Chapter 9: Neighborhood Character

A. INTRODUCTION

As defined by the *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, neighborhood character is considered to be a combination of the many elements that creates each neighborhood's distinct personality. These elements include land use, urban design, visual resources, historic resources, socioeconomics, traffic, and noise, as well as the other physical or social characteristics that help to describe the community.

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of neighborhood character is generally needed when the action would exceed preliminary thresholds in any one of the following areas of technical analysis: land use, urban design and visual resources, historic resources, socioeconomic conditions, transportation, or noise. An assessment is also appropriate when the action would have moderate effects on several of the aforementioned areas. Potential effects on neighborhood character may include:

- *Land Use.* Development resulting from a proposed action could alter neighborhood character if it introduced new land uses, conflicts with land use policy or other public plans for the area, changes land use character, or generates significant land use impacts.
- *Socioeconomic Conditions.* Changes in socioeconomic conditions have the potential to affect neighborhood character when they result in substantial direct or indirect displacement or addition of population, employment, or businesses; or substantial differences in population or employment density.
- *Historic Resources.* When an action would result in substantial direct changes to a historic resource or substantial changes to public views of a resource, or when a historic resource analysis identified a significant impact in this category, there is a potential to affect neighborhood character.
- *Urban Design and Visual Resources.* In developed areas, urban design changes have the potential to affect neighborhood character by introducing substantially different building bulk, for building forms, scale, or arrangement. Urban design changes may also affect block forms, street patterns, or street hierarchies, as well as streetscape elements such as streetwalls, landscaping, curb cuts, and loading docks. Visual resource changes could affect neighborhood character if they directly alter key visual features such as unique and important public view corridors and vistas, or block public visual access to such features.
- *Transportation.* Changes in traffic and pedestrian conditions can affect neighborhood character in a number of ways. For traffic to have an effect on neighborhood character, it must be a contributing element to the character of the neighborhood (either by its absence or its presence), and it must change substantially as a result of the action. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, such substantial traffic changes can include: changes in level of service (LOS) to C or below; change in traffic patterns; change in roadway classifications; change in vehicle mixes, substantial increase in traffic volumes on residential streets; or

significant traffic impacts, as identified in the technical traffic analysis. Regarding pedestrian, when a proposed action would result in substantially different pedestrian activity and circulation, it has the potential to affect neighborhood character.

- *Noise.* According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, for an action to affect neighborhood character with respect to noise, it would need to result in a significant adverse noise impact and a change in acceptability categories.

This chapter of the EIS examines neighborhood character within the area to be rezoned and its surrounding blocks (a study area of up to ¼ mile, coterminous with the land use study area, see Figure 2-1 in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy"), and the proposed actions' effects on that character. The impact analysis focuses on changes in neighborhood character resulting from changes in the physical and social environments discussed above, since these areas are most relevant to neighborhood character.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

For the purposes of assessing neighborhood character, this chapter discusses the primary study area in two subareas: (1) East Village/Alphabet City subarea (the primary study area north of East Houston Street; and (2) Lower East Side subarea (the primary study area south of East Houston Street).

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

EAST VILLAGE/ALPHABET CITY SUBAREA

The East Village/Alphabet City subarea of the primary study area is mostly residential with a sizeable number of community facilities and open spaces scattered throughout; commercial uses, typically in the form of street-level retail, are common and located along most major east-west and north-south corridors. Tompkins Square Park is the most prominent land use in the East Village neighborhood. Commonly referred to as the "heart of the East Village," this approximately three-block 10.5-acre park, bounded by East 10th Street on the north, Avenue B on the east, East 7th Street on the south, and Avenue A on the west, has served as this neighborhood's outdoor meeting place and also hosts a number of festivals throughout the year.

The East Village subarea predominantly includes residential buildings typically taking the form of four- to six-story buildings on small lots. With the exception of the Village View Housing development along First Avenue between East 4th and East 6th Streets, which consists of four 16-story towers and three 21-story towers, and the 20-story New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Max Meltzer Tower located between First Avenue and Avenue A, most residential development on larger lots has also been built to the prevalent low- to mid-rise scale of the neighborhood (e.g., NYCHA's First Houses, Mariana Bracetti Plaza, Lower East Side II, and Lower East Side III developments).

The commercial uses within this subarea are generally found on the ground-floor of residential buildings and many streets in this subarea have a commercial streetscape with tree-lined pedestrian sidewalks. A variety of retail is generally found along the major north-south streets: First Avenue, Second Avenue, and Avenues A through D. Typical retail uses include restaurants, bars, coffee shops, delis, newsstands, clothing stores, and other neighborhood retail uses. St. Mark's Place is the principal east-west shopping street in the East Village and is lined with a number of small retail establishments that reflect the arts culture of the East Village, including

music shops, tattoo parlors, vintage and used clothing stores, antique shops, restaurants, and bars.

