manhattan Community District 5, while the balance (all or portions of 7 blocks) is in Manhattan Community District 4. As discussed above, the primary Study Area consists of four noncontiguous manufacturing-zoned areas roughly bounded by 40th Street to the north, Fifth Avenue to the east, 23rd Street to the south, and Ninth Avenue to the west (**Figure 18-1**). These noncontiguous areas are comprised of:

- *Northwest Quadrant* –the area bounded by Broadway and Seventh Avenue to the east, West 35th Street to the south, West 40th Street to the north, and a line 100 feet west of Eighth Avenue to the west.
    - *Subdistrict A-2 of the Special Garment Center District (GC)*- Contiguous with the western boundary of the Northwest Quadrant, Subdistrict A-2 of the GC encompasses approximately four blocks bounded by a line 100 feet east of 9th Avenue to the west, 35th Street to the south, a line 100 feet west of 8th Avenue to the east, and 39th Street to the north.
- *Northeast Quadrant* –the area bounded by a line 150 feet west of Fifth Avenue to the east, 150 feet east of Sixth Avenue to the west, West 35th Street to the south and the centerline of the block between West 39th and West 40th Streets to the north.
- *Southeast Quadrant* –the midblocks bounded by a line 100 to 275 feet west of Fifth Avenue to the east, a line 125 to 150 feet east of Sixth Avenue to the west, West 23rd Street to the south, and West 31st Street to the north. The area is bisected by Broadway.
- *Southwest Quadrant* –the area roughly bounded by Seventh Avenue and a line 100 feet east of Eighth Avenue to the west, a line 125 feet west of Sixth Avenue to the east, West 28th Street and the centerline of the block between West 23rd and West 24th Street to the south, and West 30th and West 31st Streets to the north.

Secondary Study Area

As shown in **Figure 18-1**, the secondary Study Area for the assessment of neighborhood character is defined as the area within a 0.25-mile radius of the Affected Area and is generally bounded by West 45th Street and East 44th Street to the north, Park Avenue to the east, West 19th Street and East 18th Street to the south, and Dyer Avenue and the midblock between Tenth Avenue and Eleventh Avenue to the west.

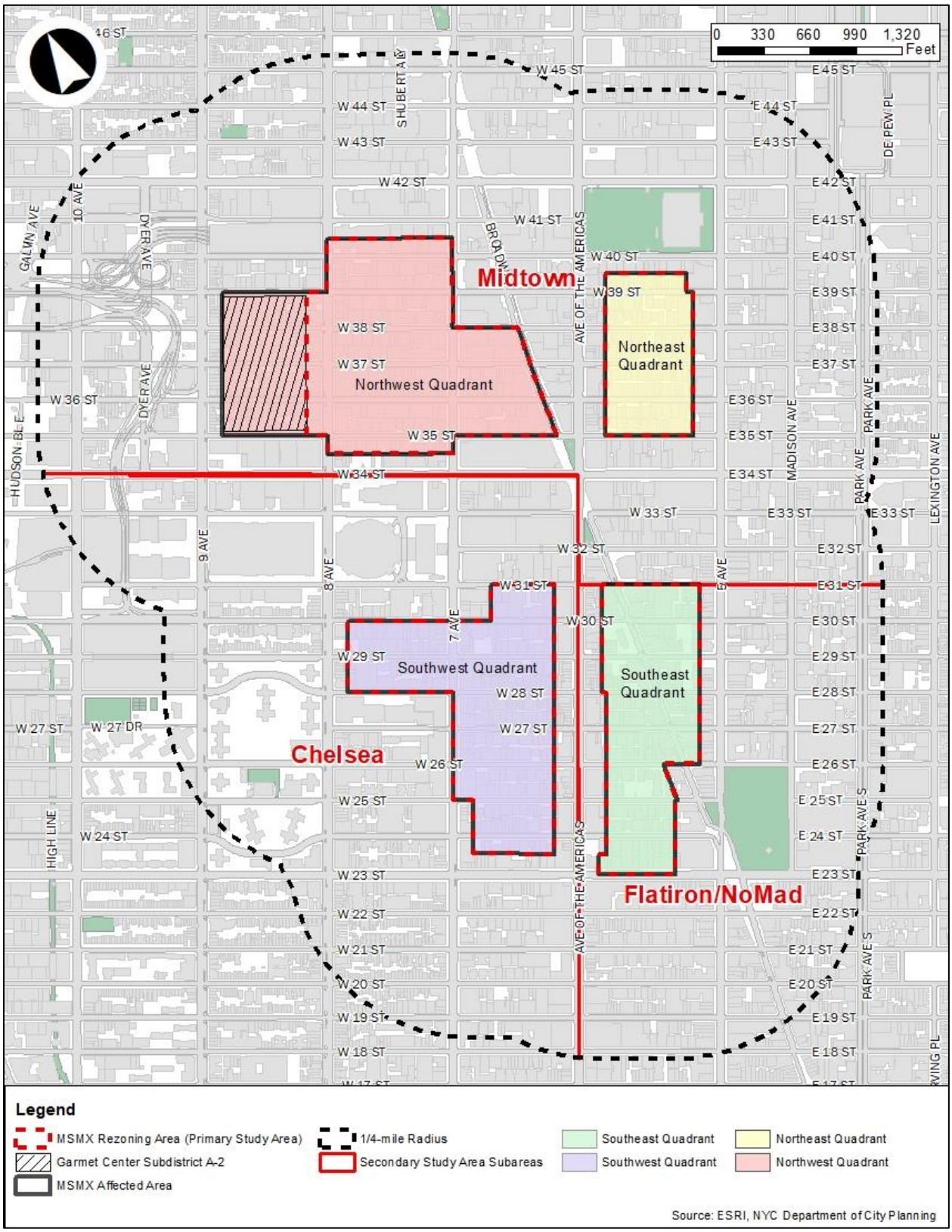
This assessment of neighborhood character in the secondary Study Area is discussed by neighborhood subarea and covers portions of three Manhattan neighborhoods including:

- *Midtown Analysis Area* –lots within 0.25 miles of the primary Study Area north of 34th Street between Sixth Avenue and Tenth Avenue and north of 32nd Street between Sixth Avenue and Park Avenue South in the Midtown neighborhood.

