# Chapter 19: Neighborhood Character

## A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Actions on neighborhood character. As defined in the 2020 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, neighborhood character is a combination of elements that give a neighborhood its distinct "personality," which may include 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 the aforementioned 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.

The New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) is proposing zoning map amendments and zoning text amendments (the "Proposed Actions") that would affect an approximately 56-block, 146-acre area (the "Project Area") of the SoHo and NoHo neighborhoods of Manhattan, Community District 2. The Project Area is generally bounded by Astor Place and Houston Street to the north; Bowery, Lafayette Street, and Baxter Street to the east; Canal Street to the south; and Sixth Avenue, West Broadway, and Broadway to the west.

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 a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

There are no significant adverse impacts from the Proposed Actions with respect to land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; urban design and visual resources; or noise. Although the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse impacts with respect to open space, historic resources, shadows, and transportation (pedestrian conditions and transit), these

impacts would not result in a significant adverse impact to the determining elements of neighborhood character.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate development that would enhance the mixed-use and historic character of SoHo/NoHo. The Proposed Actions would replace outdated manufacturing zoning and rigid use restrictions, including ground floor use restrictions that do not allow retail and other storefront uses, with new zoning that promotes a greater mix of uses and supports economic recovery from the pandemic, business adaptation, and long-term resiliency. The broad range of uses would support existing businesses in SoHo/NoHo as they continue to operate, grow, and evolve, while allowing a greater range of commercial, cultural, and civic activities within the existing highly adaptable loft buildings and new mixed-use developments.

Within the SoHo–Cast Iron Historic District and Extension and the NoHo Historic District and Extension, the Proposed Actions would maintain existing density while allowing mixed-use infill developments and conversions that would be consistent with the height and form of existing historic buildings. In the Broadway-Houston Street and Canal Street corridors, wide corridors that are generally within historic districts and better served by transit, the Proposed Actions would increase density and facilitate building forms that are comparable to the taller and bulkier buildings that characterize these corridors. At the periphery of the Project Area and generally outside of historic districts, the Proposed Actions would allow the greatest increases in density and allow the largest and tallest buildings. The NoHo-Bowery corridor and SoHo West and SoHo East—peripheral areas that are framed by wide streets and characterized by excellent transit access and a varied built context—would accommodate the most density. In these areas, the Proposed Actions would support housing production, including the provision of permanently affordable housing, and serve to better transition the historic districts in SoHo and NoHo with the adjacent neighborhoods beyond the Project Area.

## 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 the above 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 AREAS

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

*PRIMARY STUDY AREA*

This primary study area is comprised of the approximately 56-block SoHo/NoHo Project Area where the potential effects of the Proposed Actions would be directly experienced. The primary study area is generally bounded by Astor Place and Houston Street to the north; Bowery, Lafayette Street, and Baxter Street to the east; Canal Street to the south; and Sixth Avenue, West Broadway, and Broadway to the west. The subareas include the Broadway-Houston Street subarea, Canal Street subarea, NoHo-Bowery subarea, NoHo Core (Preservation) subarea, SoHo Core (Preservation) subarea, SoHo East subarea, and the SoHo West subarea (see **Figure 19-1**).

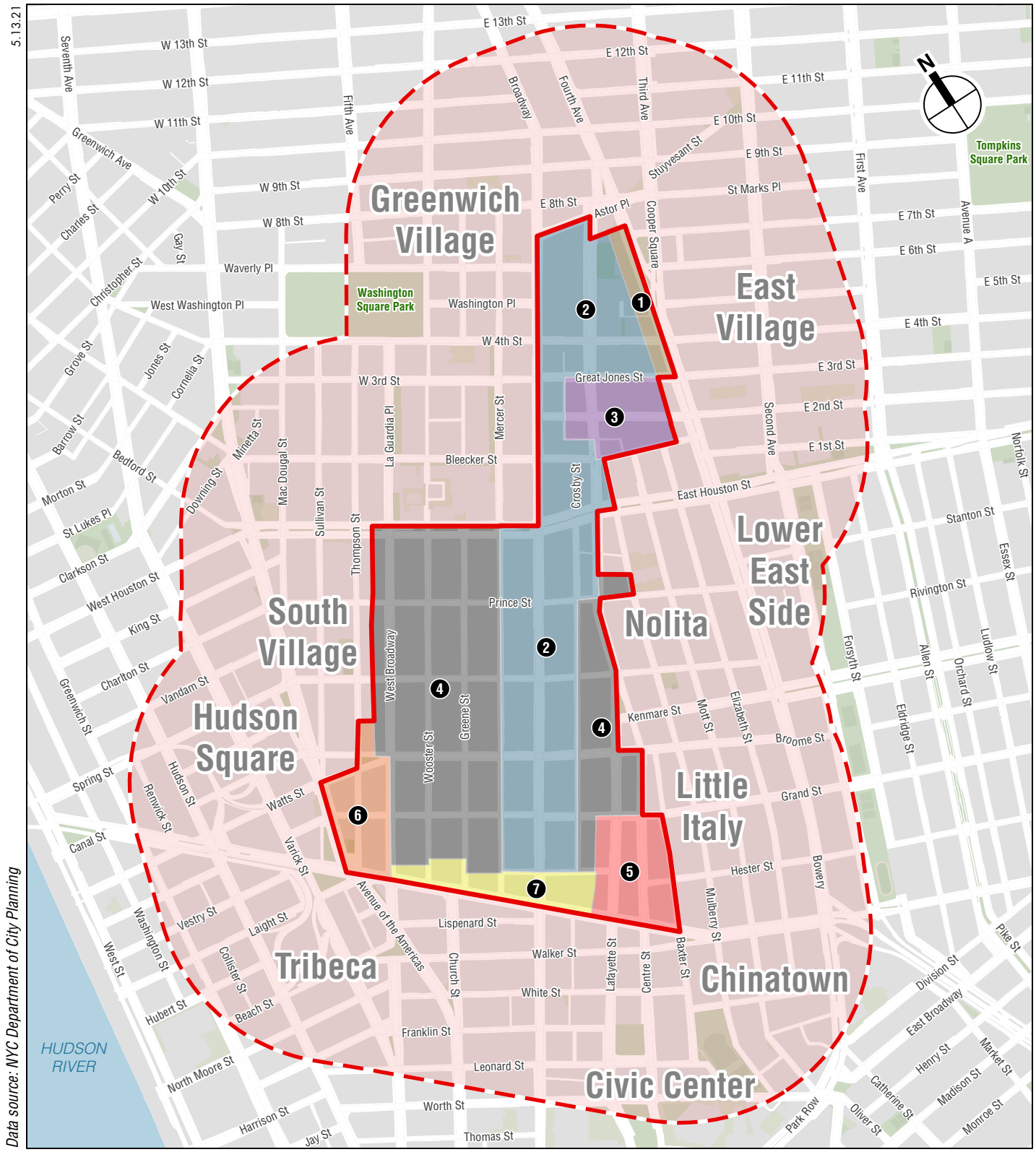
*SECONDARY STUDY AREA*

As shown in **Figure 19-1**, the secondary study area is defined as the area within a quarter-mile radius of the primary study area. It is generally bounded by East 13th Street to the north, Worth Street to the south, Seventh Avenue and Washington Street to the west, and First Avenue and Forsyth Street to the east.

## C. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

In the mid-19th century, SoHo and NoHo emerged as important manufacturing and commercial districts, with Broadway becoming a bustling commercial corridor with marquee retail stores, entertainment venues, and hotels. The neighborhoods' resulting iconic cast-iron loft buildings contain large, contiguous floor plates and high ceilings to accommodate a wide range of business activities. This flexibility made the buildings particularly conducive to adaptive reuse in later years. Starting in the 1860s, SoHo/NoHo shifted from a commercial and entertainment destination to a critical manufacturing and wholesale center for textiles and garments. Influenced by changes within the manufacturing industry after World War II, the number of manufacturing and related businesses contracted significantly through the 1970s.