Institutional uses in the East Village/Alphabet City subarea include churches, public schools, and portions of New York University's (NYU) Washington Square Campus. Several institutions within the subarea address people in need, including Project Renewal on the Bowery, the Salvation Army's East Village Residence Hall, and the Bowery Residents' Committee (BRC) facility on the Bowery. Performance Space 122 (also known as "P.S. 122") is a formerly abandoned four- story Public School (P.S.) 122 that was converted into a community center and performance space.

With the notable exception of Tompkins Square Park and First Park at First Avenue and East 1st Street, public open spaces in this subarea are primarily limited to playground associated with neighborhood public schools. However, there are a substantial number of community gardens in the lesser-developed eastern portion of the East Village/Alphabet City subarea (particularly east of Avenue A), which have taken the place of formerly vacant parcels. Local community groups have fiercely defended many of these community gardens from redevelopment, which are viewed as part of the East Village character.

With respect to urban design, the street grid of the East Village/Alphabet City subarea is a continuation of the Manhattan grid system with major north-south thoroughfares (avenues) and local east-west streets; the Manhattan grid system terminates at East Houston Street at a slight northeast/southwest angle. First (northbound) and Second (southbound) Avenues stretch from East Houston Street along the entire length of Manhattan into Harlem; Avenues A, B, C, and D are two-way streets that more local in character, extending from East Houston to East 14th Streets (Avenue C extends a few blocks further north to FDR Drive). The numbered local streets are one-way street, with odd-numbered streets carrying traffic westbound and even-numbered streets carrying traffic eastbound. The blocks in the primary study area north of East Houston Streets are longer in the east-west direction. Interruptions in the street grid north of East Houston Street are limited; St. Mark's Place/East 8th Street and East 9th Street are interrupted between Avenues A and B by Tompkins Square Park and East 5th Street between First Avenue and Avenue A is part of the superblock that includes the Village View development. Stuyvesant Street between Second and Third Avenue runs diagonally between East 9th and East 10th Streets.

In terms of vehicular traffic, the major streets in this subarea are East Houston Street, First Avenue, and Second Avenue. East Houston Street is a busy—and wide—east-west street with three moving lanes, one parking lane, and a center left-turn lane in each direction that acts as a border between the East Village and Lower East Side neighborhoods. Houston Street is a crosstown route for traffic between Sixth Avenue to the west and FDR Drive to the east, bisecting both Broadway and Bowery to the west. As noted above, First and Second Avenues stretch from East Houston Street into Harlem. First Avenue has five northbound travel lanes and two on-street parking lanes; Second Avenue has three southbound travel lanes, two on-street parking lanes, and one on-street bicycle lane.

With the exception of St. Mark's Place, the principal east-west shopping street in the East Village, pedestrian traffic is not concentrated in any specific location. However, pedestrian traffic is greatest along the north-south commercial corridors and pedestrian activity tends to increase as one traverses the study area from east to west.

There is one designated historic district, the St. Mark's Historic District, and 47 historic resources in the East Village/Alphabet City subarea. Located between Second and Third Avenues, the St. Mark's Historic District is a New York City Landmark (NYCL) and listed on the State and National Register (S/NR). This residential historic district of three-, four-, and five-story buildings, which has its own street pattern (as evidenced by Stuyvesant Street, which runs due east and west diagonally through the Manhattan street grid), is one of the oldest developments in this section of the city. This residential district is located on land that was once part of Peter Stuyvesant's farm and includes two architectural resources: the Saint Mark's-in-the-Bowery Church along Second Avenue between East 10th and East 11th Streets and the Nicolas and Elizabeth Stuyvesant Fish House at 21 Stuyvesant Street. The remaining 45 architectural resources in this subarea date from the middle of the 18th century to the early 20th century, and represent a range of building types and architectural styles that illustrate multiple development periods. Most of these resources are located in the western portion of this subarea and include the New York City Marble Cemetery, the First Houses, the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer, and several historic homes.

According to 2000 Census data, there were approximately 14,595 employees working in the East Village/Alphabet City subarea of the primary study area. More than half of these employees worked in the Health and Social Services (4,220 employees, 27 percent) and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services (3,785 employees, 24 percent) sectors. Employment is highest in the western portion of this subarea.

Noise levels at receptor sites in the East Village/Alphabet City subarea are in the "marginally acceptable" category along local residential streets and in the "marginally unacceptable" category along the major north-south avenues, reflective of the traffic levels on adjacent streets.

