A. INTRODUCTION

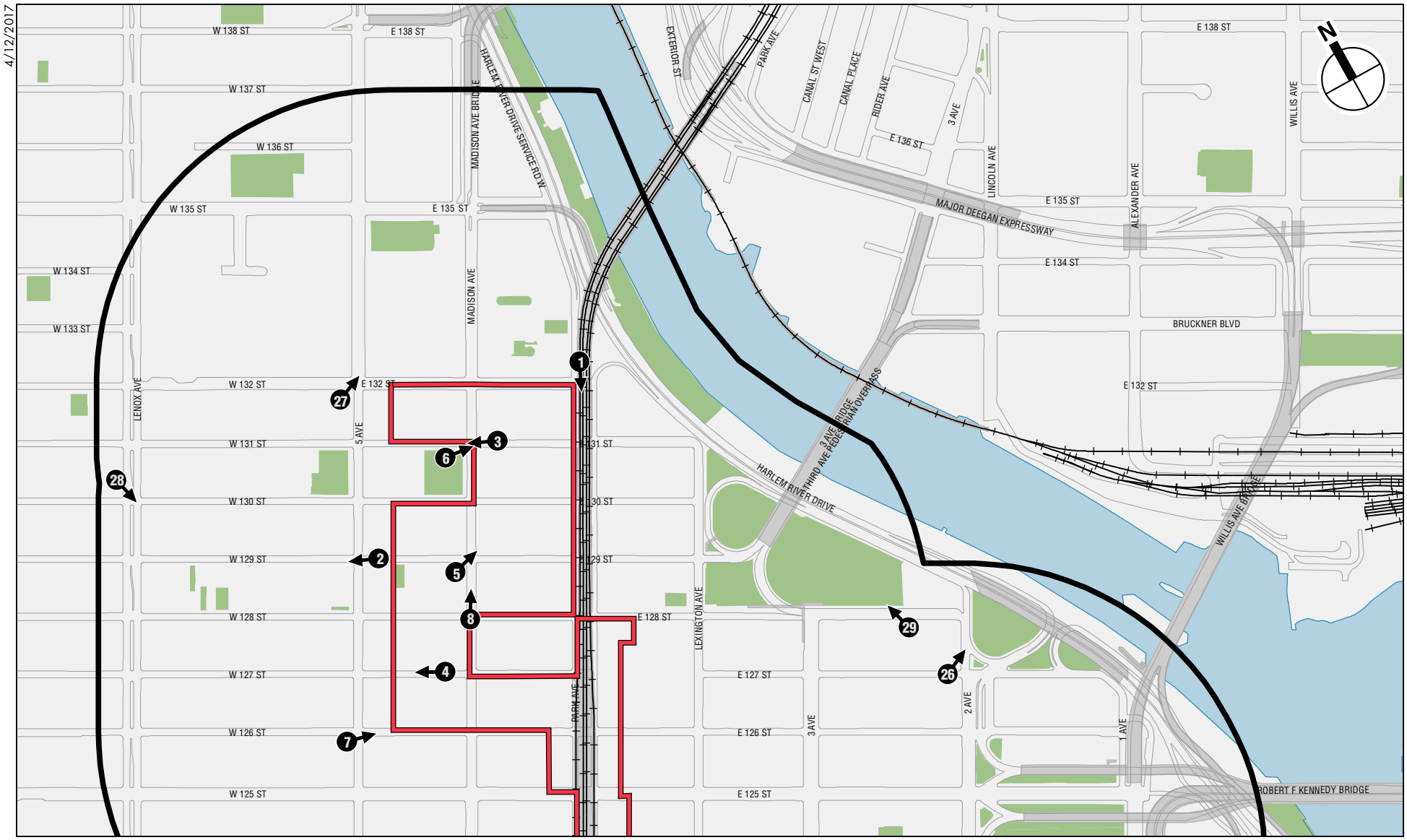
This chapter considers the potential of the Proposed Actions to affect urban design and visual resources. As defined in the 2014 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, urban design is the totality of components that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. A visual resource can include views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings, and natural resources.

Consistent with the land use study areas, the urban design and visual resources analysis considers a primary study area consistent with the rezoning area and a secondary study area that extends approximately ¼ mile from the rezoning area (see **Figures 8-1a, 8-1b, 8-1c, and 8-2**). The study areas cover the area where the Proposed Actions would be most likely to influence land use patterns and the built environment. This analysis addresses the urban design and visual resources of the primary study area and the secondary study area for existing conditions, the future without the Proposed Actions (the No Action Condition), and the future with the Proposed Actions (the With Action Condition) in the 2027 Build Year, when the proposed East Harlem Rezoning Project is expected to be completed.