The dramatic decline of industrial uses from the 1950s through the 1970s gave way to space for cultural and artistic production. In 1971, the City amended SoHo/NoHo's basic M1-5 industrial zoning that had been in place since 1961. The zoning changes sought to address the decline in manufacturing uses and recognize the growing presence of an artist community that was drawn to the area's vacant manufacturing loft buildings. Joint Living-Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) was created as a new manufacturing use to allow certain artists and their households to live and practice their craft in such spaces. At first, the use was permitted only in SoHo, but in 1976, the




Neighborhood Character

**SOHO/NOHO NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

**Figure 19-1**

M1-5B zoning was expanded to NoHo. The M1-5A and M1-5B zoning required that spaces used as JLWQA must be occupied by an artist certified by the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA).

In the following decades, SoHo/NoHo gained increasing popularity as a loft district, as residential occupancies not associated with artists and arts production became more prevalent. Elsewhere in Manhattan, as industrial sectors relocated to buildings and areas that could accommodate modern production and distribution, loft buildings were increasingly occupied with residential uses.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the City and State introduced zoning and legislative changes to regulate the conversion of non-residential loft buildings after recognizing a growing trend of illegal residential loft conversions. The "Loft Law" enabled the creation of Interim Multiple Dwellings (IMDs), i.e., a temporary legal status conferred upon commercial or manufacturing buildings occupied by three or more families with the ultimate expectation that such buildings be upgraded as permanent housing, and established the New York City Loft Board to regulate such conversions to residential use. Along with familial successions of JLWQA by non-artists, sales and leasing of units to non-artists, conversions to residential use and new construction via City approvals, SoHo/NoHo's shift from a limited artist community to a broader residential demographic was well underway.

Today, SoHo/NoHo has a residential population of approximately 8,000 persons, including new residents and long-time artist-residents, and serves as an employment hub for professional services and creative industries. Its iconic loft buildings are recognized around the world, and the neighborhood is renowned for its cultural offerings, world-class shopping, and trendy cachet. SoHo/NoHo is well-served by transit, with a total of nine subway stations or station complexes serving the area. Major streets like Broadway, Canal Street, and Houston Street are characterized by high pedestrian activity, shoppers and tourists, traffic, and the hustle and bustle of urban life; however, farther from the neighborhood's bustling streets, the charm of SoHo/NoHo is evident with the relative quiet of the cobblestoned streets, galleries, and shops.

## DEFINING FEATURES

The character of SoHo/NoHo is defined primarily by the neighborhoods' varied built form, including the iconic cast-iron façades of its many loft buildings, the vibrant mix of uses found in its buildings, and the cultural legacy of the pioneering artist community that lives on today with the neighborhood's concentration of arts and culture establishments and a flourishing creative sector.

### *MIX OF USES*

Despite the restrictive manufacturing zoning established 50 years ago, SoHo/NoHo has evolved into a neighborhood characterized by a dynamic mix of uses. SoHo/NoHo exhibits a mixed-use character that is unique even among New York City neighborhoods that typically have commercial uses concentrated on avenues and wide streets and predominantly residential use in the midblock and alongside streets. In SoHo/NoHo, the neighborhood's approximately 8,000 residents live among various uses that are located side by side—and, in many cases, above and below within individual buildings—on nearly every street.

The primary study area contains approximately 23 million square feet (sf) of built floor area. Mixed commercial and residential buildings account for 46 percent of built floor area, and commercial buildings with a mix of office, retail, and other commercial uses account for approximately 42 percent of the built floor area. The commercial prevalence is most notable along Broadway (see Figure 2-3 in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy"). The loft buildings

that line Broadway provide space for publishers, media and design firms, fashion and apparel companies, production and other creative industries as well as retail, including flagship stores for national retailers, on the ground floors.

Notwithstanding its manufacturing zoning designation, the primary study area is a hub for non-industrial employment, providing over 53,000 private sector jobs, inclusive of at least 10,000 retail jobs. SoHo/NoHo are home to small- and medium-sized firms, including those in creative industries and professional services. The commercial success of SoHo/NoHo is attributed to several factors, including access to transit, proximity to educational institutions and workforce, and the versatility of its loft buildings. Based on consumer spending (and pre-COVID-19 pandemic conditions), the shops and upscale boutiques along Broadway, Prince and Spring Streets, and other nearby streets in SoHo and NoHo place them among the top 10 shopping districts in the nation, and second only to Fifth Avenue in New York City.

SoHo/NoHo are home to several arts and culture establishments, including museums, galleries, and performing arts organizations and venues. In some cases, cultural uses are contained within the same building as commercial and residential uses, or other community facilities such as educational institutions like New York University and Cooper Union. Many of the commercial enterprises in SoHo/NoHo are associated with the design industry and feature showroom space for furniture, lighting, interior design, and other types of creative businesses.

Housing in SoHo/NoHo includes JLWQA units, Loft Law units, pre-existing residential units (legal residences that were in existence prior to the 1961 zoning) or, more recently, units created through discretionary City approvals. According to data from DCLA, buildings used as JLWQA are located throughout SoHo/NoHo, but are concentrated in the historic cores of SoHo and NoHo. Originally intended to be occupied by certified artists that reside and practice their craft in the same space, over time legal occupancy was extended to include non-certified artist residents. Many of the cast-iron buildings and tenements that predominate throughout SoHo and NoHo contain housing, including JLWQA, on the upper floors and clothing stores, galleries, restaurants, and other non-residential space in mixed-use buildings. The mixing of these uses creates pedestrian connections that make SoHo and NoHo the lively and vibrant neighborhoods they are today.

*VARIED BUILT FORM*

The built form of SoHo/NoHo consists of a variety of architectural styles and building typologies, ranging from modern glass-façade buildings to historic cast-iron loft buildings. Houston Street is the major artery separating NoHo to the north from SoHo to the south. Broadway is the primary north–south corridor that extends the entire length of the Project Area. Other primary north–south corridors include Bowery, Centre Street, Lafayette Street, and Sixth Avenue. Canal and Houston Streets are the major east–west streets serving SoHo and NoHo.

The historic cores of SoHo and NoHo consist primarily of high lot coverage, well preserved cast-iron and/or masonry loft buildings constructed during the mid- to late-19th century and are typically five to seven stories tall. The historic cores lie within the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District and Extension and the NoHo Historic District and Extension, which are designated New York City Historic Districts (NYCHD). Due to the narrow lot width in the midblocks of the historic cores, many buildings are only 20 to 30 feet wide. Larger buildings occupy prominent corner locations. The façades typically have cast-iron or stone-clad storefronts, with upper stories clad in stone, brick, cast-iron, or terra cotta, and pronounced metal cornices. The unique character of the historic cores is distinguished by these buildings, which existed decades before the manufacturing zoning was

established. While not wholly consistent with the manufacturing zoning, these features are preserved by way of the area's Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designation as NYCHDs.

While most buildings in the historic cores range from to five to seven stories, there are several taller buildings, including an approximately 160-foot-tall (13-story) building at 104 Greene Street between Prince and Spring Streets. Lafayette Street, between Spring and Broome Streets, contains a unique mix of building forms ranging from older two-story commercial buildings to the 12-story, approximately 156-foot-tall building located at 210 Lafayette Street, which is characterized by its undulating gray brick and glass cladding. Although limited, recently constructed, modern eight- to 10-story buildings are located along West Broadway and West Houston Street.

Taller buildings in the NoHo historic core include the 11-story, approximately 140-foot-tall newer condominium building at 40 Bond Street that rises above the five-story, approximately 65-foot-tall base that meets the sidewalk. The façade has large window openings framed with thick copper mullions. Across the street to the south at 41 Bond Street is a modern nine-story, approximately 118-foot-tall building clad in gray brick. An apartment building at 48 Bond Street (approximately 132 feet tall) has a glass curtain wall on the ground floor, with upper stories clad in gray stone.

Buildings along Broadway, between Crosby and Mercer Streets in SoHo, and along the adjacent Lafayette Street in NoHo, have the largest floorplates in SoHo/NoHo and are generally taller and bulkier than those in the historic cores: between six and 12 stories tall. Many of the through-block buildings that have their primary façades on Broadway are over 100 feet tall. The Broadway corridor is lined with historic cast-iron loft buildings with ornate façades that have distinctive architectural features, typically including large arched window openings and columns at each floor.

Canal Street is characterized by a mix of tenements, row houses, historic cast-iron lofts, newly constructed residential buildings, low-rise commercial/semi-industrial buildings, and parking garages. New residential developments are transforming the corridor by replacing low-intensity uses, such as single-story discount retail buildings and parking lots. The buildings at 341 Canal Street and 419 Broadway, at six and eight stories respectively, are establishing Canal Street as a gateway to the neighborhood and serve as a transition between SoHo and the taller commercial buildings south of Canal Street.