- *Chelsea Analysis Area* –lots within 0.25 miles of the primary Study Area south of 34th Street and west of Sixth Avenue in the Chelsea neighborhood.

- *Flatiron/NoMad Analysis Area* –lots within 0.25 miles of the primary Study Area south of 32nd Street and east of Sixth Avenue in the Flatiron/NoMad neighborhoods.

Figure 18-1: Project Location



D. Preliminary Assessment

Existing Conditions Defining Features

Primary Study Area

The defining features of neighborhood character in Midtown South is the frequency of commercial land uses. Unlike most other neighborhoods in Manhattan and elsewhere that tend to have commercial uses concentrated on avenues and wide streets and predominantly residential uses in the midblocks and side streets, the Affected Area is almost uniformly commercial, consisting primarily of offices interspersed with manufacturing, wholesale, and showroom uses as well as some newer hotel developments. This area, which contains Penn Station, Penn Plaza, Madison Square Garden, Macy's department store, Herald and Greeley Squares, and the Empire State Building, among other destinations, is one of the most heavily trafficked transportation, business, and retailing neighborhoods in the country. The Affected Area's four quadrants have subtle differences in terms of built character and mix of uses, as detailed below.

Northwest Quadrant and Special Garment Center Subdistrict A-2

The northwest quadrant and Special Garment Center Subdistrict A-2, which make up the majority of the Garment Center, is roughly bounded by Broadway and Seventh Avenue to the east, West 35th Street to the south, West 40th Street to the north, and a line 100 feet east of Ninth Avenue to the west. The quadrant is characterized by loft buildings constructed in the early part of the 20th century that were originally used for production and showroom space. On the side streets, buildings are generally around 15 stories tall; on the avenues, buildings tend to range from 25 to more than 40 stories. These buildings were designed as for general purposes and could accommodate manufacturing, warehousing, retail, and office uses. More recently, buildings whose upper floors were used for production have become showrooms or Class B or C office spaces, though some garment production remains. The northwest quadrant has the fewest residential units of any part of the Affected Area. Avenue frontages tend to have a consistent ground-floor retail presence, often occupied by large chain stores including banks, restaurants, and variety stores; second-floor retail is not uncommon. The midblocks tend to have smaller retail storefronts populated by bars, local services, and specialty, fashion-related wholesale establishments. Among the four quadrants, the northwest has the largest economy with 65,000 jobs, representing almost half of the Affected Area's total employment.

As the densest quadrant, the northwest generally has FARs in the 9.0 to 18.0 range, but with some buildings over 30.0 FAR. Existing commercial loft buildings come in two basic variations: the more squat, boxy typology that typically rises to its full height at the street wall, and the wedding cake style, which, above a high street wall, has multiple, shallow setbacks forming tiers each set back from the one below. The wedding cake loft, with its distinctive ziggurat-like profile, is a legacy of the 1916 ZR, which was designed to allow light and air to filter into the narrow streets below. Both loft typologies have high street walls, often rising to over 150 feet before setbacks on side streets, and as much as 200 feet before setbacks on the avenues. The buildings tend to have high lot coverage with no or shallow rear yards.

The northwest quadrant is located between Penn Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal and has high volumes of pedestrians between Monday and Friday. As described in Chapter 8, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," on Seventh and Eighth Avenues, planters, bollards, and Citi Bike stations are positioned along the westernmost lane to create a widening of the sidewalk between Times Square to the north and Penn Station to the south. Signage along these corridors indicates that they are "Pedestrian Flow Zones," also known as Super Sidewalks, created for the purpose of safe and continuous movement of pedestrian traffic (see **Figure 8-5**).

The Garment Center Historic District is located within this quadrant as well as several S/NR-eligible historic resources and one LPC-designated resource (refer to Chapter 7, "Historic Resources").

This quadrant includes one pedestrian plaza on Broadway between West 35th and 38th Streets and two POPS. On the west side of Eighth Avenue between West 36th and West 37th Streets is the 0.06-acre 525 Eighth Avenue POPS. On the west side of Eighth Avenue between West 38th and West 39th Streets is the 0.05-acre 585 Eighth Avenue POPS. Each POPS includes landscaping and seating.

Northeast Quadrant

The northeast quadrant, also known as the Garment Center East, but outside the special zoning district, is bounded by a line 150 feet west of Fifth Avenue to the east, 150 feet east of Sixth Avenue to the west, West 35th Street to the south, and the centerline of the block between West 39th and West 40th Streets to the north (refer to **Figure 18-1**).

Unlike the other three quadrants, which have been zoned for manufacturing since 1961, the northeast quadrant was originally zoned C6 and only rezoned to M1-6 in the 1980s. As a result, the building stock tends to be more diverse, with lofts interspersed with older walkup rowhouses and tenements, most of which have been altered and converted, as well as newer hotels. Buildings tend to be around 15 stories tall with a median FAR of 11, but with a significant concentration of buildings in the 3.0 to 6.0 and the 12.0 to 15.0 FAR ranges. Most of the loft buildings have been converted from manufacturing and wholesale uses to Class B and C office use. Over the last 15 years, due to the permissive M1-6 zoning (which, as of 2021, no longer allows transient hotel accommodations as of right) and proximity to the Midtown theater district, the northeast quadrant has seen a proliferation of budget and mid-rate chain hotel development. As a result of the quirks of the M1-6 bulk regulations, these hotels tend to have street walls that set back 10 to 20 feet from the street line and rise to their full height without setback, breaking up the street wall and creating a somewhat awkward "missing tooth" character. Ground-floor retail typically consists of local services, such as salons, dry cleaners, and hardware stores, and eating and drinking uses.

