Chapter 19: Neighborhood Character

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the Proposed Actions' potential effects on neighborhood character. As defined in the 2020 *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 every case.

Under CEQR, an analysis of neighborhood character identifies the defining features of the neighborhood and then evaluates whether a proposed project has the potential to affect the defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical analysis areas. To determine the effects of a proposed project on neighborhood character, the defining features of neighborhood character are considered together. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character impacts are rare, and it would be unusual that—in the absence of a significant adverse impact in any of the relevant technical areas—a combination of moderate effects to the neighborhood would result in an impact to neighborhood character. Moreover, a significant adverse impact identified in one of the technical areas that contributes to a neighborhood's character does not necessarily constitute 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 City is proposing several actions (the "Proposed Actions") to implement land use and zoning recommendations in the Gowanus Neighborhood Plan (the "Neighborhood Plan"). The Project Area comprises approximately 81 blocks of the Gowanus neighborhood of Brooklyn, Community Districts 2 and 6. The Proposed Actions would create new neighborhood parks and a waterfront esplanade along the Gowanus Canal, and provide opportunities for new housing in mixed-use developments, light industrial space, commercial space, arts-related space, and community facility space.

By 2035, the Proposed Actions are expected to result in a net increase of approximately 8,500 dwelling units (DUs), a substantial portion of which would be affordable; 735,000 square feet (sf) of commercial space, which includes local retail, destination retail, grocery, and restaurant use; 251,000 sf of community facility space; and approximately 6 acres of new open space, including over an acre of newly mapped parkland, as compared to the No Action condition. The Proposed Actions are also expected to result in net decreases of approximately 132,000 sf of warehouse space, 125,000 sf of self-storage space, and 60,000 sf of other industrial space. In total, the Proposed Actions would contain approximately 10 million sf of floor area occupying 63 projected development sites, to be developed over time through the analysis year of 2035.

The assessment of neighborhood character was prepared in accordance with the guidance in the *CEQR Technical Manual*. This chapter describes the defining features of the existing

neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Actions on these defining features. This assessment relies on the technical analyses presented in other chapters of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character.

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; urban design and visual resources; or noise. Although there would be significant adverse impacts with respect to open space, historic resources, shadows, and transportation, these impacts would not result in a significant adverse impact to the determining elements of neighborhood character.

In the No Action condition, development is expected to occur in a piecemeal manner and without the benefit of a comprehensive plan to coordinate appropriate densities and urban design controls across the neighborhood. In contrast, the Proposed Actions would provide for sufficient predictability, flexibility, and variety for building envelopes that account for the unique conditions in the Gowanus neighborhood, including the Canal, with appropriate transitions between lower and medium density adjacencies, the creation of new waterfront open space, enhanced pedestrian-oriented sidewalk conditions, and lively, active streets. While the character of Gowanus has changed throughout the years and will continue to change with or without the Proposed Actions, the Proposed Actions would facilitate predictable development patterns that meet the long-term vision of Gowanus as a sustainable, mixed-use neighborhood anchored by a vibrant and resilient Canal waterfront. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.

B. METHODOLOGY

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

A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in other technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The preliminary assessment first identifies the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and then evaluates whether the proposed project or action has the potential to affect those defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the relevant technical areas. If the project has the potential to affect defining features of a neighborhood, a detailed assessment of neighborhood character may be appropriate. The key elements that define neighborhood character, and their relationships to one another, form the basis of determining impact significance; in general, the more uniform and consistent the existing

neighborhood context, the more sensitive it may be to change. A neighborhood that has a more varied context is typically able to tolerate greater change without experiencing significant impacts.

STUDY AREA

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study area for a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character is typically consistent with the study areas in the relevant technical areas assessed under CEQR that contribute to the defining features of the neighborhood. In the context of an area-wide rezoning such as the one envisioned with the Proposed Actions, the study area boundaries of the preliminary assessment of neighborhood character are generally coterminous with those used in the analyses of land use or urban design. As shown in **Figure 19-1**, the study area for the assessment of neighborhood character comprises an area within a quarter-mile radius of the Project Area.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

This chapter identifies a primary study area and a secondary study area; the primary study area consists of the Project Area, an approximately 81-block area surrounding the Gowanus Canal and a segment of 4th Avenue. The area directly affected by the Proposed Actions is generally bounded by Warren, Baltic, and Pacific Streets to the north; 3rd and 4th Avenues to the east; Huntington, 3rd, 7th, and 15th Streets to the south; and Bond, Hoyt, and Smith Streets to the west. The area encompasses 200 acres, and is defined by the 1.8-mile-long Gowanus Canal. The Canal splits the neighborhood and the major north–south and east–west corridors that connect the upland areas to the surrounding neighborhoods.