The built form in the periphery of the primary study area in the SoHo East, SoHo West, and NoHo-Bowery subareas is varied. These subareas are mostly outside of the historic districts and tend to contain a greater concentration of low-intensity uses relative to other areas of SoHo/NoHo, including tenement-style buildings, low-rise industrial buildings, parking lots and garages, and one-story bars, restaurants, and cafés.

Located off of the main transportation corridors of Canal Street and Sixth Avenue, both of which are wide streets, the SoHo West subarea includes a variety of building types and sizes, with buildings that range from single-story retail to a cantilevered 16-story hotel, including older six-story masonry-faced apartment buildings, small two-story buildings with ground floor restaurants, and modern apartment buildings in a variety of contemporary cladding materials.

Buildings in the SoHo East subarea range in size from one to 14 stories, and range from 20 to over 300 feet in width. The subarea is characterized by mid-rise five- to six-story buildings with ground-floor retail. These buildings vary in their material, date of construction, and form. A glass-clad, approximately 86-foot-tall bank building at 235 Canal Street has angled façades. Across the street to the west at 239 Canal Street is an early 20th-century six-story, approximately 90-foot-tall building that evokes the architectural style of nearby Chinatown, with round columns, polychromatic painted friezes, and multiple tiers of roof tiles.

Like the SoHo East and SoHo West subareas, the NoHo-Bowery subarea has a varied built context, and includes portions of the Bowery and NoHo Historic Districts. The subarea is a narrow corridor that includes the west side of Bowery between Great Jones Street and Astor Place. Bowery is a major commercial corridor and wide street. The stretch north of 4th Street is characterized primarily by mixed residential and commercial buildings and a large institutional presence, with heights ranging from four to 16 stories. In the area outside of the historic district, south of East 4th Street, there are a number of underbuilt sites, characterized by vacant land, low-rise tenements, and single-story semi-industrial or formerly industrial buildings that have been converted to restaurants and bars.

The tallest buildings in the NoHo-Bowery subarea include 2 Cooper Square, a 16-story apartment building occupying the northwest corner of Bowery and East 4th Street. The brick-clad structure is approximately 150 feet tall with a tower rising from a five-story base. Located just outside of the subarea at 25 Cooper Square (at East 5th Street) is The Standard East Village, a 21-story hotel constructed in 2006 and an adjacent 13-story hotel constructed in 2014 at 35 Cooper Square. Farther north is 56 Cooper Square, a 12-story approximately 150-foot-tall stone- and brick-clad older apartment building that has tall arched double-height window openings on the ground floor and decorative brickwork on the upper stories. Institutional buildings are also located on the block, including the approximately 98-foot-tall New York University building at 16 Cooper Square and the Grace Church School at 46 Cooper Square.

*CULTURAL LEGACY*

The relevance of arts and cultural activity has historically been and is a defining feature of SoHo/NoHo. The post-war decline in industrialization provided the availability of space for cultural and artistic production to flourish. Through the adaptive reuse of SoHo's vacant loft buildings in the 1960s and 1970s, the artist community inspired the conventional notion of "loft living" by transforming the loft spaces to places where artists could live, create, and thrive. Artists took advantage of the high ceilings, abundant light, and open airy spaces afforded in the neighborhood's loft buildings, and found a place where they could practice their craft in a community of like-minded artists, free from complaints and interruptions.

In 1971, the City established JLWQA as a manufacturing use to support the industry that remained in the area, and to allow certain artists and their households to live and practice their craft in SoHo's loft buildings (JLWQA was expanded to NoHo in 1976). Today, while certified-artist-occupied JLWQA largely remains the sole as-of-right quasi-residential use, only about 30 percent of all SoHo/NoHo homes are still listed as JLWQA use that requires certified artist occupancy on buildings' certificates of occupancy.

The neighborhood has changed significantly in the ensuing decades. While the number of certified artists has declined and artistic production has evolved and taken new forms, the SoHo and NoHo of today continue to be destinations for the arts and design. Notwithstanding the changes since 1970s and 1980s, the SoHo/NoHo of today is home to not only long-time resident-artists, but also a multitude of arts and culture organizations, creative businesses and individuals, including independent artists, art studios, museums, theaters, galleries, artisanal and maker-retailers, design showrooms, film and recording studios, and art installations.

Although many of the art galleries that rose to prominence during the 1970s and 1980s have relocated, the neighborhood maintains a significant arts and culture presence with establishments such as the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, the Museum of Chinese in America, Judd Foundation, Emily Harvey Foundation, the Public Theater, the Drawing Center, and the

Merchant's House Museum. In addition, there are more than 30 design showrooms, many working collectively to highlight their products and unique content as part of the SoHo Design District, and more than 80 other cultural and creative uses from artisan micro-manufacturers to digital and recording studios.[1]

## PRIMARY STUDY AREA

For purposes of assessing neighborhood character, the primary study area is divided into subareas, as shown in **Figure 19-1**.

### *BROADWAY-HOUSTON STREET SUBAREA*

The Broadway-Houston Street subarea is generally bounded by Astor Place and Fourth Avenue to the north, Crosby Street to the east, Mercer Street to the west, and Howard Street to the south. The Broadway-Houston subarea is a major commercial corridor comprised of primarily commercial and mixed-use buildings, including stand-alone commercial buildings and mixed-use residential and commercial buildings. Community facilities and institutions, including New York University (NYU) facilities, as well as parking facilities are generally are located north of Houston Street.

Broadway is a major commercial corridor and at 80 feet, a wide thoroughfare that runs through SoHo and NoHo, and separates the primary study area from Greenwich Village and the NYU campus to the west. Houston Street, at approximately 125 feet wide, is the primary east—west artery that separates SoHo to the south from NoHo to the north. The N/Q/R/W subway lines run below Broadway and includes stations at Canal, Prince, and 8th Streets. The B/D/F/M subway lines run under Houston Street with a major transit node at Broadway-Lafayette that connects to the 6 line at the Bleecker Street station. In addition, there are several bus routes along Houston Street and Broadway, with a dedicated bus lane on Broadway. Both sides of Broadway are lined with mixed-use buildings that have commercial storefronts primarily occupying the full width of the ground floor. The buildings on Houston Street are also mixed-use buildings, but contain fewer active uses on the ground floor. The importance of Broadway and Houston Street as commercial corridors, the mix of uses, and the prevalence of transit in the subarea contributes to traffic and pedestrian activity. The sidewalks on both streets are wide to accommodate pedestrians.

Buildings along Broadway, between Crosby and Mercer Streets in SoHo, and along adjacent Lafayette Street in NoHo, are generally taller and bulkier than those in the adjacent subareas, between six and 12 stories tall, and consist of a mix of older loft buildings and more recent construction. The subarea contains the largest floorplates, with a high concentration of commercial uses, particularly offices and destination retail. The corridor is an employment hub. Some examples of relatively recent construction includes the building that houses the Adidas flagship store, located at the northeast corner of Broadway and Houston Street and a mixed-use residential building with ground-floor commercial space on the east side of Broadway between Great Jones and East 4th Streets. There is a high concentration of public institutional uses in the northern portion of the subarea, with NYU facilities and the Public Theater located to the north of West 4th Street. Aside from a restaurant at the northwest corner of Lafayette and Great Jones Streets, active ground-floor uses are more limited within this northern portion of the subarea.

[1] Envision SoHo/NoHo: A Summary of Findings and Recommendations; November 2019

Some of the neighborhood's most iconic buildings are located in the subarea, including visual resources such as the cast iron E.V. Haughwout Building at 490 Broadway (at Broome Street), and the Public Theater (the former Astor Library) at 423 Lafayette Street (at Astor Place).

*CANAL STREET SUBAREA*

The Canal Street subarea is generally bounded by West Broadway to the west, Howard Street to the north, Lafayette Street to the east, and Canal Street to the south. Canal Street is a 100-foot-wide thoroughfare that is renowned as a discount shopping destination. The subarea is characterized by a diverse mix of tenements, federal-style row houses, historic cast-iron lofts, newly constructed residential buildings, low-rise retail stores, and some low-intensity semi-industrial businesses and parking garages. Mixed commercial and residential buildings predominate.