The northeast quadrant contains several S/NR-eligible historic resources, LPC-eligible, and one LPC-designated resource (refer to Chapter 7, "Historic Resources").

There are no open spaces in this quadrant.

Southeast Quadrant

Bisected by Broadway, the southeast quadrant consists of the midblocks bounded by a line 100 to 275 feet west of Fifth Avenue to the east, a line 125 to 150 feet east of Sixth Avenue to the west, West 23rd Street to the south, and West 31st Street to the north. The southeast quadrant is the most historically intact portion of the Affected Area; approximately 50 percent of the area is within a LPC historic district with a further nine individual landmarks. In terms of the built character, the southeast is perhaps the most heterogeneous. While 10- to 15-story lofts are still the predominant building type, there are a number of three- to six-story historic rowhouses as well as Class A office buildings, many of which were converted from former department stores and hotels. The median FAR for the southeast quadrant is 5.2, though there is a notable concentration of buildings in the 9.0 to 15.0 FAR range.

In recent years, this area has become part of the trendy NoMad (North of Madison Square Park) neighborhood. Because of its popularity with tourists and employers alike, the southeast quadrant has seen a proliferation of large upscale hotel developments, including the Ritz-Carlton at Broadway and West 28th Street and the Virgin Hotel at Broadway between West 29th and West 30th Streets. A number of institutional uses are concentrated here, including the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral of Saint Sava at 13 West 25th Street and Marble Collegiate Church at Fifth Avenue and West 29th Street. The southeast quadrant has the second-highest residential population among the four quadrants, with approximately 425 residential units, mostly IMDs, pre-1961 legally nonconforming residences, as well as at least one 74-711 special permit at 39-41 West 23rd Street in the Ladies' Mile Historic District that allowed for 43 homes, four of which are affordable. In approving that application (C 140404 ZSM), CPC noted that there was already an appreciable residential presence in the M1-6 district and surrounding areas with shrinking demand for conforming manufacturing and commercial uses, particularly on small sites. There are a wide range of retail offerings in the area, including upmarket restaurants, boutiques, bookstores, and gyms, as well as a robust, if dwindling, concentration of small wholesale import shops and low-cost clothiers. Notably, the southeast quadrant has the Affected Area's highest concentration of large, underdeveloped and undeveloped soft sites such as parking lots.

Three POPS are in this quadrant at 1185 Broadway, 776 Sixth Avenue, and on Broadway south of West 27th Street (refer to Chapter 5, "Open Space").

Southwest Quadrant

The southwest quadrant is roughly bounded by Seventh Avenue and a line 100 feet east of Eighth Avenue to the west, a line 125 feet west of Sixth Avenue to the east, West 28th Street and the centerline of the block between West 23rd and West 24th Street to the south, and West 30th and West 31st Streets to the north. While most of the building stock consists of 12- to 15-story masonry loft buildings, like the northeast quadrant, the southwest quadrant has seen a proliferation of hotels over the last two decades that are built 15 to 20 feet from the street line and rise without setbacks or articulation to a height taller—sometimes taller than 40 stories—than their prewar neighbors. The southwest quadrant has the widest variation of building densities; while the

median FAR is 8.3, there are a significant number of buildings built to less than 5.0 FAR and greater than 12.0 FAR.

While many of the older lofts have been converted to office use, this quadrant still has the Affected Area's highest concentration of wholesale establishments, a trend that has remained relatively stable over the last two decades despite a shrinking manufacturing sector. With approximately 37,000 jobs, the southwest quadrant is second only to the northwest quadrant in terms of economic impact, and it includes a flourishing creative and tech sector. The southwest quadrant has historically been the heart of the Flower District; today, there are several dozen floral retail and wholesale businesses employing around 200 people, mostly concentrated along West 28th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. In the warmer months, the sidewalks and streets along this stretch of West 28th Street transform into an open-air flower market serving restaurants, hotels, and other businesses across Manhattan and the city.

The southwest quadrant is within the orbit of the Fashion Institute of Technology and its large population of students and staff. Like the northwest quadrant, avenue frontages tend to have ground-floor retail, consisting mostly of chain stores and restaurants with smaller storefronts in the midblocks tenanted with bars, local services, and fashion-related businesses. The southwest quadrant has by far the biggest residential presence of any quadrant, containing more than 70 percent of the Rezoning Area's homes. Most of the residential development is concentrated in the roughly two-block M1-6D area west of Seventh Avenue, which was rezoned in 2011 from M1-5 and mapped as an IH area. The M1-6D district requires buildings to line up at the street line in loft-like building forms to match the surrounding context. The success of the 2011 rezoning, catalyzing hundreds of new market-rate and affordable units, indicates strong demand for residential development in the Affected Area.

The southwest quadrant contains several S/NR-eligible and S/NR-listed historic resources (refer to Chapter 7, "Historic Resources").

The southwest quadrant is located south of Penn Station. Seventh and Eighth Avenues experience significant pedestrian volumes to and from the station between Monday and Friday.

This quadrant includes one POPS. A 10,819-sf public plaza is located behind the building at 849 Sixth Avenue between West 29th and West 30th Streets.

Secondary Study Area

Consistent with the secondary Study Area presented in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," and Chapter 8, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," and shown in **Figure 18-1**, the secondary Study Area extends to include the area within a 0.25-mile radius of the Affected Area and divided into three distinct analysis areas, as follows:

- *Midtown Analysis Area* – comprises lots within 0.25 miles of the primary Study Area north of 34th Street between Sixth Avenue and Ninth Avenue and north of 32nd Street between Sixth Avenue and Park Avenue South in the Midtown neighborhood.