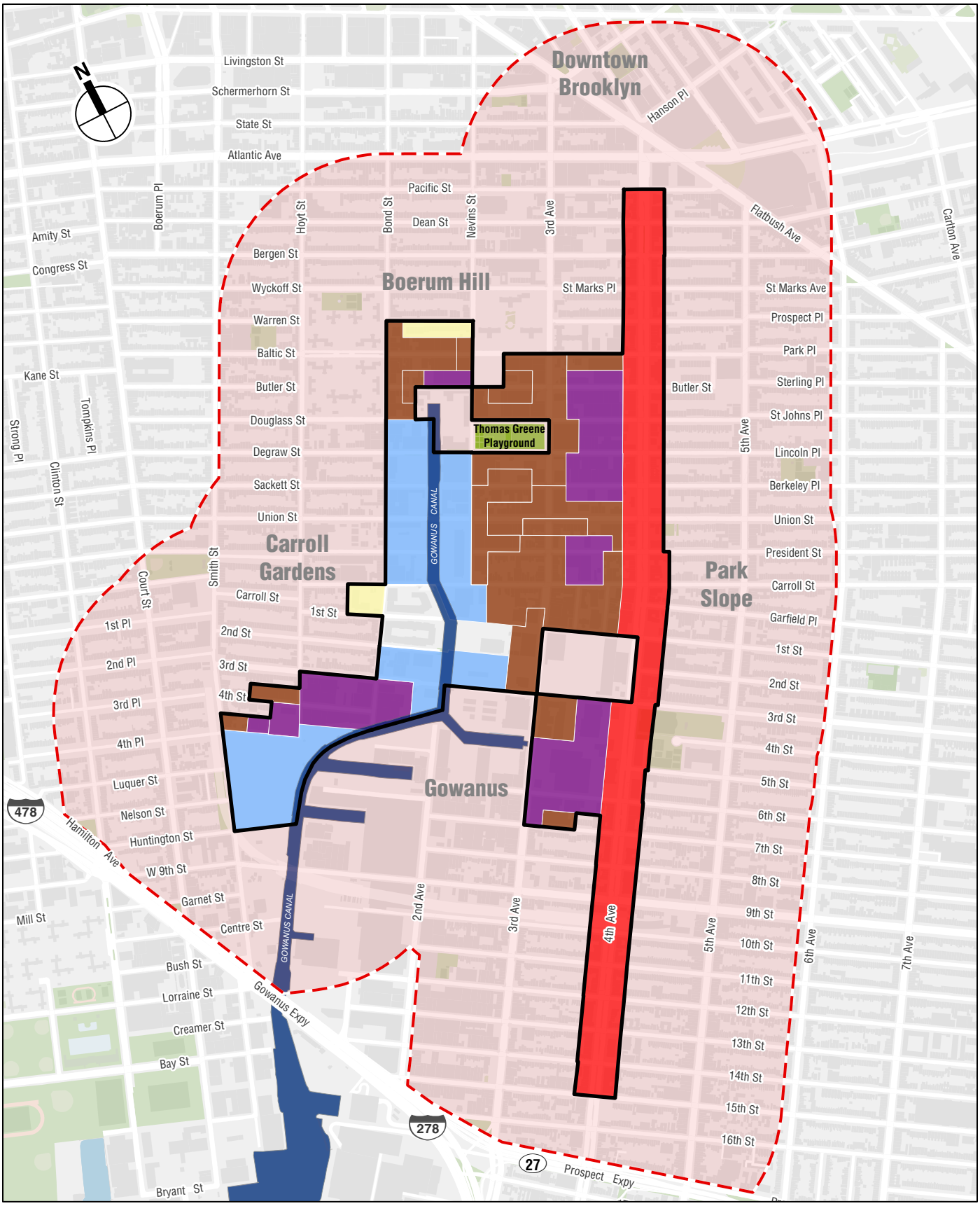
SECONDARY STUDY AREA

As shown in **Figure 19-1**, the secondary study area for the assessment of neighborhood character is generally defined as the area within a quarter-mile radius of the Project Area. It is generally bound by Fulton Street and Atlantic Avenue to the north, 6th Avenue to the east, the Gowanus and Prospect Expressways to the south, and Clinton and Smith Streets to the west. Neighborhoods within the secondary study area include Park Slope, Boerum Hill, Downtown Brooklyn, Carroll Gardens, and the areas of Gowanus outside of the Project Area.

C. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

The Gowanus Canal is the preeminent defining feature of the neighborhood. Both the Canal and the surrounding zoning (which has, for the most part, been in place since 1961), have significantly influenced land use and development patterns in the primary and secondary study areas. A landscape feature dating back to 1639, the Gowanus Canal has been the subject of extensive and successive human intervention throughout its history. Originally designed to support industrial uses in the immediately surrounding area with water access to shipping lanes found near Red Hook in the East River, the Canal remains a defining feature of the neighborhood's character. As described elsewhere in this EIS, the use of the Canal and character of the neighborhood have changed along with macroeconomic and societal shifts, including decentralization, suburbanization, containerization, and other global changes in production.

Once referred to as Gowanus Creek, the Gowanus Canal was originally a wide tidal creek with numerous small tributaries that extended northeast from its mouth at Lower New York Bay south of Red Hook. In 1846, the Brooklyn Common Council engaged Major David B. Douglass to draw



Neighborhood Character

GOWANUS NEIGHBORHOOD REZONING AND RELATED ACTIONS

Figure 19-1

up plans to drain "the Gowanus Meadow" to "accommodate a population of 200,000 inhabitants." Before these residential development plans were set in motion, Daniel Richards, an upstate developer who founded the Atlantic Dock Company in 1840, received permission to fill, dredge, and install a bulkhead to create the approximately one-mile-long Gowanus Canal. That plan was approved in 1849 by the Brooklyn Common Council and authorized by the State of New York a month later in order to open the area to barge traffic, increase circulation and flushing, receive stormwater, and fill the adjacent lowlands for development.

By 1870, the waterbody had been transformed to resemble its current configuration and was serving as a major industrial waterway. By 1950, the Canal was handling a fraction of its previous freight volume. Until 1961, when New York City's current Zoning Resolution was enacted, the neighborhood was allowed to naturally evolve into a mixed-use, live-work neighborhood. The zoning regulations made new industrial and commercial development more difficult because of its low permitted densities and high parking regulations. The 1961 Zoning Resolution also prohibited residential use in Gowanus. Residential use was allowed until 1961 and contributed to the live-work dynamic in the neighborhood. From 1970 to 1990, the Gowanus neighborhood, like many in New York City, saw its population drop precipitously.

Today, Gowanus is characterized by a variety of building forms and uses reflecting its evolving history and outdated zoning, which has limited the new construction of buildings and the expansion of existing business. With the exception of hotels and self-storage facilities, and two new apartment buildings on sites rezoned in 2009 to allow residential use, there have been few new ground-up redevelopments in the area surrounding the Canal. The area contains a variety of former industrial structures including single-story warehouses, some abutting the Canal, and loft buildings interspersed with row houses and mixed-use buildings.

DEFINING FEATURES

The primary study area, or Project Area, is bisected by the approximately 100-foot-wide Gowanus Canal that runs north to south. As a result, bridge connections across the Canal and neighborhood are limited, with three bridges on Union, Carroll, and 3rd Streets traversing the Canal; however, 3rd Street is the only street that allows westbound traffic. Baltic Street is another key corridor that traverses the Project Area and neighborhood north of the Canal. The primary north–south corridors serving the Project Area are 3rd and 4th Avenues, which are the only through streets.

The Gowanus Canal is a defining feature of neighborhood character. The approximately 100-foot-wide Canal defines the eastern edge of the primary study area from Huntington Street to 3rd Street and divides the primary study area from 3rd Street to Butler Street, where it terminates. The physical presence of the Canal has shaped the area's transportation pattern, and the development of large industrial sites along the Canal. The former industrial waterfront is a mix of commercial activity, parking lots, storage, and light industrial uses interspersed with vacant, unoccupied buildings and vacant land.

Although the land around the Canal remains post-industrial in character, manufacturing and industrial uses are no longer present in most locations adjacent to the Canal. Due to its historic development as an industrial area, Gowanus is characterized by a variety of building forms and a mix of uses, including one- to two-story former industrial buildings, vacant or underutilized lots that are primarily used for open storage or parking, and larger loft-style buildings. Many of the buildings have been adaptively reused for commercial and art-related uses, including co-working, technology, media and design firms, and other newly emerging business sectors as well as traditional distribution/warehousing and other light industrial uses.

A limited number of residential buildings are interspersed throughout the primary study area. Two- to four-story residential buildings are generally located north of Carroll Street and west of 4th Avenue. The 363-365 Bond Street development is located between 2nd and Carroll Streets. This recent development ranges in height between 6 and 12 stories and includes a publicly accessible esplanade. The 4th Avenue Corridor also includes new, 6- to 12-story residential and mixed-residential buildings with ground floor retail space. The variety of building forms and heights present in Gowanus contributes to neighborhood character.

The decline of industry, coupled with outdated zoning that discourages new commercial development and prohibits residential development, has allowed an eclectic mix of uses to flourish in Gowanus. Commercial businesses, offices, and other uses that serve the surrounding residential communities have increased alongside long-time artists and a small number of remaining industrial tenants. These commercial uses include retail business such as clothing stores, restaurants and bars, fitness and recreational facilities (such as rock climbing and fencing venues), and a Whole Foods supermarket. Residential buildings and trendy bars and restaurants are located next to artists' studios and production spaces, galleries, and light industrial businesses. The mix of uses is a defining feature of neighborhood character that gives Gowanus its feel.