LOWER EAST SIDE SUBAREA

As discussed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the Lower East Side was widely considered the most famous immigrant neighborhood in the United States and once known for its bustling street-level commercial activity and its overcrowded conditions. Many of the four- to six-story tenements in the Lower East Side subarea of the primary study area still remain, with street-level retail and residential uses above, and this area retains its bustling commercial character as evidenced by the concentration of commercial uses along Delancey Street—including Essex Market—and the apparel shops along Orchard and Ludlow Streets, comprising what is now called the "Bargain District." Until recently, most development in this subarea has been on a low- to mid-rise scale. However, this subarea is in transition and a large number of sites are currently under construction (see Figure 2-2).

While tenements characterize the housing stock of this subarea, higher-density residential development is becoming a more frequent occurrence, with a number of taller residential buildings currently under construction or recently completed. These new developments include the 15-story Blue Condo at 100 Norfolk Street and the 23-story Ludlow at 188 Ludlow Street and East Houston Street; a 16-story residential building is currently under construction on the northeast corner of Delancey and Forsyth Streets.

Although residential uses are predominant, the Lower East Side is more well-known for its commercial uses. The most notable commercial uses include the Bargain District, the Delancey Street commercial corridor, and the Essex Street Market. The Bargain District, generally defined as the area bounded by East Houston, Essex, Grand, and Allen Streets, formerly had a concentration of discounted apparel shops, tailors, and fabric stores, but is now home to an

increasing number of up-scale restaurants, boutiques, specialty shops, signature clothing shops, spas, and lounges. The Essex Street Market continues to be a commercial focal point in the Lower East Side neighborhood at the intersection of Delancey and Essex Streets, adapting to meet the needs of this evolving neighborhood. Delancey Street is lined with local, regional, and national retailers. East of Essex Street and north of the Delancey Street commercial corridor, local retail uses are more prevalent. Finally, many bars, small night clubs, live music venues, and performance spaces are concentrated between Clinton and Ludlow Streets north of Delancey Street, making the Lower East Side a popular late night destination.

Commercial and light industrial uses along Chrystie Street and in the southwest portion of the Lower East Side subarea generally reflect the Chinatown character most prevalent to the south and west along East Broadway and Canal Street. Grand Street is a main Chinatown-style commercial corridor, lined with restaurants, seafood and meat markets, small electronics shops, and a few remaining decorations and fabric stores once dominant in the Lower East Side neighborhood along Orchard and Orchard Streets. Light industrial uses, such as warehouses, wholesalers, distributers, and hardware stores that support Chinatown's commercial corridors, are located along Chrystie Street. A small enclave of auto repair shops is located on Attorney Street between East Houston and Stanton Streets.

This subarea has also proved to be an attractive location for new and boutique hotels. The most notable—and tallest—of these is the 21-story Hotel on Rivington at 107 Rivington Street between Ludlow and Essex Streets. A number of new, tall luxury hotels are currently under construction in this subarea, including a 26-story mixed-use hotel/residential building at 180 Orchard Street, an 11-story hotel at 136 Ludlow Street, and a 19-story hotel at 200 Allen Street (see "Future without the Proposed Actions" below).

The Sara D. Roosevelt Park, which extends from Canal Street to East Houston Street between Chrystie and Forsyth Streets, is the largest single land use in the Lower East Side subarea and defines the western portion of this subarea and acts as a dividing line between more commercial areas in Lower Manhattan (i.e., Chinatown, the Bowery) and the more residential Lower East Side. This well-utilized 7.85-acre linear park includes playgrounds, basketball and handball courts, a soccer field, general open recreation areas, seating areas, walking paths, and restrooms.

Community facilities are a common land use in this subarea. These community facilities include a number of large public schools that occupy large tracts of land, institutions that address people in need, senior centers, day care centers, outpatient medical facilities, and a number of religious institutions.

The street grid south of East Houston Street follows the pattern set by this wide street and forms rectangular blocks that are longer in the north-south direction. In terms of vehicular traffic, the major north-south streets within the Lower East Side subarea of the primary study area include Chrystie Street, Allen Street, and Essex Street, which line up with—although at a slight angle to—Second Avenue, First Avenue, and Avenue A, respectively. Chrystie Street, which carries two lanes of traffic in each direction, forms the western border of Sara D. Roosevelt Park and extends from East Houston Street to Canal Street and the Manhattan Bridge. Allen Street, also known as "Avenue of the Immigrants," is comprised of three moving lanes and one parking lane in each direction. A 25-foot-wide median flanked by benches and trees, called the Allen Malls, runs along the entire length of this wide street between East Houston and Division Streets. The malls are divided into eight sections, each containing a walkway and assigned a number one through eight. Essex Street carries two lanes of traffic in each direction between East Houston and Canal Streets.