- *Chelsea Analysis Area* – comprises lots within 0.25 miles of the primary Study Area south of 34th Street and west of Sixth Avenue in the Chelsea neighborhood.

- *Flatiron/NoMad Analysis Area* – comprises lots within 0.25 miles of the primary Study Area south of 32nd Street and east of Sixth Avenue in the NoMad neighborhoods.

Midtown

As discussed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the area is occupied primarily by commercial uses (approximately 59 percent of total lot area and 79 percent of total floor area). Mixed-use residential and commercial uses make up approximately 13 percent of total lot area in the subarea and nearly 12 percent of total building area. Public facilities and institutions in the subarea occupy approximately 6 percent of total lot area and 2 percent of total building area.

The highest built density and building height in the Midtown secondary subarea is generally concentrated on north-south avenues, particularly Eighth Avenue, Seventh Avenue, Broadway, Sixth Avenue. On north-south avenues, buildings generally range in height between 20 to 40 stories. On the east-west streets, buildings generally range in height between five to 15 stories. The area between Eighth Avenue and Fifth Avenue is primarily occupied by commercial uses. Within this area, a small number of buildings include mixed-use residential and commercial, multi-family residential, or institutional uses. East of Fifth Avenue, the area is still primarily occupied by commercial uses, but mixed-use residential and commercial, residential, and institutional uses become more common. West of Eighth Avenue, the area contains a mix of commercial buildings, mixed-use residential and commercial buildings, multi-family residential buildings, institutional uses, the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and ramps leading to and from the Lincoln Tunnel.

Similar to the northwest and northeast quadrants discussed above, buildings in the Midtown secondary subarea are generally built to the lot line, particularly older buildings in the area. Newer buildings along side streets are commonly hotels that are set back from the street wall and rise to their maximum height without any setback. Buildings along the north-south avenues create a continuous street wall. Buildings on the side streets create a nearly continuous street wall.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal is located within the subarea and Grand Central is located just outside the subarea. The area has excellent access to local and regional transit.

Significant defining features of this subarea includes the New York Public Library – Stephen Schwarzman Building, Bryant Park, Times Square, the several Broadway theaters.

Notable open spaces within the secondary subarea include Bryant Park, McCaffery Playground, Herald Square, Greeley Square, and the Times Square pedestrian plaza. Bryant Park is a 9.6-acre park that includes public seating, food kiosks, a fountain, a great lawn during the non-winter months, and an ice-skating rink/winter village during the winter. McCaffery Playground is a 0.44 -acre playground located on the north side of West 43rd Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. The playground includes basketball courts, handball courts, playgrounds, spray showers, public restrooms, and public seating. Herald Square is a 0.21-acre plaza located on Broadway between West 35th Street and West 34th Street; it offers seating areas and public restrooms. Greeley Square is a 0.14-acre plaza located on Broadway between West 33rd Street and West 32nd Street. The plaza includes seating areas, public restrooms, and food kiosks. On Broadway between West 42nd Street and West 45th Street is a portion of the Times Square

pedestrian plaza. Additionally, several privately owned public spaces are in the subarea (refer to Chapter 5, "Open Space," for further discussion of these resources).

Chelsea

The Chelsea subarea is a primarily commercial area, though this subarea has a lower concentration of commercial uses than the Midtown subarea. Commercial area constitutes 55 percent of total floor area in the subarea. Mixed-use residential and commercial uses make up 18 percent of total floor area and residential uses make up 16 percent of total floor area. Multifamily elevator buildings are the most common form of residential use in the subarea. The Chelsea subarea has the highest percentage of residential uses of secondary study area subareas.

Penn Station and Moynihan Train Hall at Penn Station are located within the subarea. These two buildings are a multimodal transit hub with access to six subway lines (1, 2, 3, A, C, E), NJ Transit Rail, the LIRR, and Amtrak. Madison Square Garden, an approximately 19,000-seat multipurpose arena, sits above Penn Station.

Building heights range between 10 to 20 stories on the north-south avenues and between five to 10 stories on the east-west streets. The area between Sixth Avenue and Seventh Avenue north of 23rd Street is primarily occupied by commercial buildings. Moving south and west, building height and density in this secondary Study Area subarea decreases. Mixed-use residential and commercial buildings and institutional buildings are also located in this area. West of Seventh Avenue the Chelsea secondary subarea is primarily residential with a mix of mixed-use residential and commercial buildings, multi-family buildings, and one- and two-family buildings.

Buildings on Sixth Avenue and Seventh Avenue are generally built to the lot line, creating a continuous street wall. An exception to this is Penn Station/Madison Square Garden on Seventh Avenue between West 33rd Street and West 31st Street. Penn Station/Madison Square Garden is set back from the property line to provide additional sidewalk width for pedestrian ingress and egress for the arena and train station. On Eighth Avenue and Ninth Avenue, buildings do not create a continuous street wall, particularly due to the Penn South Housing Cooperative. The Penn South Housing Cooperative is built as a tower-in-the-park style development that includes 21- and 22-story residential buildings surrounded by landscaped land. Buildings on side streets in the subarea are typically built to the lot line. Exceptions include a cluster of one- and two-family residential buildings on West 29th Street west of Eighth Avenue.

Three parks are in the subarea and include Penn South Playground, Chelsea Green, and Chelsea Park. Penn South Playground is a 0.6-acre playground on West 26th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. The playground includes seating areas, basketball courts, and playgrounds. Chelsea Green is a 0.23-acre park on West 20th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. The park was opened in 2019 and includes seating, synthetic turf, and a playground. Chelsea Park is a 3.9-acre park located on the block bound by West 28th Street to the north, Ninth Avenue to the east, West 27th Street to the south, and Tenth Avenue to the west. The park includes baseball fields, a soccer field, basketball courts, fitness equipment, playgrounds, handball courts, spray showers, running tracks, and public seating. Additionally, several privately owned public spaces are in the subarea (see Chapter 5, "Open Space," for further discussion of these resources).