At 120 feet wide, 4th Avenue is the widest street in the neighborhood and is one of the main thoroughfares in Brooklyn. Fourth Avenue serves as the boundary between Gowanus and the primarily residential neighborhood of Park Slope to the east. The D/N/R subway lines run below 4th Avenue with stations at 9th and Union Streets, and an entrance on President Street to the Atlantic Avenue/Barclay's Center station. The 9th Street station also provides access to F/G subway lines. Uses along 4th Avenue vary and include one-story semi-industrial uses, various commercial uses (including local retail shops), and walk-up apartment house buildings.

The Smith Street, 3rd Avenue, and 4th Avenue corridors typically carry the highest vehicular volumes in the neighborhood. Traffic is especially concentrated at the intersections of these corridors with Union, Carroll, and 3rd Streets, all three of which bridge the Canal. In general, the sidewalks closest to the subway stations experience some of the highest pedestrian volumes, including the sidewalks in the vicinity of the Carroll Street Station on Smith Street (F/G trains) and the Union Street Station on 4th Avenue (R trains). Ambient noise levels are relatively low throughout much of the primary study area. Among the intersections in the primary study area with the highest measured noise levels are Smith Street at Huntington Street, 3rd Street at 3rd Avenue, and 4th Avenue between 3rd and 5th Streets with peak daytime noise levels at approximately 74 decibels (dB). Noise at these locations can generally be attributed to traffic and the elevated subway.

For purposes of assessing neighborhood character, the primary study area is divided into five subareas: the Canal Corridor Subarea, the 4th Avenue Corridor Subarea, the Industrial and Commercial Subarea, the Residential Subarea, and the Upland Mixed-Use Subarea, as shown in **Figure 19-1**.

Canal Corridor Subarea

The Canal Corridor Subarea is primarily occupied by industrial and manufacturing buildings with very few residential or mixed residential and commercial spaces. There is a large portion of vacant land in the Canal Corridor, along with industrial and manufacturing uses and parking facilities. The defining feature of this subarea is the Gowanus Canal.

The approximately 100-foot-wide Gowanus Canal defines the eastern edge of the Project Area from Huntington Street to 3rd Street and divides the Project Area from 3rd Street to Butler Street,

where it terminates. The former industrial waterfront is a mix of commercial activity, parking lots, storage, and light industrial uses, interspersed with vacant buildings and land. The recently completed 363-365 Bond Street residential developments, which were facilitated by a rezoning in 2010, are the first new residences along the Canal, and include a publicly accessible esplanade, community facility space, and affordable housing. Along the Canal, views are expansive to the north, south, east, and west because of the primarily low-rise industrial buildings and vacant or underdeveloped lots adjacent to the Canal.

Connections across the Canal are limited within the primary study area, with only three bridges traversing the waterbody: the Union Street bridge, the Carroll Street bridge, and the 3rd Street bridge. The Union Street bridge is an early 20th century rolling bridge with two vehicular traffic lanes that carry eastbound traffic. It has a combination open steel grid and steel-reinforced concrete deck and two sidewalks that are bordered by metal railings. At the bridge's northeast corner is a small, one- to two-story Operator's House that has windows oriented toward the Canal. The Carroll Street Bridge and Operator's House, a New York City Landmark (NYCL), are late-19th century structures. The bridge has a wood deck and is retractable, allowing it to roll onto land and open the waterway to water traffic on the Canal. The one-story, irregularly shaped brick Operator's House has windows and a doorway and is located at the southwest corner of the bridge. The 3rd Street bridge is an early 20th century rolling lift bascule drawbridge. It carries two lanes of vehicular traffic, one in each direction, and has flanking sidewalks.

Although the Canal extends several blocks through the primary study area, its visibility is generally limited to nearby vantage points such as views from streets that terminate at the Canal, broader views from the three bridges that cross the Canal, and views from the recently constructed waterfront esplanades. The Canal is relatively narrow, which also limits visibility. Most waterfront properties along the Canal are privately owned, which further reduces public views to the Canal. Physical access to the Canal is largely restricted but is available to local water-based recreational enthusiasts from an access point at the end of 2nd Street and between Carroll and 1st Streets.

The Canal Corridor is within the proposed Gowanus Canal Historic District, which has been previously determined eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR-eligible), as described in Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources." In response to community comments, including opposition from property and business owners, the New York State Board for Historic Preservation review for the State Register listing of the Gowanus Canal Historic District did not move forward. The buildings along the Canal Corridor are primarily older one- to four-story industrial warehouses, several of which are located adjacent to paved and unpaved parking lots associated with the industrial buildings.

Block 471, located at the southwest edge of the primary study area, is comprised of two large properties located directly adjacent to the Smith and 9th Street and Carroll Street F/G stations—one is a privately owned site and the other is a City-owned site, referred to as "Public Place." The sites are separated from the residential neighborhood to the west and the more industrial context to the south and east by the elevated train line and the Canal, respectively. The City-owned site is approximately six acres and occupies Block 471, Lots 1 and 100. To the south of the City-owned site is the approximately four-acre, privately owned parcel on Block 471, Lot 200, which is used in connection with Superfund remediation activities (dredging and staging work). The major defining characteristics of Block 471 are its size and its extensive waterfront of approximately 500 linear feet. Today, apart from its use in connection with Superfund remediation activities, the site is largely vacant.

4th Avenue Corridor Subarea

The 4th Avenue Corridor Subarea encompasses the block frontages along 4th Avenue from Pacific Street in the north to 15th Street in the south. At 120 feet wide, 4th Avenue is the widest street running through the neighborhood and is one of the main thoroughfares in Brooklyn. 4th Avenue is an important north–south corridor that serves as a dividing line between the predominantly industrial Gowanus neighborhood to the west and the predominantly residential Park Slope neighborhood to the east. It is a predominantly flat avenue with long views, street trees, and two open spaces that include playgrounds and recreational fields: J.J. Byrne Playground and Washington Park.

The width of 4th Avenue, its mix of uses, and its characteristically taller mixed-use buildings (up to 12 stories) give it a more commercial character that is different from Gowanus. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic is much more prevalent, as the avenue is one of the main thoroughfares in Brooklyn. Three subway stations are located along 4th Avenue, with access and egress to the stations at 9th, Union, and President Streets. The corridor links Downtown Brooklyn with Sunset Park and Bay Ridge. Its proximity to Flatbush Avenue and Downtown Brooklyn is a defining feature in the northern section of 4th Avenue, with more ground-floor retail and restaurant space north of Carroll Street. South of Carroll Street, 4th Avenue is lined with schools and office buildings, some of which are currently under construction.

Buildings along 4th Avenue are primarily residential, mixed residential and commercial, community facilities, and single-story commercial buildings. Just north of this subarea is Downtown Brooklyn and the Atlantic Avenue/Barclays Center station, a transportation hub that provides access to the 2, 3, 4, 5, B, D, N, Q, and R trains. The D/N/R subway lines run below 4th Avenue and include local stops at Union Street and 4th Avenue/9th Street, which is also an F/G subway stop. A portion of 4th Avenue was rezoned in 2003 to protect the scale of development in Park Slope and to allow for housing growth along 4th Avenue. Subsequent zoning changes were made in 2011 to require commercial and community facility uses on the ground floor and apply transparency and curb cut location requirements for ground floors in new developments to enhance the pedestrian streetscape.