Based on the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. Examples include projects that permit the modification of yard, height, and setback requirements, and projects that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed "as-of-right" or in the No Action Condition.

This analysis considers the Proposed Actions, which involve zoning map amendments, zoning text amendments, and Urban Renewal Plan amendments. These changes would allow the development of new, larger residential and commercial buildings, as well as community facilities and new light manufacturing space. Therefore, as the Proposed Actions would be expected to result in physical alterations beyond that allowed by existing zoning, it would meet the threshold for a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources.

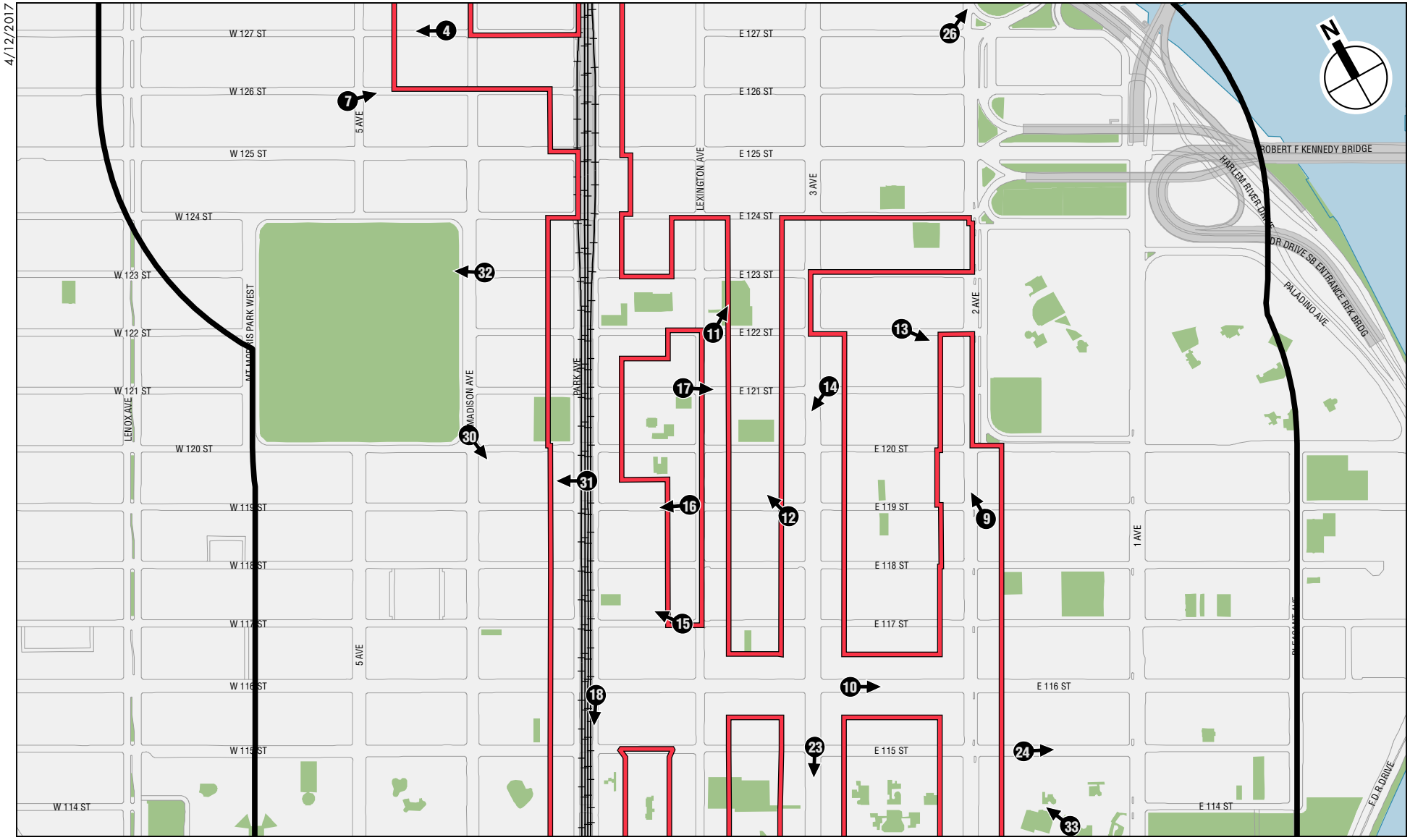
The *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines state that if the preliminary assessment shows that changes to the pedestrian environment are sufficiently significant to require greater explanation and further study, then a detailed analysis is appropriate. Examples include projects that would potentially obstruct view corridors, compete with icons in the