Flatiron/NoMad

The Flatiron/NoMad subarea, similar to the larger secondary study area, is primarily comprised of commercial uses (approximately 65 percent of total building floor area). Mixed-use residential occupies approximately 22 percent of total floor area. Residential uses occupy approximately 10 percent of total floor area. Multifamily elevator buildings are the most common form of residential use in the subarea.

Buildings in the Flatiron/NoMad secondary subarea are generally built to the lot line, creating nearly continuous street walls. Newer construction in the secondary subarea, particularly near the intersections of Fifth Avenue and 29th/30th Streets, includes tall residential towers not set back from the street wall before reaching their maximum height.

Other defining features in the subarea are Madison Square Park, a 6.24-acre open space located in the southern half of the residential study area. It is located on the block bounded by East 26th Street to the north, Park Avenue South to the east, East 23rd Street to the south, and Fifth Avenue to the west. Madison Square Park includes lawns, playgrounds, passive seating areas, walking paths, movable café tables and chairs, a dog run, and restaurant. The lawn hosts seasonal art installations.

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

Future Without the Proposed Actions (No-Action Condition)

It is expected that the current land use trends and general development patterns will continue in both the primary and secondary study areas. These trends and patterns are characterized primarily by commercial uses. The primary Study Area will continue to include mixed-use residential and commercial uses, residential uses, and public facilities and institutions. The identified projected development sites are zoned M1-6 and are assumed to remain unchanged from existing conditions. The buildings on these sites would continue to age and become more difficult to lease to commercial tenants seeking quality space. The manufacturing uses are expected to continue declining in the Study Area, including garment manufacturing.

In the future without the Proposed Actions (No-Action condition), the projected and potential development sites are zoned for manufacturing uses and are assumed to remain unchanged from existing conditions.

There is one known planned No-Build Development that would occur in the primary Study Area, in the northwest quadrant. At 515 7th Avenue, a 23-story commercial building with 181,110 gsf of office space, 255 hotel rooms, and a covered pedestrian space is expected to be constructed by 2029.

As discussed in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” there are 22 No-Build developments that are expected to be completed by the 2034 build year within a ¼-mile radius of the Affected Area. In total, these developments would include 7,213 DUs, 791 of which would be affordable DU, 12,064,753 gsf of office space, 251,622 gsf of local retail, 330,000 gsf of destination retail, and 167,388 gsf of community facility space. No-Build development would be

generally concentrated to the Midtown subarea. Eight developments would occur in the Chelsea subarea. There are not any No-Build developments in the Flatiron/NoMad subarea.

As discussed in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," there is an existing trend toward housing development in the surrounding area outside of the Affected Area. According to data from Costar, the amount of residential areas in each of the six submarkets comprising the Study Area increased over the last 10 years, and residential vacancy remains virtually unchanged. Meanwhile, multifamily residential rents increased on average 26.3 percent across the six submarkets and 23.1 percent in the Greater Midtown market, indicating a strong and sustained demand for housing. Under the No-Action Condition, this trend is expected to continue.

Future With The Proposed Actions (With-Action Condition)

The sections below discuss the potential for adverse impacts resulting from the Proposed Actions in the following technical areas that are considered in the neighborhood character assessment pursuant to the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; shadows; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the information and conclusions from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Actions would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character. As described below, defining features of the study area's constituent neighborhoods would not be adversely impacted either through the potential of any single significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in these technical areas.

In the future with the Proposed Actions (the "With Action" condition), the Proposed Actions would nurture a more vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood, create opportunities for new housing through ground-up development and conversions, support critical commercial activity and job growth, stabilize the commercial real estate market in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and shifting work patterns, and reflect the historical architectural legacy and industrial character of the neighborhood.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description", the RWCDS for the Proposed Actions assumes that all With-Action development on the 61 projected development sites and 1,093,808 gsf of conversion area would attempt to maximize the permitted floor area and would result in a net increase of 9,676 dwelling units (DU), including 1,940 to 2,890 permanently affordable units; 462,129 gsf (402,300 zoning square feet [zsf]) of projected retail space (local retail), 81,755 gsf (71,125 zsf) of community facility use, a decrease of 732,619 gsf of commercial office space (651,316 zsf), and a decrease of 69,782 gsf of industrial/warehouse space (62,103 zsf).

Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on land use, zoning, and public policy, either singly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the Proposed Actions would not have significant

adverse impacts to land use, zoning, or public policy. The Proposed Actions would not directly displace any land uses so as to adversely affect surrounding land uses, nor would they generate land uses that would be incompatible with existing land uses or zoning districts in the primary or secondary study areas. The Proposed Actions would not result in land uses that conflict with public policies applicable to the primary or secondary study areas.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate residential and commercial mixed-use development throughout the primary Study Area by allowing residential use and expanding the allowable density of commercial uses and community facilities. The Proposed Actions would support new housing and jobs in a neighborhood with strong public transit access within the Central Business District (CBD) of Midtown Manhattan.

With the proposed zoning changes, residential use would be allowed throughout the primary Study Area, expanding the City's housing supply to help meet the housing needs of current and future residents, and significantly increasing the supply of affordable housing through the application of MIH. The Proposed Actions also would create opportunities for new nonresidential space. The Proposed Actions would promote these opportunities in new mixed-use buildings throughout the primary Study Area. Bulk regulations would encourage a range of heights and building forms, allowing sufficient flexibility for buildings, and reflect the existing built character of the neighborhood.

Development under the Proposed Actions would be compatible with the scale and use of surrounding neighborhoods and would support public policies. The new land uses generated as a result of the Proposed Actions would support the existing residential populations of adjacent neighborhoods and would be compatible with land uses found in those areas.