The portion of the 4th Avenue Corridor closer to Downtown Brooklyn is characterized by older three- to five-story mixed-use buildings on small lots. Most of the buildings are older brick buildings that contain retail on the ground floor with residential space above. More recent new construction includes 10- to 12-story residential buildings, some with ground-floor retail space. Community facility uses are also prevalent in this area, including the Pacific Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library and several houses of worship.

The portion of the subarea between Warren and 1st Streets is characterized by recently constructed, higher-density residential and mixed-use commercial and residential developments among older, lower-density buildings. The recently constructed residential and mixed-use buildings are typically built on large lots on the east side of 4th Avenue, encompass all or half of a block, and rise to 11 or 12 stories. Auto-related uses, such as gas stations and auto repair shops, are also prevalent and community facility use is limited to P.S. 133 William A. Butler, located on the east side of 4th Avenue between Baltic and Butler Streets. The historic Public Bath No. 7 was constructed in 1910 at 227 4th Avenue, at the northeast corner of 4th Avenue and President Street, and was the first public bath in the City to include a swimming pool.

A Con Edison facility encompasses the entire frontage of a superblock located between 1st and 3rd Streets on the west side of 4th Avenue. Between 3rd and 6th Streets on the same side of the

street another superblock contains destination retail, community facility, transportation, warehouse, and hotel uses, with an accessory parking lot between the buildings and the street. A warehouse and multi-family residential buildings are located along the east side of 4th Avenue. Just outside of the primary study area is Washington Park, an NYC Parks open space, on the southeast corner of 4th Avenue and 3rd Street.

South of 6th Street, land uses are similar to those found north of Warren Street: older mixed-use residential buildings with ground-floor commercial space and community facilities. Community facility uses include New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Engine 239, St. Thomas Aquinas Church and School, P.S. 118, The Maurice Sendak Community School, and P.S. 124 Silas B. Dutcher. The above-ground IND subway 4th Avenue-9th Street station, which serves the F/G line, extends across 4th Avenue on the southern portion of the block between 9th and 10th Streets.

Industrial and Commercial Subarea

The Industrial and Commercial Subarea, as its name implies, predominantly consists of industrial, manufacturing, and commercial uses. Although the subarea contains some vacant land and vacant buildings, these uses are far less prevalent than in the Canal Corridor. The Industrial and Commercial Subarea is comprised of several non-contiguous areas scattered throughout the primary study area. These areas are characterized by industrial and commercial buildings with large footprints such as offices, breweries, arts-related uses, and distribution and warehousing facilities. The subarea contains existing concentrations of light industrial, commercial, and arts-related uses and is geographically situated near transit and major corridors. As shown in **Figure 19-1**, this subarea consists of five non-contiguous areas, including three between 3rd and 4th Avenues, portions of the blocks between 3rd and 4th Streets and Bond and Smith Streets, and a portion of the north side of Butler Street between Nevins and Bond Streets.

The northwest portion of this subarea is bounded by Baltic and Nevins Streets, and contains a two-story commercial building and a four-story warehouse building. Natural features are limited to street trees and the Warren Street Houses Playground to the north of Baltic Street. The northeast portion of the subarea is generally located west of 4th Avenue between Baltic and Sackett Streets. This area is characterized by one- to two-story industrial buildings being used as distribution and warehousing facilities, garages and auto repair shops, light industrial spaces, and recreation and entertainment spaces (including a rock climbing gym, an archery facility, and a fencing center). This subarea also contains light industrial and commercial uses, such as breweries. Other commercial uses include a hotel located midblock on the north side of Sackett Street, a restaurant midblock on the south side of Douglass Street, and a music studio on the north side of Douglass Street.

The portion of the subarea in the center of the primary study area is located on the midblocks west of 4th Avenue, generally between President and Carroll Streets. This area contains a two- and three-story commercial building that extends from President Street to Carroll Street, and a site that is currently under construction as an eight-story light industrial building.

The southernmost portion of the subarea is generally located between 3rd and 7th Streets and 3rd the 4th Avenues. This area is characterized by large destination retail, storage facility, and hotel uses with an accessory parking lot north of 6th Street. The block between 6th and 7th Streets is characterized by one- to two- story warehouse and industrial buildings. The southwestern portion of the subarea is generally bounded by Smith, 3rd, and 5th Streets, and the Canal. This area is characterized by one- to two-story warehouse and distribution buildings along 4th Street with a number of surface parking lots. On the block south of 3rd Street between Hoyt and Bond Streets

a commercial office encompasses a portion of the midblock with frontages on 3rd and 4th Streets. A one-story residential building on 4th Street is the only residential use in this portion of the subarea.

Residential Subarea

The Residential Subarea consists of two small portions on the westernmost edge of the primary study area. The northernmost area is adjacent to Boerum Hill and is bounded by Warren Street to the north, Baltic Street to the south, Bond Street to the west, and Nevins Street to the east. This portion contains residential buildings and a mixed-use residential building with ground-floor retail. The residences are three- to four-story brick row houses with front lots and stoops that form a consistent street wall. The second portion of the Residential Subarea is adjacent to Carroll Gardens and located on the eastern portion of the block bounded by Carroll, 1st, Bond, and Hoyt Streets. This area contains Mary Star of the Sea, a six-story multi-family residential building with 101 senior units and accessory parking. On the same block is a three-story mixed-use residential building with ground-floor commercial space and two two-story residential buildings.

Upland Mixed-Use Subarea

The Upland Mixed-Use Subarea covers most of the primary study area and contains the most diverse mix of land uses of any of the subareas. As shown in **Figure 19-1**, the Upland Mixed-Use Subarea covers six non-contiguous areas and is generally located to the north and east of the Canal Corridor Subarea and west of the 4th Avenue Subarea, with small portions located on the western and southern edges of the Project Area. This area currently consists of a mix of land uses including residential, commercial, mixed residential and commercial, industrial and manufacturing, transportation and utilities, community facilities, and vacant land. The east–west street corridors are generally narrower than the north–south avenues and are tree-lined with smaller-scaled buildings.

The portion of the subarea south of Sackett Street is characterized by small residential and mixed residential and commercial buildings with some industrial, manufacturing, transportation, and utilities uses as well. Buildings containing only residential use are concentrated on the east–west streets while mixed-use residential buildings with ground-floor retail space are concentrated on 3rd Avenue. Industrial and warehousing buildings are located on the west side of the block bounded by Union Street, President Street, Nevins Street, and 3rd Avenue and on the northwest corner of the intersection of 3rd and Union Streets. Community facility uses are concentrated on the blocks between Carroll and 1st Streets and include P.S. 372 The Children's School, The Little Brooklyn Pre-K Center, and Our Lady of Peace Church.