EAST HARLEM REZONING

Urban Design and Visual Resources Reference Map

Figure 8-1a



Primary Study Area (Project Area)

Secondary Study Area (1/4-mile boundary)

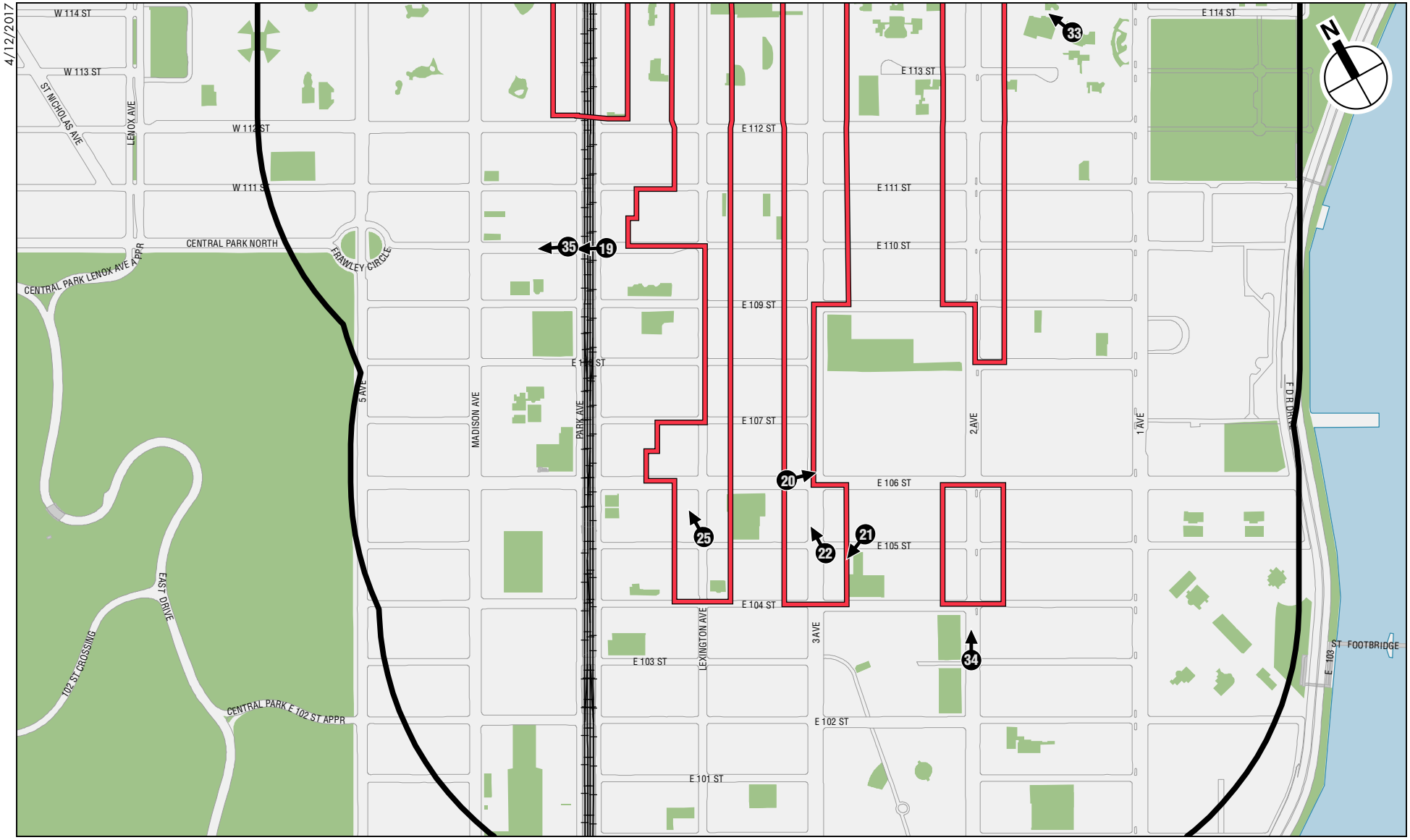
1 *Photograph View Direction and Reference Number*