Delancey Street is the major east-west commercial street on the Lower East Side. This relatively short thoroughfare stretches from the Bowery and serves as the access point for the Williamsburg Bridge. Delancey Street is comprised of three moving lanes and one parking lane in each direction with a planted median between the Bowery and Suffolk Street (at the entrance to the Williamsburg Bridge). Delancey Street is a heavily travelled route for traffic between the Williamsburg neighborhood in Brooklyn and the commercial areas in Lower Manhattan. The remaining streets in the primary study area south of East Houston Streets are one-way local streets that typically alternate direction.

Pedestrian traffic is heaviest on weekends and concentrated in the commercial portions of the Lower East Side subarea, which include the north side of Delancey Street between Allen and Clinton Streets, Orchard and Ludlow Streets in the Bargain District, and Grand Street. On Sundays, Orchard Street between Delancey and East Houston Streets is closed to vehicular traffic, transforming the streetscape into an outdoor pedestrian shopping district (part of the Bargain District). The bars, restaurants, and nightclubs in this area also generate substantial pedestrian activity during the evenings and late nights.

A portion of one designated historic district, the Lower East Side Historic District (S/NR), and 15 other historic resources are located in the Lower East Side subarea. Within the subarea, this historic district, mapped over the entire subarea between Allen and Essex Streets south of East Houston Street, is characterized by 19th century five- and six-story, brick and stone-clad tenements with street-level commercial spaces. This historic district includes two known architectural resources: the Lower East Side Tenement Museum at 97 Orchard Street and the Independent Subway System (IND) Substation 409 at 163 Essex Street. The remaining 13 architectural resources in this subarea include Public School 91 at 198 Forsyth Street, the University Settlement House at 184 Eldridge Street, and various tenements and synagogues.

According to 2000 Census data, there were approximately 6,015 employees working in the Lower East Side subarea of the primary study area. Approximately 23 percent of employees in this subarea (1,400 people) worked in the Health and Social Services sector, which includes employment in institutions within the subarea that address people in need, nursing and residential care facilities, outpatient care centers, and day care centers. The next largest employment sector was Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services, with approximately 1,160 employees, or about 19 percent of the Lower East Side subarea employment. Approximately 14 percent (855 people) worked in retail; retail employment is concentrated along Delancey, Orchard, and Ludlow Streets.

Noise levels at receptor sites in the Lower East Side subarea area in the "marginally unacceptable" or "clearly unacceptable" categories due to high levels of traffic, especially at the intersection of Delancey and Essex Streets.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

The secondary study area for neighborhood character is coterminous with the secondary study area for land use, which is a ¼-mile distance from the boundary of the primary study area. This secondary study area includes Union Square, Stuyvesant Town, Astor Place/Noho, the Bowery, and Little Italy/Nolita (see Figure 2-1 in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy").

The northwest corner of the secondary study area encroaches on Union Square, a thriving hub of culture, business, education, and health care,[1] located at the crossroads of Broadway, Park Avenue South, and East 14th Street. The neighborhood surrounding this popular park and meeting place, which hosts a Greenmarket and other seasonal events, includes such diverse land uses as off-Broadway theaters, local and destination retailers, universities (NYU and the New School), and hospitals. The area directly north of the primary study (rezoning) area is known for the number of medical facilities along Second Avenue, including Beth Israel Medical Center, Hospital for Joint Diseases, and New York Eye & Ear Infirmary. Stuyvesant Town, a large-scale 8,750-unit residential development comprised of 35 13- and 14-story brick buildings built around a landscaped park, is the largest single land use in the entire study area. Covering 18 blocks in total, Stuyvesant Town is bounded by East 20th Street to the north, Avenue C to the east, East 14th Street to the south, and First Avenue to the west. The Consolidated Edison (Con Ed) East River Complex, with its four towering exhaust stacks, is adjacent and east of Stuyvesant Town along the East River.