The area north of Sackett Street is characterized by industrial and commercial buildings, and vacant land. A small number of residential buildings are clustered on the western portions of the blocks north of Douglass Street. The Gil Hodges Community Garden, managed by the New York Garden Trust, is the only open space in the subarea and is located on the southeast corner of Carroll Street and Denton Place. Thomas Greene Playground, which encompasses the block bounded by Douglass Street, 3rd Avenue, Degraw Street, and Nevins Street, is not located within the primary study area, but is adjacent to this subarea and serves as the area's primary open space.

Thomas Greene Playground is a 2.54-acre publicly accessible open space spanning one block bounded by Douglass Street, Degraw Street, 3rd Avenue, and Nevins Street. Douglass and Degraw Streets slope down to the west. It is located outside of the Project Area and the primary study area, but it is bounded by the subarea on three sides, and is included for discussion purposes. Thomas

Greene Playground currently contains seating areas, landscaping, a playground with spray showers, handball courts, basketball courts, a skate park, and two swimming pools open during the summer months. As part of the Superfund remedy, contaminated soil beneath Thomas Greene Playground will be removed, and the park will be temporarily closed and unusable. It is assumed that the remediation and reconstruction of Thomas Greene Playground will be completed by the 2035 analysis year.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

The secondary study area extends a quarter-mile from the primary study area, terminating in the south at the Gowanus and Prospect Expressways. The secondary study area generally extends north to Fulton Street, west to Clinton and Smith Streets, and east to 6th Avenue. The assessment of land use in the secondary study area is discussed by neighborhood and covers parts of Park Slope, Downtown Brooklyn, Boerum Hill, Carroll Gardens, and the portion of Gowanus located outside the Project Area (see **Figure 19-1**).

Park Slope

Park Slope is located east of 4th Avenue and is primarily characterized by residential buildings comprising two- to four-story brownstones. Residential uses are concentrated on east–west streets. Commercial and mixed-use commercial and residential uses are concentrated on 5th Avenue and 9th Street. Community facility uses are concentrated along 6th Avenue and include Park Slope Elementary School/MS 282 (located between Lincoln Place and Berkeley Place), Saint Augustine's Church, P.S. 77, and Park Place Community School between Park Place and Sterling Place. Open space includes the Park Slope Playground, a public park managed by NYC Parks located directly west of Park Slope Elementary School/MS 282.

Downtown Brooklyn

The portion of the secondary study area north of Boerum Hill is Downtown Brooklyn. Downtown Brooklyn is one of New York City's central business districts (CBD). It is characterized by high-density commercial and mixed-residential and commercial buildings. After the area was rezoned in 2004, the neighborhood experienced an increase in new residential and mixed-use developments. Buildings in this neighborhood reach over 40 stories and are much taller than buildings in the surrounding residential neighborhoods. As a CBD, Downtown Brooklyn has a higher concentration of office and commercial development than the rest of the secondary study area. Downtown Brooklyn has wider thoroughfares and access to mass transit with a hub at Atlantic Avenue/Barclays Center. Downtown Brooklyn streets are wider and have heavy pedestrian and vehicular activity, with street trees generally planted at public pedestrian plazas.

Boerum Hill

Boerum Hill is a tree-lined residential neighborhood that extends from State Street to Warren Street, and from Court Street in the east to 4th Avenue. Boerum Hill is characterized by three- to four-story residential brick rowhouses with stoops that form a consistent street wall. A portion of Boerum Hill is located in the Boerum Hill Historic District, which was originally designated in 1973 and was expanded in 2018. The district includes historic row houses and some mixed-use residential buildings with ground-floor retail. The neighborhood is primarily residential and some of the residential buildings contain ground-floor retail space. The neighborhood's commercial corridors are located along Atlantic Avenue and Smith Street. Community facility uses include P.S. 261 on Pacific Street between Smith and Hoyt Streets and the Hopkins Center for

Rehabilitation and Healthcare on the northeast corner of the intersection of Hoyt and Dean Streets. Open spaces in Boerum Hill are concentrated west of 3rd Avenue and generally have playground equipment, benches, and ball courts.

Boerum Hill contains three public housing complexes: Wyckoff Gardens, Gowanus Houses, and Warren Street Houses. Wyckoff Gardens occupies a superblock bounded by Wyckoff, Nevins, and Baltic Streets and 3rd Avenue and contains three 21-story residential buildings. The Gowanus Houses, located to the west of Wyckoff Gardens, occupies two superblocks north of Baltic Street and south of Baltic Street between Bond and Hoyt Streets. Gowanus Houses includes 16 residential buildings that range from six to 14 stories, paved walkways, small grassy yard areas, and mature trees. Warren Street Houses contains a six-story building located on the east side of 3rd Avenue between Baltic and Warren Streets. The NYCHA developments provide a combined total of over 2,000 dwelling units and house a significant component of the residential population in the secondary study area.

Carroll Gardens

Carroll Gardens is a residential neighborhood located west of the primary study area. Carroll Gardens is characterized by three- to four-story row houses. Mixed residential buildings with ground-floor retail are found on Court and Smith Streets, the neighborhood's local retail corridors. Community facility and open space uses are concentrated on Smith Street. Carroll Park (operated by NYC Parks) is the neighborhood's largest open space, located on the block bounded by President, Court, Carroll, and Smith Streets. South of Carroll Park are two community facility uses, P.S. 58 The Carroll School and the Hannah Senesh Community Day School. The above-ground F and G subway line runs along the west side of Smith Street, south of 3rd Street. St. Mary's playground is located under the elevated subway line between Luquer and Huntington Streets.

The Carroll Gardens Historic District (designated in 1973) encompasses block frontages along President and Carroll Streets between Smith and Hoyt Streets. The district consists of two- and three-story row houses set back from the street with deep front yards and gardens.

Gowanus (outside of Project Area)

The southern portion of the Gowanus neighborhood south of the Canal and east of 3rd Avenue is not included in the primary study area, but is included in the secondary study area. West of 2nd Avenue, Gowanus is characterized by large lots with industrial and manufacturing uses, commercial uses, or parking facilities; no residential uses are located west of 2nd Avenue. East of 2nd Avenue, the lots become smaller and the area contains some residential and mixed residential and commercial uses. The F and G subway line runs above ground and occupies the north side of 10th Street.

Ennis Playground, a NYC Parks property, is located midblock on the block bounded by 11th Street, 12th Street, 2nd Avenue, and 3rd Avenue. Triangle Three Sixteen, a small paved lot with trees, is located between 16th Street, Hamilton Avenue, and 3rd Avenue.

ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT THE DEFINING FEATURES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The sections below describe future conditions with and without the Proposed Actions, and includes a discussion of the potential changes resulting from the Proposed Actions in the following technical areas that are considered in the neighborhood character assessment, pursuant to the

guidelines in the *CEQR Technical Manual*: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; shadows; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Actions would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas, and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the study area's neighborhood character.

THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS (NO ACTION CONDITION)

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," in the 2035 future without the Proposed Actions (the "No Action" condition), future development in Gowanus is expected to occur in a piecemeal manner. It is likely that in the future, property owners may seek discretionary approvals along the Canal and elsewhere within the Project Area for zoning changes to allow for a mix of uses including residential development. Although specific development proposals by private property owners and the discretionary approvals needed to facilitate those projects are unknown, it is reasonable to assume some owners will seek to utilize their properties to the fullest extent. In the No Action condition, it is likely that new mixed-use residential and non-residential development will occur, albeit in a piecemeal manner and without the benefit of a comprehensive plan to coordinate redevelopment activities, infrastructure investments, and appropriate densities and urban design controls. Along 4th Avenue, new residential development will continue without any requirement to provide needed affordable housing.

In the No Action condition, projected development sites are expected to either remain unchanged from existing conditions or become occupied by uses that are as-of-right under existing zoning. While these developments may result in some minimal localized changes to neighborhood character, most of the primary study area will retain its characteristics and neighborhood character will be largely unaffected.

In the No Action condition, it is expected that the current land use trends and general development patterns will continue. These trends and patterns are characterized by a mix of uses and include residential development (primarily limited to 4th Avenue) and commercial, self-storage, and community facility development throughout the primary study area. These trends and patterns are characterized by a continued decline in heavy industrial and manufacturing uses and a shift to lighter, more commercial uses and as-of-right residential development. The area is expected to experience increased demand for housing, as indicated by requests for zoning variances to permit residential use in areas where it is prohibited by zoning, and the continued deterioration of property, buildings, and bulkheads. Moreover, the waterfront will continue to remain inaccessible to the public and no new parkland will be provided, with the exception of passive open space on the planned Head End Facility at Degraw and Nevins Streets.

The required Superfund remediation calls for the dredging of the Canal, cleanup of former manufactured gas plants (MGP) sites, and the reduction of combined sewer overflows (CSO) into the Canal. All remedial requirements would apply irrespective of the Proposed Actions. The former MGP sites will be remediated under the direction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), in coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Full-scale dredging of the Canal is expected to be completed by the 2035 analysis year.

In addition to the as-of-right development anticipated on 30 of the 63 projected development sites, 14 other sites are expected to be developed irrespective of the Proposed Actions. These planned developments are under construction or proposed and will be developed within the 2035 analysis

year independent of any changes in land use contemplated by the Proposed Actions. These planned developments are expected to introduce an estimated 889 new residents and 424 new workers by 2035.

THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTIONS (WITH ACTION CONDITION)

In the future with the Proposed Actions (the "With Action" condition), the Proposed Actions would facilitate development that supports the vision of Gowanus as a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood. Specifically, the Proposed Actions would implement recommendations from the Neighborhood Plan. The Neighborhood Plan is a comprehensive plan developed with community stakeholders and elected officials, in coordination with City and other public agencies, to identify needs and opportunities to support a shared long-term vision of a sustainable, inclusive, and mixed-use Gowanus neighborhood. The Proposed Actions are intended to leverage the neighborhood's unique assets and features to realize this vision and accomplish and support many neighborhood goals, including remediating the Canal and surrounding properties, supporting existing and future resiliency and sustainability efforts, creating more housing (including permanently affordable housing), promoting more diverse mixing of compatible uses, encouraging economic development and diverse employment opportunities, and improving existing community resources and investing in new ones like schools and parks in an area with excellent transit access and proximity to the central business districts of Downtown Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate approximately 8,500 new units of housing, including approximately 3,000 units of affordable housing, approximately 6 acres of new publicly accessible open space, and space for jobs and schools. The Proposed Actions would allow residential development in most of the primary study area, facilitating the development of new housing, including a substantial amount of affordable housing, and bringing existing non-conforming residential properties into conformance with zoning. The Proposed Actions would strengthen existing clusters of non-residential activity by increasing the allowable density for commercial and industrial uses, eliminating required accessory parking and loading requirements, and reserving some areas for exclusive non-residential development. The Proposed Actions would promote active ground-floor uses and second-story non-residential uses along main thoroughfares, Canal crossings, and around Thomas Greene Playground. The Proposed Actions would facilitate the creation of new waterfront open space and activate underutilized land.

ASSESSMENT OF DEFINING FEATURES OF NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

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 individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. The Proposed Actions would facilitate a mix of residential, commercial, community facility, and light industrial development that would be consistent with the mixed-use character of the neighborhood.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," no significant adverse impacts related to land use, zoning, or public policy would occur in the future with the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would change the zoning in the primary study area to facilitate development patterns that meet the long-term vision of a sustainable, mixed-use neighborhood anchored by a resilient waterfront. The Proposed Actions would support new housing and jobs in a neighborhood

with strong public transit access and in close proximity to the Downtown Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan CBDs.

With the proposed zoning, residential use would be allowed throughout most of 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. New housing would be allowed along major north-south corridors (3rd and 4th Avenues) and east-west corridors (Union, Carroll, and 3rd Streets), around Thomas Greene Playground, and along the Canal. The development that would occur along the Canal would reactivate contaminated, vacant, and underutilized land, and facilitate the creation of a new esplanade along the Gowanus Canal.

The Proposed Actions would create opportunities for new light industrial space, commercial space, arts-related space, and community facility space. The zoning would promote these opportunities in new mixed-use buildings throughout the primary study area, and more directly, in areas that would be reserved exclusively for non-residential activity (portions of the midblocks between 3rd and 4th Avenues and an area around 4th and Hoyt Streets). In mixed-use buildings, the Proposed Actions would promote the integration and mixing of uses through ground-floor use requirements at key locations and floor area incentives. In areas where residential use would be prohibited, the Proposed Actions would support existing clusters of economic activity and promote the development of new job-generating uses. The zoning changes would strengthen and promote these areas by maintaining them for industrial, commercial, and community facility uses and by increasing the allowable density for job-generating uses and removing onerous requirements, such as required accessory parking and loading, that act as barriers to redevelopment and enlargements.

As discussed above, many buildings have been adaptively reused for commercial and art-related uses, including co-working, technology, media and design firms, and other newly emerging business sectors as well as traditional distribution/warehousing and other light industrial uses. These uses exist alongside residential buildings. The mix of land uses expected with the Proposed Actions would be in keeping with the mix of uses currently found in Gowanus. The Proposed Actions would promote the integration and mixing of uses through ground-floor use requirements at key locations and floor area incentives to activate the pedestrian environment. Throughout the primary study area, zoning changes to allow a wider range of uses and flexibility for evolving business and land use types would be made along with promoting new community resources for civic, arts, and cultural organizations.

The new neighborhood parks and waterfront esplanade would provide an amenity for existing and future residents and workers in the neighborhood. The new land uses generated as a result of the Proposed Actions would support the existing residential populations of adjacent neighborhoods in the secondary study area, and would be compatible with residential, commercial, and community facility uses found in those areas. Development anticipated under the Proposed Actions would be compatible with the scale and use of surrounding neighborhoods and would be supportive of public policies affecting the primary and secondary study areas.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," in the future absent the Proposed Actions, development would occur in a piecemeal manner and without the benefit of a comprehensive plan to coordinate appropriate densities and urban design controls across the neighborhood. The Proposed Actions provide for sufficient predictability, flexibility, and variety for building envelopes that account for the unique conditions in Gowanus. The Proposed Actions would include mechanisms through zoning to require the cleanup of upland sites and support the overall

Superfund remediation of the Canal. While the character of Gowanus has changed throughout the years, the Proposed Actions would facilitate predictable development patterns that meet the long-term vision of Gowanus as a sustainable, mixed-use neighborhood anchored by a vibrant and resilient Canal waterfront. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on land use or 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 discussed in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts related to direct residential displacement, direct business displacement, indirect residential displacement, indirect business displacement, or effects on specific industries in the rezoning area or larger half-mile secondary study area.