The introduction of new land uses and zoning would not adversely affect any of the defining features of neighborhood character in either the primary or secondary study area. The increased supply of new housing, including affordable housing, would provide New Yorkers with more housing options. Therefore, the Proposed Actions effects on land use, zoning, and public policy would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

Socioeconomic Conditions

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

With regard to potential direct displacement, the Proposed Actions would result in the displacement of 91 residents in 54 DUs and an estimated 5,304 employees at 779 firms. This direct displacement would not result in significant adverse direct residential or business impacts in the study area. The directly displaced residents do not represent a sizable portion of the study

area population, nor do they have socioeconomic characteristics that differ markedly from the study area population as a whole. The potentially displaced businesses provide goods and services that would still be found within the study area. The Proposed Actions would eliminate from the zoning map the portion of the Special Garment Center District that is coextensive with the Affected Area, and Special Garment Center Subdistrict A-2 would be subsumed by the Special Hudson Yards District. The Garment Center Text Amendment of 2018 already removed protections for the garment industry by allowing for the conversion of manufacturing and warehousing uses to office uses in Subdistrict A-1 east of 8th Avenue. Therefore, any garment industry businesses occupying sites within the Special Garment Center District are not currently subject to regulations or publicly adopted plans to preserve, enhance, or otherwise protect them. Nevertheless, potentially displaced garment industry businesses were analyzed to determine any adverse impacts. Overall, 114 of the potentially displaced businesses are in the garment industry. Upon further analysis, direct displacement of these businesses does not constitute a significant adverse impact on socioeconomic conditions as defined by the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*.

Under the RWCDS, the Proposed Actions are expected to introduce 9,676 DUs, of which up to 2,890 would be permanently affordable, and 16,256 new residents. The Proposed Actions are not expected to result in a new population with higher incomes than the existing population, as the aggregate With-Action population is expected to have a lower average household income ($161,822) than the current average household income in the Study Area ($210,646). The population increase under the With-Action condition, which would exceed five percent, would be large enough to potentially affect real estate market conditions in the ½-mile study area. The Proposed Actions are not expected to introduce a new trend that places upward pressure on rents. As discussed in **Chapter 3, Socioeconomic Conditions**, this trend is already being observed in the study area, and the Proposed Actions would not accelerate this trend. Between 2018 to 2023, the study area experienced a 28.8 percent increase in median asking rent for market-rate units. The Proposed Actions would add new transit-accessible housing stock to the study area and would increase the inventory of protected units in the area by creating affordable housing through the MIH program, potentially slowing trends of increasing rents and maintaining a more diverse mix of incomes within the subareas as compared to the No Action condition. The Proposed Actions would support the socioeconomic diversity of the study area and ensure that households with a range of incomes could live in the neighborhood.

With regard to indirect business displacement, the primary and broader secondary study areas have well-established residential and commercial markets such that the Proposed Actions would not introduce new economic activities or significantly alter or accelerate existing economic patterns. The addition of new residents would increase demand for the goods and services provided by existing businesses. The new residential and retail uses would be spread throughout the Affected Area, and the Study Area's well-established retail and office markets would not be disrupted by the incremental increase and reduction, respectively, in activity introduced by the Proposed Actions. Recent trends indicate that the area is already adding residential use while commercial office and retail space experience increased vacancy rates and industrial space declines, indicating the Proposed Actions are consistent with existing market trends.

The Proposed Actions' resident population would become new customers at many of the existing retail businesses in the primary and secondary study areas, and the mix of market-rate and affordable DUs resulting from the Proposed Actions would maintain a diverse customer base to shop at retail stores. Overall, as there would be no impacts to socioeconomic resources with respect to the five analysis categories as summarized above, there would be no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

Open Space

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on open space, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. The Proposed Actions would not result in the physical loss of existing public open space resources, and would not result in any adverse air quality, noise, or other environmental impacts that would affect the usefulness of any publicly accessible open space. However, the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse shadow impacts on one open space resource, the 1185 Broadway privately owned public space (POPS). See Chapter 6, "Shadows" for more information. The area near the 1185 Broadway POPS includes several passive open space POPS meaning residents/workers in this area will continue to have access to passive open space with direct sunlight.

As detailed in **Chapter 5, Open Space**, a detailed open space analysis for both a residential (½-mile) study area was conducted, pursuant to the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*. The detailed analysis determined that the Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse indirect impact to total, passive, and active open space in the residential study area due to the added demand placed on open spaces.

The lack of open space in the study area indicates that open space is not a defining feature of the neighborhood character. Potential mitigations measures to address the significant adverse impacts are discussed in Chapter 21, "Mitigation". Measures being considered to mitigate the impact include: expanding existing parks, creating new open space on publicly owned land, encouraging owners of privately-owned sites to create new open space as part of their redevelopment, making playgrounds accessible to the community after school hours through the Schoolyards to Playgrounds program, establishing new pedestrian plazas in streets through the City's Plaza program, and/or improving existing parks to allow for more diverse programming. These potential mitigation measures are currently being explored in coordination with the lead agency, the Department of City Planning (DCP), and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and will be refined between the DEIS and FEIS. In addition, as part of the Proposed Actions, a proposed zoning text amendment would allow for a floor area bonus with the provision of a Covered Pedestrian Space.

While the potential for increased usage of the open space resources may lead to lower ratios of total, passive and active open space per resident in both the primary and secondary study area, their function and aesthetic contributions to the primary and secondary study areas would remain unchanged. As open space is not a defining feature of neighborhood character, the significant adverse open space impact would not result in an impact to neighborhood character.

Shadows

The Proposed Actions would result in development that would cast incremental shadows on sunlight sensitive resources near the Affected Area. Most of the new shadow would not reach sunlight-sensitive resources due to existing and anticipated future intervening structures. However, as described in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse shadow impacts on four sunlight-sensitive resources: 1185 Broadway POPS, Marble Collegiate Church, St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church, St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, and Trinity Chapel Complex.