The areas immediately adjacent to the east and south of the primary study area typically house large-scale residential developments on large blocks. These tower-in-the-park multi-building developments, which include both NYCHA and private cooperatives, have maximum building heights between 14 and 23 stories. Portions of the study area east of Pitt Street and along Delancey Street exist in the shadow of the Williamsburg Bridge. Several large tracts of land south of Delancey Street between Essex and Clinton Streets are occupied by a number of large surface parking lots and on sites of the former Seward Park Urban Renewal Area. The portions of the secondary study area with the Lower East Side Historic District retain much of their original tenement-style development; however, these tenements and loft buildings are increasingly being converted to residential and/or commercial uses. There are a number of parks and community facilities scattered throughout this area as well, including Hamilton Fish Park, Seward Park, the Seward Park High School, and the New Explorations Science, Technology, and Math School. The northern portion of the approximately 57-acre East River Park is located in the secondary study area east of FDR Drive. East River Park amenities include an amphitheater, bike paths, playgrounds, sports fields and courts, gardens, children's water play areas, and walking paths.

The secondary study area to the west of the rezoning area and north of East Houston Street contains a mix of building types, including 19th century rowhouses, low-slung tenement buildings, and old garment factories and lofts converted to residential or commercial use. A sizable portion of this study area west of the Bowery and Fourth Avenue is part of three successive historic districts (in order from north to south): Noho (short for 'North of Houston') Historic District, Noho Historic District Extension (proposed), and Noho East Historic District. As evidenced by pedestrian activity in this area, Astor Place, particularly at Bowery, Lafayette Street, and St. Mark's Place, is a destination hub and meeting place that is becoming increasingly defined by its academic institutions. The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art is featured prominently at Astor Place and Third Avenue and new academic buildings associated with this school are currently under construction along Third Avenue. Although the focal point of NYU is further to the west at Washington Square Park, NYU also has a strong presence in this area, including a number of facilities along Third Avenue. The Broadway and 8th Street commercial corridors, as well performance spaces in this area along

[1] Union Square Partnership; http://unionsquarenyc.org/about.html

Lafayette Street, contribute to this area's active streetscape. To the south of Astor Place, new residential developments along East 4th, Great Jones, and Bond Streets between Lafayette Street and the Bowery are becoming increasingly recognized for their signature architecture.

The Bowery, which runs along the western edge of the primary study area south of East 4th Street, is mostly commercial and light industrial (increasingly to the south), although residential and community facility uses are becoming increasingly common. Once famous as a skid row filled with missions and low-rent hotels, the Bowery south of East Houston Street now has a concentration of lighting fixture shops, secondhand restaurant equipment stores, bars, and nightclubs. Recently the area has become a new gallery district, with more than 25 galleries anchored by the New Museum of Contemporary Art at 235 Bowery—which opened in December 2007—between Stanton and Rivington Streets. West of the Bowery are the Little Italy and Nolita (short for 'North of Little Italy') neighborhoods. The Little Italy neighborhood is known for its Italian-owned businesses, primarily restaurants and bakeries concentrated along Mott and Mulberry Streets, and the San Gennaro street festival that takes places annually in the last two weeks of September. Unlike retail uses in Little Italy to the south, Nolita is home to upscale shops, boutiques, restaurants, and galleries. Canal Street, the major commercial corridor of Chinatown, known for its restaurants, markets, and small shops, is located in the southwest corner of the secondary study area.

C. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

Development of new residential and commercial uses in the primary study area is expected to continue in the future without the proposed actions. Within the primary study area, new development comprised of residential, commercial, and hotel uses—a number of these anticipated projects would reach heights of 15 stories or taller—would be concentrated in the Lower East Side subarea south of East Houston Street and east of Allen Street (see Table 2-3 and Figure 2-5).

Absent the proposed actions, two new developments are expected in the East Village/Alphabet City subarea: a new 6-story 20-unit residential development with street-level retail is anticipated at 401 East 8th Street and a 7-story extension containing 23 residential units on top of the existing building is expected at 654 East 12th Street.

As noted above, most of the anticipated development within the primary study area would be located in the Lower East Side subarea. Construction of the largest of these new projects is almost complete; 188 Ludlow Street (also known as "The Ludlow"), is a 23-story 243-unit residential building with street-level retail. The 15-story, 32-unit Blue Condo at 105 Norfolk Street, just north of Delancey Street, is also nearing completion. Other new developments along Delancey Street include the 18-story 58-unit residential building at 101 Ludlow/92 Delancey Street, 16-story mixed-use building at 40 Delancey Street, and the renovation and expansion of the existing 4-story building at 100 Delancey Street into a 6-story residential building with street-level retail. Three new hotels would be completed in the Lower East Side subarea: the 19-story 142-room hotel at 200 Allen Street, the 11-story 32-room hotel at 136 Ludlow Street, and the 18-story 100-room hotel at 180 Orchard Street (which would also include 18 residential units).

Additional development in this subarea would include a 12-story 99,000-square-foot non-profit building with sleeping accommodations at 133 Pitt Street/357 East Houston Street and an 8-story mixed-use building with residential, medical office, and street-level retail at 196 Stanton Street.