The preliminary assessment found that the average household income of the new population would be lower than the average household incomes in the surrounding neighborhoods of Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, and most of Boerum Hill. However, the portion of Boerum Hill that contains public housing and the portion of Gowanus generally south of the primary study area have lower average household incomes than other areas. The analysis found that while the Proposed Actions would add a substantial new population with higher incomes to both neighborhoods, in the area to the south, the mixed-income composition of the new population would not cause substantial changes in the real estate market that would lead to indirect displacement of all vulnerable renters in unprotected units. In Boerum Hill, low-income renters in public housing reside in protected rental units and would not be vulnerable to indirect residential displacement as a result of the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions are expected to introduce substantially more affordable housing than in the future without the Proposed Actions, potentially slowing the existing trend of increasing rents and maintaining a more diverse mix of incomes within study areas. Furthermore, the Proposed Actions could provide opportunities for some public housing residents to move out of public housing yet remain in the neighborhood, should they be inclined to do so.

The primary and secondary study areas have well-established residential, retail and office, and manufacturing markets such that the Proposed Actions would not introduce new economic activities to the projected development sites or secondary study area or add to a concentration of a particular sector of the local economy enough to significantly alter or accelerate existing economic patterns. While the Proposed Actions would introduce a new residential population, the demand for goods and services from existing residents has already established a strong commercial market such that the influence of new residents would not markedly increase commercial property values and rents throughout the study area. In addition, the introduction of a new residential population would increase demand for the goods and services provided by existing businesses. The Proposed Actions would add retail and office space. There is an existing trend of increasing retail development in the study area and adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings for commercial uses. The retail projected with the zoning changes would not be enough to alter or accelerate ongoing trends. The new office space is expected to respond to the local demand for office space and other workspaces, and is not enough to substantively alter or accelerate trends.

Open Space

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on publicly accessible open space, either singularly or in combination with

potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. The Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse impact associated with active open space. As noted in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the primary and secondary study areas are currently underserved by open space. The largest open space in the primary study area and the only one programmed with active features is Thomas Greene Playground. Field surveys indicate that area open spaces are heavily utilized under the Existing conditions and would likely remain heavily utilized in the future with or without the Proposed Actions. Although the Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse open space impact, measures being considered to mitigate the impact include improvements to existing parks to allow for expanded programming and enhanced usability, and making New York City public school playgrounds accessible to the community after school hours through the Schoolyards to Playgrounds program. Furthermore, the Proposed Actions would provide over six acres of new, high-quality publicly accessible open space along the Canal. For these reasons, the Proposed Actions would enhance neighborhood character and provide an amenity for area residents and all New Yorkers.

Shadows

The Proposed Actions would result in development that would cast new shadow on sunlight-sensitive resources in the vicinity of the Project Area. Most of this new shadow would not reach sunlight-sensitive resources due to existing and future intervening structures. However, incremental shadows would reach resources that are sensitive to sunlight and could potentially be significantly impacted by incremental shadows. As discussed in detail in Chapter 6, "Shadows," incremental shadows would shade portions of two sunlight-sensitive resources that could result in significant adverse shadow impacts: Our Lady of Peace Church and the Douglass and Degraw Pool in Thomas Greene Playground. Our Lady of Peace Church is not a defining element of neighborhood character. Mitigation for impacts to the park may include changes to the bulk or configuration of projected or potential development sites that cause or contribute to the adverse impact. In addition, Thomas Greene Playground will be reconstructed in the No Action condition as part of the Superfund remedy. While the programming and layout of the reconstructed park is not confirmed, locating the pool in the northern half of the park, which would receive much less shadow than the southern half throughout the summer months, could potentially mitigate this significant adverse impact. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character would occur.

Historic and Cultural Resources

The Proposed Actions would not eliminate or substantially obstruct important public views of architectural resources, as all significant elements of these historic resources would remain visible in view corridors on public streets. In addition, no incompatible audible or atmospheric elements would be introduced by the Proposed Actions to any historic resource's setting. However, the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse impacts associated with direct impacts and construction related impacts to historic and cultural resources.

As discussed in Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources," most of the Project Area is within the S/NR-eligible Gowanus Canal Historic District. Twenty-nine projected development sites and 31 potential development sites are located within the boundaries of the Gowanus Canal Historic District. The Proposed Actions would result in the demolition of some contributing utilitarian former industrial buildings, most of which are one-story garages, auto shops, or storage buildings. Many of the buildings on sites between Bond and Nevins Streets, including those that have frontage along the Canal, would be demolished to allow for new development under the Proposed

Actions. Furthermore, the demolition of contributing buildings within the Gowanus Canal Historic District and construction of new buildings on the development sites could change the setting of some contributing buildings, but overall, the change in context would not result in an impact to neighborhood character. As noted above, other industrial buildings in the primary study area are projected to remain. Within the Industrial and Commercial Subarea, residential development would not be allowed, and some industrial buildings would be retained and adaptively reused for other non-residential uses. Because the Proposed Actions are projected to result in the preservation and, in some cases, the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings in Gowanus, the demolition of a subset of contributing industrial buildings would not affect neighborhood character. In addition, the manufacturing zoning and industrial buildings in the portion of Gowanus in the secondary study area east and south of the Canal will remain in place. This area is also within the boundaries of the District and would not be affected by the Proposed Actions.

The Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse impact related to the disturbance of archaeologically sensitive resources associated with the Gowanus Canal bulkhead and associated landfill; 19th century shaft features; and/or evidence associated with milling or agricultural activities. Because none of these resources are defining elements of neighborhood character, the significant adverse archeology impact would not result in an impact to neighborhood character. Therefore, the historic industrial character associated with the Gowanus Canal Historic District would remain in the primary and secondary study areas with the Proposed Actions.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As described in more detail in Chapter 8, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," the Proposed Actions would result in beneficial effects related to urban design by reinforcing the street wall, enlivening the streetscape with new activity and enhancing pedestrian conditions in the Project Area.

The zoning changes provide for sufficient flexibility and variety for building envelopes that account for the unique conditions in Gowanus, such as the Canal, appropriate transitions between lower and medium density adjacencies, the creation of new waterfront open space, and enhanced pedestrian-oriented sidewalk conditions and lively, active streets. The Proposed Actions would also encourage a range of heights and building forms, allowing sufficient flexibility for building heights to achieve the many goals for development in the area while addressing unique site conditions and reflecting the existing built character of the Gowanus neighborhood.