Canal Street is a primary transportation corridor in the neighborhood, with subway station entrances at multiple corners of Broadway and Lafayette Street. Canal Street is heavily utilized as it feeds traffic eastbound toward the Manhattan Bridge and westbound toward the Holland Tunnel entrance.

The Canal Street subarea is characterized by four- and five-story brick-faced tenement buildings, with steel fire escapes on the upper stories and retail storefronts on the ground floor in the midblocks. The corner lots generally have older, larger, and more prominent buildings that are developed with a mix of building types and heights. As potential development sites become increasingly scarce in the SoHo core, interest in the Canal Street subarea has grown. New residential development projects are transforming the corridor by replacing single-story discount retail buildings and parking lots. The developments at 341 Canal and 419 Broadway, at six and eight stories respectively, are establishing Canal Street as a gateway to the neighborhood and serve as a transition between SoHo and the taller commercial buildings south of Canal Street.

Views to the east and west along Canal Street tend to be long due to the flat topography and the approximately 100-foot-wide street. The 22-story, glass-clad hotel tower at 50 Bowery is visually prominent in views to the southeast from the subarea.

*NOHO-BOWERY SUBAREA*

The NoHo-Bowery subarea is anchored by Bowery, a major commercial corridor and a 120-foot-wide street, located at the northeast corner of the primary study area in NoHo between Great Jones Street and Astor Place. Bowery separates the primary study area from the East Village to the east. The subarea is generally located along the west side of Bowery and Cooper Square between East 3rd and East 7th Streets. The subarea contains mixed-use residential and commercial buildings, public facility and institutional buildings, and office buildings.

As stated above, the stretch north of East 4th Street is characterized primarily by mixed residential and commercial buildings and a large institutional presence. This portion of the subarea is also within the NoHo Historic District and Extension. Building heights generally range from four to 16 stories. Four- to 11-story converted brick and concrete buildings are located between the newer towers, such as the Carl Fischer building, which now contains residential condominiums. Public facility and institutional uses include Grace Church High School, NYU Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, and the Center for Ballet and the Arts. Ground-floor retail is not common in this subarea.

Outside of the historic district, along the west side of Bowery south of East 4th Street, is characterized by underbuilt sites, including vacant land, three- to five-story tenements, and single-

story semi-industrial or formerly industrial buildings that have been converted to eating and drinking establishments. Ground-floor retail is more common south of East 4th Street.

Bowery provides long views to the north and south, despite its slight west turn, and is considered a view corridor, characterized by modern institutional buildings and tall hotel towers, such as the 21-story Standard East Village on Cooper Square between East 5th and East 6th Streets.

*NOHO CORE (PRESERVATION) SUBAREA*

The NoHo Core subarea is generally bounded by Bowery and Bleecker, Lafayette, and Great Jones Streets. The subarea contains mixed-use residential and commercial buildings, residential buildings, and stand-alone commercial buildings, although mixed-use residential and commercial buildings predominate. Loft buildings in the NoHo Core Subarea have cast-iron or stone-clad storefronts, with upper stories clad in stone, brick, cast-iron or terra cotta, and pronounced metal cornices. Interspersed among the historic buildings, the subarea contains modern buildings clad in contemporary materials.

The NoHo Core subarea is defined primarily by older historic buildings, with the exception of newer construction located along Bond Street. The subarea is overwhelmingly mixed-use, with residential (including JLWQA) and commercial uses often occupying spaces in the same building and sometimes on the same floor. High lot coverage, well-preserved cast-iron and/or masonry loft buildings constructed during the mid- to late 19th century are typically five to seven stories tall. Retail use is common on the ground floors while most of the upper floors have been converted to housing and office uses. Bars and restaurants are concentrated along Great Jones and Bond Streets. More recent development is located along Bond Street, including 10 Bond Street, completed in 2014, and the developments at 40 and 48 Bond Street, both completed in 2008. Bond Street is more residential in character, with active ground-floor retail spaces, including several restaurants, with residential space above. A cluster of commercial office buildings is located in traditional six-story brick and concrete buildings to the north along Great Jones Street.

Lafayette Street is an 80-foot-wide thoroughfare while Great Jones Street is an approximately 75-foot-wide one-way street with a single travel lane. A wide sidewalk is located along the south side of the street. Bond and Bleecker Streets are narrow streets with short views. Within the subarea, Great Jones Street has long views to the west, east, and the northwest due to the low-density development at the block corner.

*SOHO CORE (PRESERVATION) SUBAREA*

The SoHo Core subarea is bisected by Broadway and the Broadway-Houston subarea. The portion located west of Broadway is generally bounded by Thompson Street/West Broadway to the west, Houston Street to the north, Mercer Street to the east, and Grand Street to the south. East of Broadway, the subarea is generally bounded by Crosby Street to the west, Prince and Jersey Streets to the north, Mulberry and Lafayette Streets to the east, and Howard Street to the south. The SoHo Core subarea, like the NoHo Core subarea, is defined by historically significant cast-iron buildings which overwhelmingly contain mixed-use residential and commercial uses. Over two-thirds of the subarea is occupied by mixed-use buildings.

The subarea contains high lot coverage, well-preserved cast-iron and masonry loft buildings constructed during the mid- to late 19th century. Retail uses predominate on the ground floors while most of the upper floors of the loft buildings have been converted from their original light

industrial uses to housing and office uses. Bars and restaurants are interspersed throughout the subarea, but are more prevalent along Lafayette Street and West Broadway.

The portion of the subarea between Mercer Street and West Broadway contains the greatest concentration of historic four- to six-story cast-iron buildings in the primary study area. Framed with Belgian block-paved streets, high-end designer stores occupy the ground floors of many buildings, forming a commercial shopping district. Art galleries are interspersed throughout the western portion of the SoHo Core. The western portion of the SoHo Core, at the intersection of West Broadway and Broome Street contains restaurants on the ground floor. Although limited, recently constructed modern eight- to 10-story buildings are located along West Broadway and West Houston Street.

Many of the buildings along the east side of Crosby Street have ground-floor commercial spaces occupied with restaurants and shops. Lafayette Street has a commercial character, and between Spring and Broome Streets there is a unique mix of building forms, ranging from older two-story commercial buildings to the 12-story contemporary glass commercial building located at 210 Lafayette Street.

The SoHo Core subarea is within the boundaries of two NYCHDs—the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District and Extension.[2] The building façades are located at the sidewalk and have no setbacks. Many building façades have unique architectural elements, which may include decorative cast-iron facades, arched window openings, terra cotta and brick detailing, ornamented friezes and pilasters, and pronounced cornices that mark the roofline. Many buildings are completely clad in cast iron, and have tall arched window openings set closely together and framed by ornate columns; although the western and eastern edges of the subarea along West Broadway and Lafayette Street are characterized by brick-clad buildings, rather than the cast iron-clad façades that are more prevalent on the narrower streets.

Due to the narrow width of most streets, the subarea does not afford long views. The SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District and Extension is a visual resource that is also a historic architectural resource as a collection of historic commercial buildings that are representative of the area's mid- to late-19th century development. The blocks in the subarea are generally characterized by a consistent street wall framed by narrow streets paved in Belgian block, with limited street trees. The historic buildings in the subarea have extensive ornamentation and are visually interesting. Visual resources within the SoHo Core subarea are typically located on corner sites making them more visually prominent from more distant vantage points.

*SOHO EAST SUBAREA*

The SoHo East subarea is generally bounded by Lafayette, Grand, Baxter, and Canal Streets. The subarea is characterized as a transitional area where SoHo, Little Italy, Chinatown, and the Lower Manhattan Central Business District (CBD) intersect. Lafayette Street, an 80-foot-wide street, and

[2] The original SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District (NYCHD, S/NR-listed, NHL) is bounded by Houston Street to the north, Canal Street to the south, Crosby Street to the east, and West Broadway to the west. The SoHo Historic District (S/NR-listed) boundaries extend beyond the original SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District boundaries, including the buildings on the west side of West Broadway and buildings generally on the east side of Crosby Street between Broome and Howard Streets, but also including buildings on Broome, Grand, and Howard Streets. In 2010, LPC designated the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District Extension as a NYCHD, which includes properties between West Broadway and Thompson Street and properties located between Crosby Street and Lafayette Street, Cleveland Place, and Centre Street on the east.