In addition to the above, the reasonable worst-case development scenario (RWCDS) assumes that development would occur on sites that are underbuilt as per current zoning (see Figure 1-4, in Chapter 1, "Project Description"). It is anticipated that, in the future without the proposed actions, there would be approximately 2,290 residential units and 450,928 square feet of commercial space on projected development sites. This represents a net increase of approximately 2,234 residential units and an increase of 1,802,180 square feet of total floor area over the existing conditions.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

There are a number of new developments proposed for the secondary study area. Most of these developments would be residential and/or commercial in nature, and would be located to the south and west of the primary study area.

The area near Astor Place is expected to change substantially in the future without the proposed actions. Two developments are currently under construction on the east side of Third Avenue between East 5th and East 7th Streets: a 21-story 67-room hotel at 25 Cooper Square and Cooper Union's new 9-story 175,000-square-foot state-of-the-art academic building at 41 Cooper Square. A new 11-story 430,000-square-foot office building is planned for 51 Astor Place and would replace the existing building on this site that houses the Cooper Union's engineering department. A 26-story 700-student NYU dormitory is currently under construction at 112 East 12th Street between Third and Fourth Avenues.

Additional new development south of Astor Place would include a 32,000-square-foot commercial building at 363 Lafayette Street, 15-story residential building with commercial uses on the lower levels at Bowery and East 4th Street, and the conversion of the existing 8- and 10-story loft buildings at 404 Lafayette Street/708 Broadway to a hotel. A number of new residential developments are currently under construction on Bond Street between Lafayette Street and Bowery. These mid-rise residential buildings are being constructed at a scale reflective of the existing loft buildings in this subarea.

In the future without the proposed actions, new development in the southwest portion of the secondary study area would consist primarily of mid-size residential buildings with street-level retail and mid-size (less than 100-room) hotels. Further enhancements of the seating and landscape elements of the center plots along Allen and Pike Streets are expected to be complete before 2017.

Two eight-story residential buildings are proposed along East 13th Street north of the primary study area. Planned projects along Third Avenue near East 14th Street include the 21-story 76-unit Toll Brothers development at 110 Third Avenue and a new 21-story 60-unit residential building on the southeast corner of Third Avenue and East 14th Street; both of these developments would have street-level retail.

D. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER ANALYSIS BY TECHNICAL AREA

The analysis below presents the potential changes in the neighborhood character of the study area by 2017. As stated above, this analysis focuses on the potential changes to neighborhood character resulting from changes in Land Use, Socioeconomic Conditions, Historic Resources, Urban Design and Visual Resources, Transportation (traffic and pedestrians), and Noise. Detailed technical analyses for each of these areas are presented in their respective chapters. As discussed in greater detail in those chapters, environmental and social changes in the areas with respect to neighborhood character are as follows:

LAND USE

Land use is the strongest factor in determining the character of the area because land use creates changes that can alter the "look and feel" of the area, as well as the levels of activity in an area (e.g., traffic and pedestrian flows). Land use changes are also the foundation for neighborhood character elements such as urban design and visual character, socioeconomic conditions, and vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

As discussed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and 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 land uses, zoning, or public policy in the secondary study area. The proposed actions would not create land uses or structures that would be incompatible with the underlying zoning, nor would they cause a substantial number of existing structures to become non-conforming. The proposed actions would not result in land uses that conflict with public policies applicable to the primary or secondary study areas.

The major transportation corridors that bisect and border these neighborhoods would be developed with higher density buildings, while the low- to mid-rise character of the midblocks would be preserved. Furthermore, the proposed actions would reduce the allowable development available for commercial hotel buildings in the primary study area and would encourage residential development with ground floor retail in their place. The proposed zoning would create a framework that is both responsive to the uses present in the primary study area and compatible with the existing zoning designations in the surrounding areas. The proposed actions would also reinforce the use of several avenues as corridors for mixed-use residential and commercial buildings and would protect existing commercial uses that currently exist as legal non-conforming uses.