While the buildings projected to be developed under the Proposed Actions would be taller than existing buildings in the area, the bulk controls included as part of the zoning changes would ensure that new developments are compatible with existing and planned buildings. The bulk controls would also ensure sufficient flexibility to promote a variety of new built forms. New developments under the Proposed Actions would be concentrated along major avenues and wide streets and would preserve the low-rise character of the buildings located along the narrower cross streets, particularly north of 1st Street and east of the Canal. In these areas, contextual zoning would be mapped to ensure that new developments complement the existing scale by reinforcing the street wall, and require minimum and maximum base heights that are contextual to existing buildings. Along the Canal, the Proposed Actions would provide flexibility in key areas (bulk placement above the maximum base height and tower location and maximum height) and include more restrictive requirements in others (maximum base heights and tower heights along some narrow streets and the Canal). The flexibility was developed in order to encourage excellent

building design and a unique and varied waterfront open space and to transition to adjacent contexts and narrow side streets.

Most waterfront properties along the Canal are privately owned, which limits public views to the Canal. Physical access to the Canal is largely restricted. With the Proposed Actions, development along the Canal would facilitate the creation of a publicly accessible shore public walkway, upland connections, and supplemental public access areas to ensure residents, workers, and visitors have visual and physical access to the Gowanus Canal, making the Canal the focal point for the community. The proposed mapping actions would facilitate the creation of new streets, including the eastern prolongation of Nelson and Luquer Streets, east of Smith Street, and the prolongation of Hoyt Street south of 5th Street and along the west side of the Canal. The new streets would provide public access to the Canal, the waterfront esplanade, and a new park on the Gowanus Green Site.

The Proposed Actions would support the mixed-use character of the neighborhood by creating special use, floor area, and bulk regulations for waterfront and non-waterfront blocks. The proposed zoning would promote the mix of commercial, community facility, light industrial, civic and arts-related uses that are present in Gowanus today, and allow development to occur in a comprehensive manner.

Transportation

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on transportation, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this chapter. As described in Chapter 14, "Transportation," the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse traffic, transit (subway station and subway line haul), and pedestrian impacts at sidewalks and crosswalks. With implementation of the subway and pedestrian mitigation measures outlined in Chapter 21, "Mitigation," most of the identified significant adverse subway and pedestrian impacts would be fully mitigated.

The Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse transit impacts at street stairs and a fare array at the Union Street Station (R train) during the morning and evening peak hours. Stairway widening is the most common form of mitigation for significant stairway impacts, provided that New York City Transit (NYCT) deems it practicable. Similarly, increasing throughput capacity through the installation of additional turnstiles is a common form of mitigation for significant fare array impacts, provided that NYCT deems it practicable (i.e., that sufficient space is available to accommodate the additional fare array elements). As noted in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Actions include a zoning incentive specific to the Union Street (R train) subway station that would allow an increase in density on Site 27 in exchange for identified transit improvements to the station entrance. In addition, the Proposed Actions would create a zoning authorization to allow an increase in density in exchange for identified transit improvements at all subway stations serving the neighborhood, such as providing greater access for the disabled and improvements to circulation for all users.

In addition to the station impacts, new subway trips generated by the Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse line haul impact to northbound F trains in the AM peak hour. As standard practice, NYCT routinely conducts periodic ridership counts and adjusts subway frequency to meet its service criteria within fiscal and operating constraints. Overall, the transit impacts are not expected to result in an impact to neighborhood character.

Pedestrian impacts would occur at nine sidewalks and five crosswalks. The significant adverse pedestrian impacts related to crosswalks would be fully mitigated by standard measures, such as crosswalk widening. Impacts at three of the sidewalks could be fully mitigated by removing or relocating impediments such as tree pits and street light poles. However, impacts would remain unmitigated along the east sidewalk of Smith Street between 4th and 5th Streets; the south sidewalk along Union Street between Bond Street and the Canal; the west sidewalk along 3rd Avenue between Carroll and 1st Streets; the north sidewalk on 3rd Street between the Canal and 3rd Avenue; and the east and west sidewalks along 4th Avenue between Union Street and the subway entrances. Practicable mitigation measures could not be identified for these locations. Although the Proposed Actions would result in six congested sidewalks, the sidewalks that experience the unmitigated pedestrian impacts are scattered throughout the Project Area south of Union Street, and are not concentrated along any one corridor or intersection; therefore, the unmitigated pedestrian impacts are not expected to result in an impact to neighborhood character.

The Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse traffic impacts at 43 study area intersections during one or more analyzed peak hours. Implementation of traffic engineering improvements, such as signal timing changes or modifications to curbside parking regulations would provide mitigation for many of the anticipated traffic impacts. However, unmitigated impacts in one or more peak hours would remain at 34 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 almost any new development in the Project Area could result in unmitigated traffic impacts. The intersections at which the unmitigated traffic impacts would occur will be characterized by high levels of traffic in the No Action condition. 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 Project 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.

Noise

The defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the Proposed Actions, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas. As described in Chapter 17, "Noise," the analysis finds that the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse noise impacts at nearby noise receptors. As a result, there would be no noise-related impacts on neighborhood character.

D. CONCLUSION

The Proposed Actions would change neighborhood character within the primary study area, primarily in the blocks along the waterfront and around Thomas Greene Park; however, the changes to neighborhood character would not be adverse. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

The Proposed Actions are necessary because existing land use patterns and zoning preclude the implementation of the Neighborhood Plan. Without zoning changes, much of Gowanus will remain unchanged, underdeveloped, and underutilized, and future development that will occur would do so in a piecemeal manner and without the benefit of a comprehensive plan to coordinate

appropriate densities and urban design controls across the neighborhood. Absent a change in neighborhood character, the Proposed Actions would not achieve their stated purpose and need and would not support the Neighborhood Plan.

Overall, the Proposed Actions would alter neighborhood character in beneficial ways. The Proposed Actions would create new opportunities for housing, including affordable housing, on underutilized or vacant contaminated land where there is no longer a concentration of industrial activity and where strong demand for housing exists. It would bring existing non-conforming residential uses into conformance with zoning. In addition, the Proposed Actions would permit the continuation of light industrial uses as well as the residential re-use of underutilized and vacant land.

The zoning changes would facilitate the redevelopment of dilapidated properties adjacent to the Canal and establish a framework for a revitalized, active, and more resilient waterfront with a continuous public walkway and new parks. Development along the waterfront would achieve a sensitive transition to the adjoining neighborhoods and narrow side streets, create a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, and a compelling and varied skyline. Light industry and residences would be permitted to once again coexist in mixed-use areas, and manufacturing zoning would be retained in areas where concentrations of industrial activity exist.

Neighborhood character would be enhanced by simultaneously maintaining and fostering Gowanus' mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses, and reinforcing the neighborhood's street walls and streetscape. Furthermore, the Proposed Actions would result in benefits to neighborhood character by establishing a distinctive urban fabric with new large-scale mixed-use development along the waterfront and contextual districts along upland portions of the primary study area. This would ensure that new development integrates appropriately with the existing low-rise character found within the primary and secondary study areas, including the adjacent neighborhoods' context. The Proposed Actions are expected to have beneficial effects on neighborhood character and significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character are not expected. As demonstrated in the assessment above, defining features of neighborhood character would not be affected either through any potential significant adverse impacts or in combination with any other moderate effects in the relevant technical areas. ✶