1185 Broadway contains a small POPS along West 28th Street west of Broadway. The POPS contains benches, planters, and trees. Incremental shadow from projected development site 42 would nearly eliminate direct sunlight to the 1185 Broadway POPS during the afternoon hours on three analysis days. Vegetation within the POPS would not receive adequate sunlight during the growing season (at least six to eight hours as specified in the *CEQR Technical Manual*). The lack of direct sunlight during the late morning and early afternoon hours may affect the public's use and enjoyment of this resource. Therefore, the Proposed Actions are expected to result in a significant adverse impact.

At 272 Fifth Avenue is the LPC-designated and S/NR-listed Marble Collegiate Church. The church is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of West 29th Street and Fifth Avenue. According to the LPC 1967 designation report, the church resembles a New England wooden church but has a façade made of marble. The church is Romanesque in style but uses Gothic forms in details of the building. The buildings southern façade includes stained glass windows. Incremental shadow would be cast on each of the four analysis days. As these incremental shadows may have the potential to affect the public's enjoyment of this resource's sunlight-sensitive features, this would constitute a significant adverse shadow impact.

At 213 West 30th Street is the LPC-eligible and S/NR-eligible St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church. Incremental shadow would be cast on each of the four analysis days. Incremental shadow would be on portions of the western and southern façade during the afternoon hours on the March 21/September 21, May 6/August 6, and June 21 analysis days. As these incremental shadows may have the potential to affect the public's enjoyment of this resource's sunlight-sensitive features, this constitutes a significant adverse shadow impact.

At 129 West 31st Street is the LPC-eligible and S/NR-eligible St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church. Stained glass windows are located on the western, southern, and eastern facades of the building. Incremental shadow would be cast on each of the four analysis days and would be cast on the southern façade during three of the four analysis days. As buildings are located on the western and eastern sides of this building, the southern façade receives the most direct sunlight through the building's stained-glass windows. As these incremental shadows may have the potential to affect the public's enjoyment of this resource's sunlight-sensitive features, this constitutes a significant adverse shadow impact.

At 15 West 25th Street is the LPC-designated and S/NR-listed Trinity Chapel Complex. Stained glass windows are located on the western façade facing projected development site 40.

Incremental shadow would be cast on three of the four representative analysis days. As the projected development at projected development site 40 is located directly west of these sunlight-sensitive features, incremental shadows may have the potential to affect the public's enjoyment of this resource's sunlight-sensitive features. This would constitute a significant adverse shadow impact.

According to the 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual*, possible measures that could mitigate significant adverse shadow impacts on open spaces may include relocating sunlight-sensitive features within an open space to avoid sunlight loss; relocating, replacing, or monitoring vegetation for a set period of time; undertaking additional maintenance to reduce the likelihood of species loss; or providing for replacement facilities on another nearby site. Other potential mitigation strategies include the redesign or reorientation of the open space to provide replacement facilities, vegetation, or other features. The 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance also discusses strategies to reduce or eliminate shadow impacts, including modifications to the height, shape, size, or orientation of a proposed development that creates the significant adverse shadow impact. Measures to reduce or eliminate the significant adverse shadow impacts will be explored between the DEIS and FEIS.

As noted above, open space is not a defining feature of neighborhood character, nor is Marble Collegiate Church, St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church, St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, and Trinity Chapel Complex. As these resources would remain in place and the impact of incremental shadow localized, the incremental shadows effects would not be to such a degree to alter the neighborhood character of any of the neighborhoods in either the primary or secondary study area.

Historic and Cultural Resources

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

The Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse unavoidable direct historic resource impact to 12 architectural resources that are S/NR-listed. These historic resources, which are privately-owned, would be directly impacted by construction on projected development sites 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 ,15, 16, 17, 18, and 36 and potential development sites C, E, and G. The historic resources on these sites would be demolished to facilitate construction of new mixed-use residential and local retail development under the Proposed Actions. The demolition and/or alteration would alter the streetscape in the northwest quadrant of the Rezoning Area. However, the demolition and/or alteration of the building would allow for new housing and local retail use at these sites. So, while the change would be significant, it would not alter the overall character of the neighborhood and allow a greater amount of housing, including affordable housing, to be built.

Sixteen non-designated historic resources are located near the projected/potential development sites. Although these developments resulting from the Proposed Actions could alter the setting or visual context of several of these historic resources, only Projected Development Site 40 would cause alterations to the setting and visual context of the NYCL-designated Trinity Chapel

Complex, and thus cause significant adverse impacts. The remaining projected and potential development sites would not alter the relationship of any identified historic resources to the streetscape, because all streets in the study area would remain open and each resource's relationship with the street would remain unchanged in the future with the Proposed Actions. Besides Projected Development Site 40, no other projected/potential developments would eliminate or substantially obstruct significant public views of architectural resources, because all significant elements of these historic resources would remain visible in view corridors on public streets. Additionally, no incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements would be introduced by the Proposed Actions to any historic resource's setting under RWCDS With-Action conditions. As such, the Proposed Actions are expected to result in only one adverse indirect or contextual impacts on a historic architectural resource.

The Proposed Actions would also result in significant adverse construction-related impacts to sixteen non-designated historic resources that are within 90 feet of a projected/potential development site, but would not be afforded protection under TPPN #10/88 unless they became designated NYC landmarks or S/NR-listed historic buildings. The affected historic resources are not defining elements of the neighborhood character, therefore no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character would occur.