In sum, the proposed actions would directly address the community's request for contextual rezoning, direct higher-density development toward areas most capable of supporting such development, and provide incentives for much needed affordable housing in the East Village and Lower East Side neighborhoods.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

As discussed in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts for any of the five issue areas—direct residential displacement, direct business and institutional displacement, indirect residential displacement, indirect business and institutional displacement, and adverse effects on specific industries. The small number of businesses that would be directly displaced as a result of the proposed actions

do not have a substantial economic value to the city or regional area, and would not have great difficulty relocating to other areas. The primary study area has a well-established residential and retail presence, and the proposed actions would result in development that reflects, rather than alters, existing economic trends in the study area.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

As discussed in Chapter 7, "Historic Resources," it is not anticipated that the proposed actions would have adverse visual or contextual impacts on the majority of architectural resources, because new development pursuant to the proposed actions would not eliminate or screen publicly accessible views of a resource, introduce an incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements to a resource's setting, or result in significant adverse shadow impacts on a historic resource with sun-sensitive features. However, the proposed actions could result in the redevelopment of eight known architectural resources and five potential architectural resources; all of these resources are located on RWCDS potential development sites. The eight known architectural resources are located at 311 East 12th Street; 68 East 7th Street; 32, 34, and 36 East 3rd Street; 28 East 2nd Street; 108 East 1st Street; and 320 East 3rd Street. The five potential architectural resources are the Church of St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Rectory and Convent at 101-109 East 7th Street; Congregation Adas Yisroel Anshe Mezeritz at 415 East 6th Street; Father's Heart Ministry Center Rectory at 543-547 East 11th Street; row house at 217 East 7th Street; and the row houses at 258-266 East 7th Street. Overall, the eight known and five potential architectural resources are scattered throughout the primary zoning area and not concentrated in one area. A number of these known and potential resources are religious buildings and the loss of these buildings, coupled with removal of additional religious buildings in the future without the proposed actions, could affect the overall neighborhood character of the study area. In addition, a total of up to twenty-four architectural resources throughout the rezoning area could be altered through enlargements.

There are two mechanisms to protect buildings in New York City from potential indirect damage caused by construction activities. All buildings are provided some protection from accidental damage New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) controls that govern the protection of any adjacent properties from construction activities, under Building Code Section 27-166 (C26-112.4). For all construction work, Building Code section 27-166 (C26-112.4) serves to protect buildings by requiring that all lots, buildings, and service facilities adjacent to foundation and earthwork areas be protected and supported in accordance with the requirements of Building Construction Subchapter 7 and Building Code Subchapters 11 and 19. The second protective measure applies to designated NYCL and National Register-listed historic buildings. For these structures, the DOB's *Technical Policy and Procedure Notice (TPPN) #10/88* applies. *TPPN #10/88* supplements the standard building protections afforded by the Building Code C26-112.4 by requiring a monitoring program to reduce the likelihood of construction damage to adjacent LPC-designated or NR-listed resources (within 90 feet) and to detect at an early stage the beginnings of damage so that construction procedures can be changed.

For the 61 non-designated or listed resources in the rezoning area, construction under the proposed actions could potentially result in construction-related impacts to the resources. The resources would be afforded limited protection under DOB regulations applicable to all buildings located adjacent to construction sites (C26-112.4); however, since the resources are not New York City Landmarks or listed National Register properties, they are not afforded special protections under *TPPN #10/88*. Additional protective measures afforded under *TPPN #10/88* would only become applicable if the potential resources are designated or listed in the

future prior to the initiation of adjacent construction. If the 61 resources are not designated or listed, they would not be subject to *TPPN #10/88* and may, therefore, be adversely impacted by adjacent development resulting from the proposed actions.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

The proposed actions are expected to result in new residential development at a scale compatible with the existing established medium-density residential neighborhoods, preserving this neighborhood's low-rise character and its expansive views of the sky. The primary study area is characterized by a variety of older, mostly masonry-faced low-rise buildings, including numerous churches; several newer residential buildings, many with primarily glass curtain walls; and numerous parks and community gardens. New building heights would be capped at 75 or 80 feet along the local streets and 120 feet along the major streets, allowing for development along major corridors to include affordable housing. The proposed rezoning would attempt to reverse the trends of recent tall, out-of-scale development as several such buildings have been developed south of East Houston Street, interrupting the former visual consistency of this area. As such, the proposed actions would not result in any significant adverse urban design impacts.

The proposed actions would not alter block shapes and building arrangements within the primary study area as new development would occur on existing blocks and lots. It is also not anticipated that the proposed actions would have adverse visual or contextual impacts on other architectural resources, which include Tompkins Square Park, Sara D. Roosevelt Park, prominent study area churches, views along both Stuyvesant and Delancey Streets, and community gardens occupying small lots throughout the study area. Anticipated new development would not eliminate or screen publicly accessible views of these visual resources, alter their visual relationship with the streetscape, or introduce incompatible visual elements to their settings. New buildings as a result of the proposed actions would be built to existing streetwall regulations, further defining the study area view corridors.