Centre Street, anchor the SoHo East subarea. Subway access is provided by the J/Z and 6 lines at Canal Street. The subarea contains a diverse mix of land uses, including commercial buildings, mixed-use residential and commercial buildings, parking facilities, and hotels.

The subarea is generally less residential and less built up than the other subareas described above, with tenement-style buildings, low-rise industrial buildings, parking lots and garages, and one-story eating and drinking establishments. The eastern portion of this corridor, between Baxter and Centre Streets, contains four- to seven-story office buildings on Canal Street with ground-floor retail, and parking facilities, tenements with ground-floor retail, and commercial buildings to the north. The portion of the subarea between Centre and Lafayette Streets contains a more dynamic range of building heights, many of which contain large-footprint buildings with local retail and office uses. A commercial presence is prevalent along Lafayette Street, with 10- to 12-story commercial buildings between Canal and Grand Streets. Centre Street contains two- to six-story commercial buildings, with taller buildings reaching up to 12 stories more prevalent along Lafayette Street. A 26-story hotel, the NoMo SoHo, is located at 9 Crosby Street. Canal Street, a major commercial street, is flanked by five- to seven-story commercial buildings, with retail uses on the ground floors of smaller mixed-use residential buildings.

Within the SoHo East subarea, Canal Street intersects with Lafayette, Centre, and Baxter Streets in quick succession because these blockfronts on Canal Street are short, each measuring approximately 150 feet in length. Pedestrian traffic is high in the subarea, with subway station entrances located near the northeast and northwest corners of Lafayette and Canal Streets, including an elevator in the sidewalk on the north side of Canal Street.

The SoHo East subarea has long east–west views on Canal Street that include the buildings along this corridor. On Centre Street, views to the south include the upper portions of some of the stone-clad municipal buildings, including 1 Centre Street in the distance. The six-story building at 239 Canal Street is notable in the view corridor along Canal Street.

*SOHO WEST SUBAREA*

The SoHo West subarea is generally bounded by Sixth Avenue and Thompson Street to the west, Watts and Broome Streets to the north, West Broadway to the east, and Canal Street to the south. SoHo West functions as a transitional area between the SoHo Core and Hudson Square to the west. Subway access is provided at the Canal Street station for the A/C/E trains at Canal Street and Sixth Avenue. The subarea contains a mix of land uses, including mixed-use residential and commercial buildings, stand-alone commercial buildings, residential buildings and hotels. An open space, Grand Canal Court, is located at the southwest corner of the subarea.

The subarea is generally less residential and less built up than the other subareas described above with a mix of tenement-style buildings, low-rise industrial and commercial buildings, parking lots and garages, and one-story eating and drinking establishments. The varied context is characterized by tall office buildings and relatively recent hotel construction of 16 to 18 stories, and recent 9- and 10-story mixed-use developments interspersed among older low-rise single story commercial buildings, parking garages, and four- to six-story residential buildings with ground-floor retail.

The subarea is bounded by Canal Street and Sixth Avenue, which are both wide streets and important thoroughfares. Thompson Street is a narrow street with little pedestrian activity, while West Broadway and Grand Street experience the most pedestrian activity. Views within the southwest edge of the subarea are long, due to the wide streets and the broad intersection of Sixth Avenue and Canal Street. Views south from Sixth Avenue and Canal Street include the 57-story,

approximately 820-foot-tall residential tower at 56 Leonard Street in Tribeca that has a distinctive silhouette of shifting cantilevered floors on each level.

## SECONDARY STUDY AREA

The secondary study area extends approximately ¼-mile from the primary study area, is generally bounded by Greenwich Street to the west, Worth Street to the south, First Avenue to the east, and East 13th Street to the north. The secondary study area encompasses several neighborhoods, including Chinatown, Little Italy, Nolita, the East Village, the Lower East Side, Greenwich Village, Hudson Square, Tribeca, and portions of SoHo located beyond the Project Area.

### *CHINATOWN*

Chinatown, to the southeast of SoHo generally between Broadway and Leonard Street, and Mott and Grand Streets, is home to a dense population of Chinese immigrants, and is one of nine Chinatowns in New York City. Its narrow, winding streets are teeming with activity—the neighborhood is famous for its shops and restaurants. Buildings in Chinatown are generally mixed-use, five- to six-story tenement buildings with ground-floor retail and residential space above. Office buildings and other commercial buildings are concentrated along both sides of Canal Street and, to a lesser extent, along Grand Street and the Bowery. Institutional uses and community facilities predominate along Centre and Lafayette Streets south of Canal Street, abutting the neighboring Civic Center, and include the Manhattan Detention Center, New York County Family Court, and Lafayette Hall (a New York University Dormitory). Parks include the 0.99-acre Collect Pond Park and 3.23-acre Columbus Park. At the southernmost edge of the secondary study area, generally between Worth and Leonard Streets and Broadway and Baxter Street, lies the Civic Center neighborhood, which contains the court complex, City buildings, parks, and plazas.

### *LITTLE ITALY*

Mulberry Street serves as the focal point of Little Italy, which generally extends from Canal to Broome Streets. The neighborhood was once home to a large Italian population. Like neighboring Chinatown, Little Italy is primarily mixed-use, with four- to seven-story buildings. Mulberry Street and adjacent stretches of Hester and Grand Streets are home to Italian restaurants, cafés, and social clubs. Notable community facilities include the Most Precious Blood Church, which houses the shrine to San Gennaro, the neighborhood's patron saint, and namesake of the neighborhood's famous San Gennaro Festival. The church is located on Baxter Street, between Canal and Hester Streets.

### *NOLITA*

Nolita is generally bounded by Lafayette Street and the Bowery, and Broome and East Houston Streets. Nolita is east of the primary study area and, as its name implies, located north of Little Italy. Nolita is overwhelmingly mixed-use, containing four- to six-story residential buildings with ground-floor retail. The neighborhood is known for its trendy boutiques, restaurants, and cafés. Open spaces include the 0.27-acre DeSalvio Playground and the one-acre Elizabeth Street Community Garden, which is expected to be redeveloped with senior housing and public open space. Institutional and community facility uses include St. Patrick's Old Cathedral, the City's first cathedral church, located at 263 Mulberry Street, with an adjacent cemetery garden.

*LOWER EAST SIDE*

A small portion of the Lower East Side occupies the blocks generally between Houston and Grand Streets, and Mott, Chrystie, and Forsyth Streets.

The Lower East Side is characterized by older mixed-use buildings with ground-floor retail, interspersed with hotels and light manufacturing buildings. A large, relatively new residential building with commercial use on the lower floors is located at the intersection of East Houston Street and the Bowery. The building includes a Whole Foods grocery store on the ground floor. Several hotels are located along the Bowery, between Grand and Stanton Streets. A prominent land use in the area is open space—including the Houston Street Playground within the 7.85-acre Sara D. Roosevelt Park, a linear park extending from Canal to East Houston Streets between Chrystie and Forsyth Streets. Several industrial businesses are located along the west side of Chrystie Street between Stanton and Rivington Streets, and also on the Bowery. For decades, the Bowery served as the City's commercial wholesale district for kitchen and restaurant equipment. Notable institutional uses include the New Museum at 235 Bowery, near Stanton Street. Community facilities include Cascades High School at 498 Forsythe Street, the Chinatown YMCA at 273 Bowery, and the Bowery Mission—a homeless services provider at 227 Bowery.

*EAST VILLAGE*

The East Village encompasses a large portion of the secondary study area generally between First Avenue, East Houston Street, East 13th Street, and Broadway/Bowery. The East Village is characterized by a diverse mix of uses. Residential uses are typically contained within four- to six-story buildings, many with ground-floor retail. Mixed-use residential buildings line First and Second Avenues and generally consist of four- and five-story buildings with retail on the ground floor. Commercial uses include restaurants, bars, coffee shops, and other local neighborhood retail uses. St. Marks Place (East 8th Street between Third Avenue and Avenue A) reflects the arts culture of the East Village and includes restaurants, cafés, music shops, tattoo parlors, and antique stores. The largest open space is the 1.4-acre First Park. There are many institutional and community facility uses, including Cooper Union at the intersection of Astor Place and Third and Fourth Avenues. The Fourth Arts Block is an association comprised of 13 non-profit cultural and community organizations located on East 4th Street, providing performance and rehearsal space for dance and theatre groups.