Indirect impacts related to shadows would occur at the Marble Collegiate Church, St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church, St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, and Trinity Chapel Complex. Incremental shadows from the Proposed Actions would extend over the majority of the church's stained glass windows and result in a reduction of direct sunlight exposure, which could affect the public's enjoyment or appreciation of those features. The sunlight-sensitive features of these churches are not a defining characteristic of the neighborhood. Therefore, incremental shadow cast on historic resources would not cause any impact to neighborhood character.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

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

Under the future With-Action condition, the built environment's arrangement, appearance, or functionality, would remain the same, and the projected developments would be compatible with the scale and use of surrounding buildings. New development and the introduction of 16,256 additional residents and additional local retail uses to the Affected Area would enliven the streetscape and create a more 24/7 mixed-use neighborhood in comparison to the existing neighborhood that primarily caters to office employees during the week. New development and uses generated by the Proposed Actions would not clash with the context of existing buildings

within the Rezoning Area and future developments built under the No-Action condition. As a result of the development of the projected and potential development sites, some views of visual resources within or from the Rezoning Area would be modified by the addition of new buildings along the view corridors. Views of these resources would not be completely obstructed. Some views would be obstructed from certain vantage points, but similar views would continue to be widely available from other locations within the Rezoning Area and larger secondary Study Area.

Approval of the Proposed Actions would not result in changes to the streetscape, buildings, or open space in the secondary Study Area. The development of the projected and potential sites would not significantly obstruct views of visual resources in the secondary Study Area. The Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts to urban design or visual resources in the secondary Study Area.

As such, while the Proposed Actions would result in a notable change in the urban design of the primary study area and would alter some views of the neighborhood from the secondary study area, these changes are expected to allow for an improved urban experience for pedestrians and an overall improvement in urban design conditions.

Transportation

As discussed in Chapter 13, “Transportation,” there are significant adverse impacts related to traffic and pedestrians. Significant adverse traffic impacts were identified at 28 intersections (all signalized) during one or more analyzed peak hours, including 15 lane groups at 14 intersections during the weekday AM peak hour, 12 lane groups at 11 intersections in the midday peak hour, 26 lane groups at 20 intersections in the PM peak hour, and 24 lane groups at 20 intersections during the Saturday peak hour. Chapter 21, “Mitigation,” discusses potential measures to mitigate these significant adverse traffic impacts. Implementation of traffic engineering improvements, such as signal timing changes, and the modification of curbside parking regulations are being proposed and would provide mitigation for many of the anticipated traffic impacts. These proposed traffic engineering improvements are subject to final review and approval by DOT. If DOT determines that an identified traffic engineering improvement is infeasible, and no alternative and equivalent measure is identified, then that impact would remain unmitigated and would constitute an unavoidable adverse impact. However, unmitigated impacts in one or more peak hours would remain at 11 intersections.

Because of existing congestion at a number of these intersections, even a minimal increase in traffic would result in unmitigated impacts. Small increases in incremental traffic volumes at some of the congested intersections would result in significant adverse impacts that could not be fully mitigated during one or more analysis peak hours, and even limited new development in the Affected Area could result in unmitigated traffic impacts. While there would be increased transportation activity as a result of the Proposed Actions, the resulting conditions would be similar to those experienced in the some of the neighborhoods surrounding the Affected Area and would not result in conditions that would be out of character with the surrounding neighborhoods. Thus, the changes in transportation due to the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character

Based on 2021 *CEQR Technical Manual* criteria, the Proposed Actions would adversely impact 19 sidewalks, six crosswalks, and three corners during one or more analyzed peak hours. Chapter 21, "Mitigation," discusses potential measures to mitigate these significant adverse pedestrian impacts. Recommended mitigation measures consisting of the relocation/removal of impediments to sidewalk and corner flow and the widening of crosswalks would fully mitigate the impacts to eight sidewalks, sixcrosswalks, and one corner. Implementation of the proposed mitigation measures would be subject to review and approval by DOT. However, in the scenario that certain impacts would remain unmitigated, the impacts would be localized and would not rise to a level where they would alter defining features of the primary or secondary study area. Therefore, this increase in pedestrian volumes would not adversely affect neighborhood character.

Despite the area's access to alternative modes of transportation, as the RWCDS does not include any on-site parking on projected developments sites, nor any new off-site public parking, parking demand under the Proposed Actions' RWCDS would not be accommodated on-site and excess demand would seek parking availability within a quarter-mile radius of the primary study area. This projected parking demand as well as any demand displaced from existing parking facilities on projected development sites would have seek available on-street and off-street parking within quarter-mile of the Affected Area. Further, some drivers destined for the Affected Area would potentially have to travel a greater distance (e.g., between quarter- and half mile) to find available parking. Any potential deficit in parking would not be considered a significant adverse impact based on *CEQR Technical Manual* criteria due to the magnitude of available alternative modes of transportation. Therefore, the Proposed Actions are not expected to result in significant adverse parking impacts. Moreover, the lack of parking would not fundamentally change the defining features of the primary or secondary study area, and as such, would not adversely affect neighborhood characteristics.

Noise

The defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the Proposed Actions, either singly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas. As described in Chapter 16, "Noise," the noise analysis concludes that the Proposed Actions would not generate sufficient traffic to have the potential to cause a significant noise impact on any of the 68 projected or potential development sites. At all the projected and potential development site noise receptor locations, the maximum noise level increase would be below three dBA between No-Action and With-Action conditions. Therefore, the noise analysis concludes that the traffic generated by the Proposed Actions would not have the potential to produce significant increases to noise levels at any sensitive receptors among the 68 projected and potential development sites within the Affected Area.

Since the RWCDS conversion model is not site-specific, if located outside of the Special Mixed Use District, residential conversion area could be located in areas with high ambient noise level and without appropriate attenuation measures to maintain CEQR interior noise target levels. Therefore, significant adverse noise impacts cannot be precluded for the residential conversion area.

However, the primary study area already experiences relatively high ambient noise levels and new development, and the resulting traffic would not be out of character with the Midtown neighborhood. As a result, there would be no noise-related impacts on neighborhood character.