0 500 FEET

EAST HARLEM REZONING

Urban Design and Visual Resources Reference Map

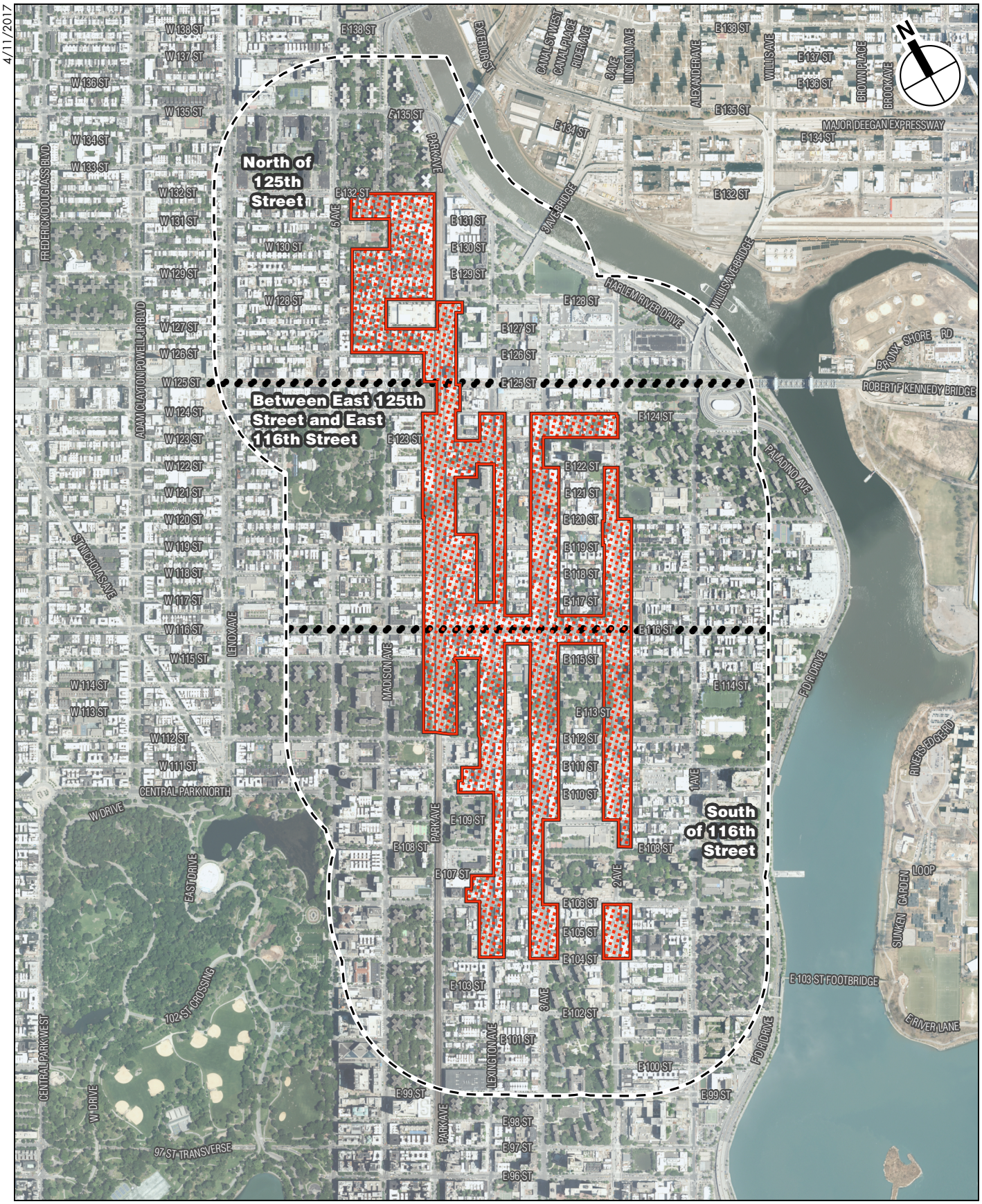
Figure 8-1b



EAST HARLEM REZONING

Urban Design and Visual Resources Reference Map

Figure 8-1c



Urban Design and Visual Resources Aerial Map

EAST HARLEM REZONING

Figure 8-2

skyline, or make substantial alterations to the streetscape of a neighborhood by noticeably changing the scale of buildings. Detailed analyses are also generally appropriate for (1) area-wide rezonings that include an increase in permitted floor area or changes in height and setback requirements; (2) general large-scale developments; or (3) projects that would result in substantial changes to the built environment of a historic district or components of a historic building that contribute to the resource's historic significance. Conditions that merit consideration for further analysis of visual resources include: (1) when the project partially or totally blocks a view corridor or a natural or built visual resource and that resource is rare in the area or considered a defining feature of the neighborhood; or (2) when the project changes urban design features so that the context of a natural or built visual resource is altered (i.e., if the project alters the street grid so that the approach to the resource changes; if the project changes the scale of surrounding buildings so that the context changes; or if the project removes lawns or other open areas that serve as a setting for the resource).

The Proposed Actions would facilitate the redevelopment of an approximately 96-block area with buildings that could be taller than existing structures, would require active ground-floor uses, and would redevelop vacant lots with new, larger buildings. The development anticipated under the reasonable worst-case development scenario (RWCDS) associated with the Proposed Actions would contain a mix of uses including housing, retail, restaurant, and community facility space.[1]

The Proposed Actions could make noticeable alterations to the Project Area and the streetscape of the surrounding area by changing the scale of buildings, and altering the streetwall by constructing new buildings on vacant or underdeveloped lots and thereby increasing activity at the street level as compared with the No Action Condition. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would meet the threshold for a detailed assessment of urban design and visual resources. This analysis is provided below.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts to the urban design character or visual resources in the primary or secondary study areas.

The Proposed Actions would allow for new residential and mixed-use developments at a greater density than what is currently permitted as-of-right in the primary study area. These actions would allow for new housing, including affordable housing, along key corridors, particularly Park, Third, and Second Avenues. The increased density would expand the customer base in the area, which would sustain existing and new businesses, thus increasing foot traffic within the area and enhancing the pedestrian experience. While the buildings that could be built under the Proposed Actions could be much taller than the existing buildings in the area, they would be similar in scale to other new buildings. New developments would be concentrated along major avenues, preserving the low-rise character of the smaller cross streets, particularly north of East 125th Street