*GREENWICH VILLAGE*

The portion of Greenwich Village located within the secondary study area generally between Broadway, West Houston Street, West 13th Street, and Fifth and Sixth Avenues. Greenwich Village is a largely residential neighborhood with active ground floors along major streets such as Sixth Avenue, Bleecker Street, and West 3rd Street. New York University has a predominant presence in the secondary study area. The blocks surrounding Washington Square Park have historically been home to New York University. Along LaGuardia Place, north of Bleecker Street, sit New York University's complex of three apartment buildings known as University Village, constructed in the 1960s and designed by I.M. Pei. New York University's expansion is currently under construction north of Houston Street between Mercer and Bleecker Streets, directly to the east of University Village. When complete, the new mixed-use development will provide new academic space, student housing, office space, athletic facilities, and performing arts space. New York University buildings and facilities are generally located between Bleecker and West 8th Streets, from Washington Square Park to Broadway.

Another prominent land use in the secondary study area is open space, including the 9.75-acre Washington Square Park, one of the best known of the City's parks.

The remaining portions of the study area are characterized by mixed-use residential buildings with restaurants, shops, and other local retail uses on the ground floors. Bleecker and MacDougal Streets contain a prevalence of eating and drinking establishments. The Angelika Film Center, a popular commercial venue for independent and foreign films, is located at the northeast corner of West Houston and Mercer Streets.

*SOUTH VILLAGE*

The blocks bounded by West Broadway, West Houston Street, Sixth Avenue, and Watts Street are part of the South Village neighborhood. Although four- to six-story residential buildings with ground-floor retail spaces are found along Thompson and Sullivan Streets, the stretch of Sullivan Street between Broome and Spring Streets has a more residential character due to fewer retail spaces on the ground floors. The area is framed by two newer mixed-use developments along Sixth Avenue: 10 Sullivan Street and One Vandam, which have space for commercial uses on the lower floors, including God's Love We Deliver, a facility serving meals to the community. Open spaces include the 0.64-acre Vesuvio Playground and 0.15-acre Father Fagan Park.

*HUDSON SQUARE*

Hudson Square is located on the west side of Sixth Avenue between West Houston and Canal Streets. Most recently rezoned in 2013 to allow for residential expansion, the neighborhood is characterized by new tall residential towers such as 70 Charlton and 565 Broome Streets, that are 20- to 24-story modern glass and steel façades, as well as full lot-coverage buildings that originally housed printing businesses. Remnants of historic three-story townhomes are present in the northern portion of the neighborhood. The neighborhood also contains transportation infrastructure (entrance and exit ramps for the Holland Tunnel), located at the intersection of Broome, Varick, Watts, and Hudson Streets. Open spaces include the 0.22-acre Duarte Square Park, the 0.58-acre Spring Street Park (formerly SoHo Square) and a 0.16-acre public plaza at the Dominick Hotel.

*TRIBECA*

Tribeca is located to the south and southwest of the primary study area, generally between Canal and Leonard Streets and Broadway and Greenwich Avenue. Historically known for its commercial and manufacturing uses, Tribeca is characterized by industrial and commercial seven- to eleven-story loft buildings that have been converted to residential use. On narrow east–west streets and on north–south Washington Street, there are some smaller residential lots with five- to six-story buildings. Commercial uses are largely ground-floor neighborhood retail spaces, including restaurants and coffee shops, as well as art galleries. The western portion of Tribeca contains the ramps and related transportation infrastructure for the Holland Tunnel.

## 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.

In the future with the Proposed Actions (the "With Action" condition), the Proposed Actions would facilitate development that supports the vision of SoHo and NoHo as vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods. 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 neighborhood. The Proposed Actions are intended to leverage the neighborhood's unique assets and features to realize this vision.

*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, and community facility uses 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 with the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would allow residential use, expand the supply of affordable housing through Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH), and expand the types of commercial and community facilities allowed beyond the current narrow band of permitted light manufacturing and limited commercial uses. The Proposed Actions would enhance the mix of uses found in SoHo/NoHo by allowing residential use and expanding commercial and community facility uses. The zoning changes would allow for residential conversion and infill development in historic districts and present opportunities for more substantial new residential development and affordable housing production in areas beyond the historic districts. Existing JLWQA would remain or could be converted to standard residences. The Proposed Actions would expand the types of commercial uses allowed in the primary study area to include uses such as theaters, restaurants, bakeries, bookstores, clothing stores, salons, and drug stores. With the Proposed Actions, community facilities such as libraries, museums, and medical offices would be allowed as-of-right.

Under the Proposed Actions, new residential use within the historic cores would be afforded floor area ratio (FAR) that is comparable to the allowable FAR for non-residential uses under the existing zoning. Within the historic cores, the proposed residential densities coupled with the contextual zoning requirements would result in a building form that is more consistent with the existing loft building context. Further, by allowing residential use and expanded commercial and community facilities uses on an as-of-right basis, the Proposed Actions would allow the adaptive reuse of vacant non-residential space in existing buildings. This option could provide building owners within the historic cores the flexibility to utilize existing floor area in a multitude of ways as an alternative to demolition and new construction, and could help the City's economic recovery from the pandemic.

The Proposed Actions would eliminate outdated ground floor restrictions and allow retail use as-of-right, including restaurants and bars, and would lift restrictions to allow retail stores larger than 15,000 sf, consistent with existing retail on Broadway. The mix of uses that define the character of the neighborhood have also raised quality of life issues affecting residents and businesses. These issues relate to commercial loading, street and sidewalk congestion, parking, and trash. Businesses and residents have expressed concerns that any new development under the Proposed Actions could exacerbate these issues. In response, as part of the Neighborhood Plan, DCP will collaborate with DOT and the City of New York Department of Sanitation (DSNY) on potential non-zoning strategies to address quality of life issues, including commercial deliveries, residential online package deliveries, taxi pick-up/drop-offs, and commercial waste. These ongoing strategy discussions may be informed by other Citywide initiatives that are beyond the scope of the Proposed Actions. These initiatives will be implemented irrespective of the Proposed Actions and are described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy."

Physical culture establishments such as gyms and health and fitness clubs would be allowed as-of-right. The Proposed Actions would allow more community-oriented uses including educational, arts, and cultural uses. As noted above, some of these uses have been allowed in the Project Area, but typically as a result of onerous discretionary approvals processes that can take years. The Proposed Actions would replace the obsolete zoning with rational use regulations for SoHo/NoHo that reflect current trends, support the existing and future residential populations, and enhance the commercial viability of the neighborhood. The Proposed Actions would support new residential and commercial development in an area with excellent transit access while simultaneously strengthening the existing historic character of SoHo and NoHo.

The Proposed Actions would support the historic context of the SoHo–Cast Iron Historic District and Extension and the NoHo Historic District and Extension. Most of the primary study area lies within these NYCHDs, but also includes portions of other NYCHDs, as described in Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources." The Proposed Actions would limit development to contextual infill development throughout much of the historic cores. Under existing conditions, special permits and zoning variances are often needed to allow building forms appropriate for the historic district context and deemed acceptable by LPC—a trend expected to continue in the absence the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would establish bulk regulations that more appropriately respond to neighborhood context and allow LPC to shape the building form in a manner appropriate to the neighborhood and the immediate context without the need for separate land use actions.

In areas on the periphery of the primary study area that can accommodate more dense development and housing production, the Proposed Actions would allow developments that are in keeping with an existing varied context that includes taller buildings. Bulk regulations tailored to SoHo/NoHo would encourage a range of heights and building forms, allowing sufficient flexibility for buildings to achieve the development goals identified by the community while addressing unique site conditions, and reflecting the existing built character of the neighborhood. The range of permitted heights would address the existing low-scale context of the historic districts while allowing limited portions of buildings to rise higher on certain blocks and frontages. Contextual zoning envelopes would require maximum and minimum base heights for new developments that are respective, and preserve the existing scale of the SoHo–Cast Iron Historic District and Extension and NoHo Historic District and Extension. The Proposed Actions would reinforce the built form in SoHo/NoHo.