TRANSPORTATION

As discussed in Chapter 16, "Traffic and Parking," the RWCDS would not generate enough vehicle trips to warrant the need for a detailed traffic study, and as a result, the proposed actions would not result in any significant adverse traffic impacts.

Similarly, with respect to pedestrian activity, Chapter 17, "Transit and Pedestrians," concludes that the RWCDS would not generate enough pedestrian trips to warrant the need for a detailed pedestrian analysis; thus, the proposed actions would not result in any significant adverse pedestrian impacts.

NOISE

As discussed in Chapter 19, "Noise," the proposed actions would not generate sufficient traffic to have the potential to cause a significant noise impact. As such, there would be no significant adverse impact on neighborhood character with respect to noise.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER ANALYSIS BY AREA

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

East Village/Alphabet city Subarea

As highlighted in the "Land Use" and "Urban Design and Visual Resources" discussions above, the proposed actions would result in the construction of new residential buildings built to the scale of the existing low- to mid-rise character of the overall East Village neighborhood. New development would occur throughout the East Village/Alphabet City subarea, including new construction on vacant lots, renovation and reuse of existing vacant buildings, and redevelopment of underutilized properties occupied by parking lots, non-essential transportation and utility facilities, and the few remaining light industrial uses. This new development would be compatible with uses found throughout this neighborhood. Commercial uses would continue to be permitted where permitted by zoning and the proposed text amendments would protect existing commercial uses that currently exist as legal non-conforming uses. New higher-density residential buildings up to 12 stories would be constructed along Second Avenue south of East 3rd Street, Avenue D, and East Houston Street. Development incentives along these corridors would also result in a substantial amount of affordable housing.

Overall, the proposed actions would address the community's request for contextual rezoning. Anticipated future growth would be focused toward the selected wide streets and major corridors to protect the low- to mid-rise streetwall that characterizes much of the East Village/Alphabet City subarea. Therefore, the proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on the neighborhood character of this subarea.

Lower East Side Subarea

As noted above, a number of new, taller buildings have been developed south of East Houston Street, interrupting the former visual consistency of this area. The proposed rezoning would attempt to reverse this trend of out-of-scale development. New development would occur on sites that are currently underutilized and would be compatible with the surrounding existing uses. Contextual zoning would limit building heights along the local streets and new higher-density residential buildings up to 12 stories would be constructed along East Houston, Chrystie, and Delancey Streets, the major corridors in the Lower East Side subarea. Similar to the East Village/Alphabet City subarea to the north, development incentives along these corridors would also result in a substantial amount of affordable housing. The small enclave of auto repair shops on Attorney Street between East Houston and Stanton Streets would be replaced by more compatible residential uses.

Overall, the proposed actions would eliminate the potential for future out-of-scale development in an area that has experienced such development, which has altered the low- to mid-rise character of this subarea. As such, the proposed actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on the neighborhood character of the Lower East Side subarea.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

The proposed actions are not expected to affect land use patterns in the secondary study area. Land uses that are expected to be introduced as a result of the proposed actions are compatible with the predominantly residential and commercial uses in the surrounding neighborhoods. New land uses would be similar in use and scale that characterizes the primary study area and would

thereby not affect the relationship between the primary and secondary study areas. The proposed actions would not result in substantial changes in any of the other elements that comprise neighborhood character (socioeconomic conditions, historic resources, urban design, transportation, or noise) as to adversely affect the neighborhood character of the secondary study area. Therefore, it is not expected that the proposed actions would result in any significant adverse impacts on land use in the secondary study area.

E. CONCLUSION

As described in detail above, no significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character, as defined by the guidelines for determining impact significance set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual* (see Section 400, Chapter 3, Section H, "Neighborhood Character"), are anticipated in the future with the proposed actions in the primary and secondary study areas. The proposed actions would not directly displace any land uses or result in differing land uses so as to adversely affect surrounding land uses. Buildings as a result of the RWCDS would be primarily residential in nature—compatible with these residential neighborhoods—and would be built to the existing neighborhood scale. Higher-density development would be channeled to the major transportation corridors that bisect and border these neighborhoods, allowing the low- to mid-rise character of the midblocks to be preserved. The proposed actions would not change the socioeconomic characteristics of the study area and would not result in a notable increase in neighborhood traffic or noise. The removal under the proposed actions of up to four individual historic houses of worship would result in significant adverse impacts to those individual buildings. Given that these individual resources are scattered throughout the rezoning area and not concentrated in one area, their removal would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character. Although 61 non-designated or listed resources in the rezoning area could be adversely affected by construction damage on nearby properties, this also would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character, since these buildings are distributed throughout the study area and since such accidental damage would be unlikely to occur at all 61 sites, if at any at all. ✷