The Proposed Actions would support the cultural legacy of SoHo/NoHo by expanding opportunities for affordable housing, updating live-work provisions in the zoning to accommodate

expanded home occupations, and allowing more community facilities on an as-of-right basis such as non-profit museums and galleries, libraries, and cultural and community centers. Affordable housing is a challenge for artists and others in the creative industry. According to a report prepared by the City Comptroller, between 2008 and 2017, Manhattan neighborhoods south of 96th Street lost residents in creative occupations to more affordable neighborhoods in the City, with the greatest increases in the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bushwick and Bed-Stuy and the Upper Manhattan neighborhoods of Washington Heights, Inwood, and Marble Hill.[3] The affordable housing created under MIH would make it easier for artists and workers in creative industries to live in SoHo/NoHo, potentially in proximity to jobs in the creative industry. Moreover, the Proposed Actions would apply flexible home occupation provisions that would allow existing and future residents in SoHo/NoHo to accommodate live-work—including long time artists and others that work in creative industries.

The Proposed Actions would be consistent with and supportive of *Where We Live NYC*, which identifies strategies such as the removal of regulatory barriers to affordable housing. Data from DCP indicates that household income is significantly greater in SoHo/NoHo as compared to Manhattan and New York City as a whole: 41 percent of households in SoHo/NoHo earn more than $200,000, compared to 23 percent in Manhattan and 11 percent Citywide. At the same time, an overwhelming percentage of SoHo/NoHo's population is white (non-Hispanic) at 78 percent (12 percent is Asian, 6 percent is Hispanic, and 2 percent is Black). The Proposed Actions would facilitate equitable housing development by increasing housing opportunities for low-income New Yorkers, including people of color.

Therefore, the Proposed Actions' effects on land use, zoning, and public policy would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

*Socioeconomic Conditions*

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on socioeconomic conditions, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As 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 Project Area or larger study area.

With regard to direct displacement, the Proposed Actions would result in the displacement of 60 residents in 32 units and an estimated 486 employees at 52 firms. The displacement would not result in significant adverse direct residential or business and institutional impacts in the study area. The directly displaced residents do not represent a significant portion of the study area population, and they do not have socioeconomic characteristics that differ markedly from the study area population as a whole. The potentially displaced businesses and institutions provide goods and services that would still be found within the study area and would continue to be available to local residents and businesses. None of the businesses or institutions serve a customer base that is uniquely dependent upon their location within the study area, nor are they subject to regulations or publicly adopted plans aimed at preserving, enhancing, or otherwise protecting them in their current location.

[3] https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/the-creative-economy/

With regard to indirect residential displacement, under the RWCDS the Proposed Actions would result in an incremental 1,829 dwelling units (DUs) and nearly 3,500 new area residents. For most neighborhoods within the study area, including most of the primary study area, the mixed-income composition of the new population would result in overall average household income that is lower than the average household income of the existing population. Study area median market rents are already above what is affordable for low-income households, with most low-income renters residing in protected rental units and planned development focused on a luxury market. The estimated average annual household income in the study area is $191,964, which is nearly $35,000 higher than that of Manhattan overall ($157,156), and over $90,000 higher than that of New York City overall ($100,958). Within the primary study area, incomes are even higher with average annual incomes of $244,317 in NoHo and $258,259 in SoHo. The Proposed Actions would grow the inventory of protected units in the area by creating affordable housing through the MIH program, potentially slowing trends of increasing rents and maintaining a more diverse mix of incomes within the subareas as compared to the No Action condition. With regard to indirect business displacement, the Project Area and broader study area have well-established residential and commercial markets such that the Proposed Actions would not introduce new economic activities or significantly alter or accelerate existing economic patterns. The addition of new residents would increase demand for the goods and services provided by existing businesses. The Proposed Actions would not result in significant indirect business displacement, and therefore would not indirectly substantially reduce employment or have an impact on the economic viability in any specific industry or category of business.

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

*Open Space*

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on 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 to open space due to the added demand placed on active and passive open spaces in an area that has limited available open space resources. As noted in Chapter 5, "Open Space," the study area is currently underserved by open space. The total, active, and passive open space ratios would each decrease by approximately two percent. In underserved areas, a one percent decline in open space ratios is used as the threshold to determine an impact. As a result, it is concluded that the Proposed Actions would result in a significant adverse impact to open space. The lack of open space in the study area indicates that open space is not a defining feature of neighborhood character. Measures being considered to mitigate the impact include the creation of additional passive open space in or near the Project Area, or the provision of funding for open space improvements to partially mitigate the significant adverse open space impact. In addition, irrespective of the Proposed Actions, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) will create two passive open spaces on sites that are part of a planned New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) infrastructure project. The sites are located at East 4th Street (west of Bowery) and Grand and Lafayette Streets. The planned DEP project would provide half an acre of open space combined. Because open space is not a defining

feature of neighborhood character, the significant adverse open space impact would not result in an impact to neighborhood character.

*Shadows*

The Proposed Actions would result in development that would cast new shadow on sunlight-sensitive resources in the vicinity of the Project Area. Five resources would experience significant adverse shadow impacts. As discussed in detail in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the Proposed Actions would potentially cause significant adverse shadow impacts to sunlight-sensitive resources, including the stained-glass windows of the Most Precious Blood Church on Baxter Street, the garden in the rear yard of the Merchant's House Museum on East 4th Street, Grand Canal Court (basketball courts with benches and game tables) at Canal Street and Sixth Avenue, a Greenstreet feature with several trees next to the Grand Canal Court, and Petrosino Square—a small park at Centre and Spring Streets. In addition, a future planned open space on East 4th Street between Lafayette Street and Bowery would experience a significant adverse shadow impact.

Potential mitigation for the impact to the Most Precious Blood Church, which would affect the stained-glass windows of the church, could include the provision of artificial lighting to simulate the effect of direct sunlight, or implementing some other mutually agreed-upon measure to improve the clarity of the sunlight and ambient light reaching the interior sanctuary. Potential mitigation measures for the impacts to open space resources could include a reorientation of the height or bulk configuration of a proposed development to reduce or avoid incremental shadow; evaluating the feasibility of relocating sensitive plantings or uses to locations within the open space to an area that is less affected or unaffected by incremental shadow; modifying the layout of the open space to minimize the effects of the incremental shadow on sensitive plantings or uses; and replacing plantings in the affected area with similar but more shade-tolerant plantings.

As noted above, open space is not a defining feature of neighborhood character, and the shadows that would be cast on the existing and planned future open space resources would not result in an impact to neighborhood character. Similarly, the Most Precious Blood Church is not a defining element of neighborhood character. Shadows affecting the stained-glass windows of the church would not constitute a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

*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. 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 direct and indirect impacts to historic resources. In addition, the Proposed Actions would result in archaeological impacts; however, because archaeological resources are not a defining feature of neighborhood character, these impacts would not constitute a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

Most of the primary study area lies within the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District and Extension and the NoHo Historic District and Extension. LPC regulates development, including demolitions, new construction, and enlargements, in NYCHDs and with respect to individually-designated New York City Landmarks (NYCLs), as required by the New York City Landmarks Law. In addition to NYCHDs, three State/National Register of Historic Places (S/NR)-listed historic districts are located within the primary study area, including the portion of the SoHo Historic District that falls outside the boundaries of NYCHD, the Bowery Historic District, and the Chinatown and Little

Italy Historic District. The Proposed Actions would result in the demolition of buildings in these historic districts.

Properties that are NYCLs, in NYCHDs, or pending designation as landmarks are protected under the New York City Landmarks Law. The potential demolition of buildings on projected and potential development sites within NYCHDs or individual NYCLs would not result in a significant adverse impact. However, because S/NR-listed historic districts are not protected by the New York City Landmarks Law, the demolition of contributing buildings to these historic districts may result in a direct significant adverse impact.

Within the S/NR-listed SoHo Historic District (the portion not located within the NYCHD that extends roughly to Thompson Street to the southwest), two buildings on Projected Development Site 5, two buildings on Projected Development Site 7, and a building on Projected Development Site 20 would be demolished. According to the S/NR nomination form, the buildings in the SoHo Historic District are not cast-iron structures, but "contribute to the area's historicity as an industrial district." The demolition of these five buildings within the S/NR-listed portion of the historic district would not result in a significant adverse impact to the overall SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District and Extension as development on the remaining 61 development sites would be subject to LPC's review and approval.

Within the S/NR-listed Bowery Historic District, four buildings on Projected Development Sites 1 and 13 would be demolished. The buildings in the Bowery Historic District include a one-story utilitarian building, two heavily altered former residences, and a one-story former gas station. The resources at 348 Bowery and 358 Bowery are examples of the utilitarian buildings that characterize the historic district as an important commercial and industrial district. The demolition of these buildings would result in a direct significant adverse impact to the historic district.

Within the S/NR-listed Chinatown and Little Italy Historic District, three utilitarian buildings on Projected Development Sites 15, 24, and 27 would be demolished. The buildings in the Chinatown and Little Italy Historic District include commercial buildings dating from the first half of the 20-century. The demolition of these buildings would result in a direct significant adverse impact to the historic district.

The buildings that would be demolished in the S/NR-listed Bowery Historic District include a one-story utilitarian building, two heavily altered former residences, and a former one-story gas station. The buildings that would be demolished in the S/NR-listed Chinatown and Little Italy Historic District include a factory building and one- and three-story commercial buildings. While the demolition of these seven buildings may be considered a significant adverse impact to the historic districts, their demolition would not constitute a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character because most buildings within the primary study area are within NYCHDs and would be protected by the New York City Landmarks Law. As described above, the defining features of neighborhood character include a varied building typology, including the well-preserved, high lot coverage, cast-iron and masonry loft buildings in SoHo/NoHo that would remain with the Proposed Actions. Therefore, the direct impact to the S/NR-listed Bowery Historic District and the S/NR-listed Chinatown and Little Italy Historic District would not constitute a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

In limited locations, the Proposed Actions would result in development that could change the setting of historic resources by allowing taller buildings that are not consistent with the scale of nearby historic districts or buildings, resulting in an indirect, or contextual significant adverse impact. The Proposed Actions would result in indirect significant adverse impacts to S/NR-listed

Bowery Historic District and the portion of the S/NR-listed SoHo Historic District not located within the NYCHD boundaries. In addition, contextual impacts would occur with respect to two individual NYCLs, including the Samuel Tredwell Skidmore House at 37 East 4th Street, and the Old Merchant's House at 29 East 4th Street. The impacts to these individual NYCLs are attributed to the projected and potential developments that could be considerably taller than the architectural resources and could alter the resources' setting.

The contextual impacts would be primarily experienced in the SoHo West subarea generally along Thompson Street and West Broadway south of Watts Street, and the NoHo-Bowery subarea, along the west side of Bowery between East 3rd and East 4th Streets. Because the contextual impacts would be largely limited to these two locations on the periphery of the primary study area, and the Proposed Actions are not expected to result in contextual impacts elsewhere in SoHo/NoHo, the limited geographic extent of the contextual impacts would not result in an overall impact to neighborhood character. A varied building typology, which includes taller buildings interspersed among shorter buildings, and SoHo/NoHo's high-lot coverage loft buildings are a defining feature of neighborhood character that would be unaffected by the indirect impacts to these historic resources. Therefore, the indirect significant adverse impacts would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

The Proposed Actions would implement bulk regulations and other urban design controls for new developments throughout SoHo/NoHo. The proposed bulk regulations would respond to neighborhood context and provide flexibility to minimize the effects of new developments and enlargements on neighboring buildings throughout the primary study area. Further, within NYCHDs, the Proposed Actions would allow LPC to shape building forms in a manner appropriate to the neighborhood and the immediate context without the need for separate land use actions. The building envelopes created under the proposed zoning would enable LPC to refine base heights further to allow for improved cornice alignment for developments within NYCHDs. This would potentially result in overall benefits to the NYCHDs within the primary study area.

*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 not result in a significant adverse impact to urban design or visual resources. The Proposed Actions would improve the pedestrian experience by replacing underdeveloped and vacant sites in the primary study area with new mixed-use buildings with active ground-floor spaces. Within the historic cores, the Proposed Actions would maintain existing density while allowing conversions of space of existing buildings to new uses and mixed-use infill developments that would be consistent with the height and form of existing historic buildings. Beyond the historic cores, the Proposed Actions would support housing production in areas that can accommodate the most density due to the area's excellent transit access, the width of adjacent streets, and the varying building heights and forms that characterize the periphery of the primary study area.

The Proposed Actions would introduce new primarily mixed-use residential and commercial buildings that would enhance the pedestrian experience and contribute to the vibrant urban design character of the primary study area. Many of the projected and potential development sites are currently occupied by low-rise buildings and vacant or underdeveloped lots, which are not

consistent with the urban design character of the Project Area, which is largely characterized by four- to 13-story historic loft buildings within the historic cores of SoHo and NoHo, and a more varied mix of building typology in the transitional areas on periphery of the primary study area.

The contextual zoning introduced with the Proposed Actions would require base heights that are responsive to the context of existing buildings. In the Broadway-Houston Street subarea, Canal Street subarea, SoHo Core, and NoHo Core subareas—which are characterized by three historic districts with varied built forms, special subarea provisions would support loft-like building forms that reflect and respect the unique existing and historic character of these areas. Because changes to buildings and new construction in NYCHDs are subject to LPC's review and approval, the new building forms allowed by the Proposed Actions would be determined in a manner appropriate to the historic character of these areas and the immediate context without the need for separate land use actions. The bulk regulations under the Proposed Actions would allow LPC to refine base heights further to allow for improved cornice alignment for developments within NYCHDs.

In the SoHo West, SoHo East, and NoHo Bowery subareas that are framed by wide streets and generally located outside of historic districts, special subarea regulations would allow sufficient flexibility to achieve the development and housing goals of the Proposed Actions while responding to neighborhood context within and around the primary study area. The Proposed Actions would facilitate higher density developments at the southwest, southeast, and northeast portions of the primary study area. The SoHo West, SoHo East, and NoHo–Bowery subareas are located at the outer edges of the historic neighborhoods and along primary transportation corridors and subway access. Under the Proposed Actions, these subareas, which already contain a variety of buildings of different forms, sizes, ages, designs, and cladding materials, would accommodate the largest and densest of the developments expected under the Proposed Actions. The projected and potential development sites in these subareas are characterized by low-density buildings and underdeveloped sites under existing conditions. The Proposed Actions would facilitate development that is compatible with the existing varied urban design context of the subareas.

The Proposed Actions would not obstruct views of visual resources in the primary or secondary study areas. Some views of visual resources in the NoHo Core subarea may be partially obscured, but other prominent views of these buildings would remain unchanged.

The Proposed Actions would contribute to the existing urban design of the SoHo and NoHo neighborhoods, maintaining the scale of development within the historic cores while generally providing for larger and taller developments along the perimeter, in keeping with similar developments within the secondary study area neighborhoods. Therefore, these effects to urban design would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

*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 not result in any significant adverse traffic impacts, but would result in a pedestrian impact at one sidewalk and a transit impact affecting one street stair at the Canal Street (A/C/E) subway station on the Eighth Avenue Line.

A significant adverse pedestrian impact would be experienced at the north sidewalk on Canal Street between Lafayette and Centre Streets during the Saturday peak hour. The impact would

occur at a point where pedestrian flow is constrained by the presence of a subway station elevator located on the sidewalk adjacent to the curb. As relocating this elevator or widening the sidewalk at this location would likely prove impracticable, in the absence of mitigation, the significant adverse impact would remain unmitigated. The transit impact would affect stair S6/M8 at the Canal Street (A/C/E) station. Stair S6/M8 is located near Canal and Thompson Streets. Stairway widening is the most common form of mitigation for significant stairway impacts. Another potential mitigation measure would be to add vertical capacity (i.e., adding an elevator, escalator, or additional stairway) in the vicinity of the impacted stairway. In the absence of practicable mitigation measures, the significant adverse impact to the street stairs at the Canal Street (A/C/E) subway would remain unmitigated.

While the Proposed Actions may cause an increase in pedestrian activity and additional subway riders using the Canal Street (A/C/E) station, the resulting significant adverse pedestrian and transit/subway station stair impacts would not be out of character with Canal Street, which already experiences relatively high levels of pedestrian activity on adjacent sidewalks and at nearby subway stations. For this reason, the changes in transportation due to the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact to 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. The SoHo and NoHo neighborhoods already experience relatively high ambient noise levels along major streets such as Broadway, Houston Street, and Canal Street. The noise levels in the Project Area are typical of many neighborhoods in New York City and would remain so with or without the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would not result in noise level increases that would constitute a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character. ✷