[1] Details about the RWCDS can be found in Chapter 1, "Project Description."

where contextual zoning would be applied to ensure that new infill development complements the existing residential character by promoting consistent building height and size. The Proposed Actions would create a more consistent streetwall along the avenues, particularly along Park Avenue, which is characterized by parking lots. In addition, the Proposed Actions could potentially allow retail development on New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) property along Park, Lexington, Third, and Second Avenues, reinforcing the streetwall along these corridors between East 115th and East 112th Streets.

The Proposed Actions would also establish a Special District that would promote non-residential active ground floors, and establish urban design controls such as minimum and maximum base heights, lowering the amount of required parking, and eliminating plaza bonuses. The Proposed Actions would seek to encourage new commercial development and growth potential along the fragmented and underutilized corridors of East 125th Street, East 116th Street, Third Avenue, and Park Avenue by encouraging development on vacant sites.

Large, colorful murals add visual character and serve as a visual resource in the primary study area, with the highest concentration located along Lexington Avenue, south of East 125th Street. While many of the murals are temporary, adding visual interest to walls until new development can occur on vacant lots, the culture of public art contributes to the overall character of East Harlem. A number of existing murals could potentially lose their visibility, due to adjacent development, or be removed as a result of development expected under the With Action Condition, but vibrant street art is expected to continue to be incorporated into the neighborhood. The Proposed Actions would allow taller buildings throughout much of the Project Area. These new buildings would be constructed within the existing street grid and existing view corridors and are not expected to be affected as a result of the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would not obscure views of the three churches that are considered visual resources north of East 125th Street. Due to the presence of the Park Avenue Viaduct, views along Park Avenue would continue to be limited with the Proposed Actions. View corridors along the east-west cross streets and south of East 116th Street would remain unaffected by the Proposed Actions. The taller buildings projected along Second and Third Avenues would limit some views; however, because of the width of these avenues, views would not be eliminated.

B. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this analysis considers the effects of the Proposed Actions on the experience of a pedestrian in the study areas. The analysis of urban design relies on drawings, maps, renderings, and photographs and photographic montages taken from the perspective of a pedestrian. The assessment focuses on those project elements that have the potential to alter the built environment, or urban design, of the Project Area, which is collectively formed by the following components:

- *Streets.* For many neighborhoods, streets are the primary component of public space. The arrangement and orientation of streets define the location and flow of activity in an area, set street views, and create the blocks on which buildings and open spaces are organized. The apportionment of street space between cars, bicycles, transit, and sidewalks and the careful design of street furniture, grade, materials used, and permanent fixtures, including plantings, street lights, fire hydrants, curb cuts, or newsstands are critical to making a successful streetscape.
- *Buildings*. Buildings support streets. A building's street walls form the most common backdrop in the city for public space. A building's size, shape, setbacks, lot coverage, and placement on the zoning lot and block; the orientation of active uses; and pedestrian and vehicular entrances all play major roles in the vitality of the streetscape. The public realm also extends to building façades and rooftops, offering more opportunity to enrich the visual character of an area.
- *Open Space*. Open space includes public and private areas such as parks, yards, cemeteries, parking lots, and privately owned public spaces.
- *Natural Features*. Natural features include vegetation and geologic, topographic, and aquatic features. Rock outcroppings, steep slopes or varied ground elevation, beaches, or wetlands may help define the overall visual character of an area.
- *View Corridors and Visual Resources*. A visual resource is the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including important view corridors, views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, or natural resources.

Wind conditions also affect the pedestrian experience of a given area. Channelized wind pressure from between tall buildings and down-washed wind pressure from parallel tall buildings may cause winds that affect pedestrian comfort and safety. While the Proposed Actions could result in the construction of tall buildings within the Project Area, the location is not along the waterfront, or other location where winds from the waterfront are attenuated by buildings or natural features. Therefore, a pedestrian wind analysis is not warranted.

This analysis addresses the urban design and visual resources of the primary study area, and the secondary study area. Similar to the analysis in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the areas are discussed by subarea, including North of 125th Street; Between East 125th Street and East 116th Street; and South of East 116th Street.

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary assessment of Urban Design is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning, including projects or actions that permit the modification of yard, height, and setback requirements; and projects or actions that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed as-of-right or in the future without the Proposed Actions. Beyond a preliminary assessment, a detailed analysis may be needed for projects or actions that potentially obstruct view corridors, compete with icons in the skyline, or make substantial

alterations to the streetscape of a neighborhood by noticeably changing the scale of buildings. Detailed analyses are generally appropriate for all area-wide rezonings that include an increase in permitted floor area or changes in height and setback requirements. Therefore, a detailed analysis has been prepared that addresses the characteristics listed above for existing conditions and the No Action and With Action Conditions for a 2027 Build Year.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Proposed Actions would affect a 96-block primary study area generally bounded by East 104th Street to the south, East 132nd Street to the north, Park Avenue to the west and Second Avenue to the east (see **Figures 8-1a, 8-1b, 8-1c, and 8-2**). Contained within the boundaries of the primary study area is the area of East Harlem that would be directly affected by the Proposed Actions. This includes the projected development sites, which are expected to be redeveloped as a result of the Proposed Actions and would be likely developed under the No Action Condition and the potential development sites, which are less likely to be developed by the 2027 Build Year (see **Figure 8-3**).

The study area is developed as part of the typical Manhattan street grid with wider north-south avenues and narrower east-west cross streets creating rectangular blocks. The blocks are oriented with their shorter ends along the avenues and their longer sides along the cross streets. The primary study area is defined by a series of north-south corridors, with East 125th Street dividing the north and central sections and East 116th Street dividing the central and southern sections. The secondary study area extends an approximate ¼ mile from the boundary of the primary study area and is generally bounded by East 99th Street to the south, the Harlem River Drive and West 137th Street to the north, Fifth and Lenox Avenues to the west and First Avenue to the east. Both the primary and secondary study areas have varied FARs with smaller, mid-block lots having higher FARs and the larger lots, particularly along the boundaries of the secondary study area, having lower FARs. While most buildings rise between three to six stories in both study areas, several superblocks are developed with very tall housing complexes, particularly in the two southern subareas (see **Figure 8-4.1a, 8-4.1b, 8-4.2a, 8-4.2b, 8-4.3a, 8-4.3b, 8-5.1a, 8-5.1b, 8-5.2a, 8-5.2b, 8-5.3a, and 8-5.3b**).

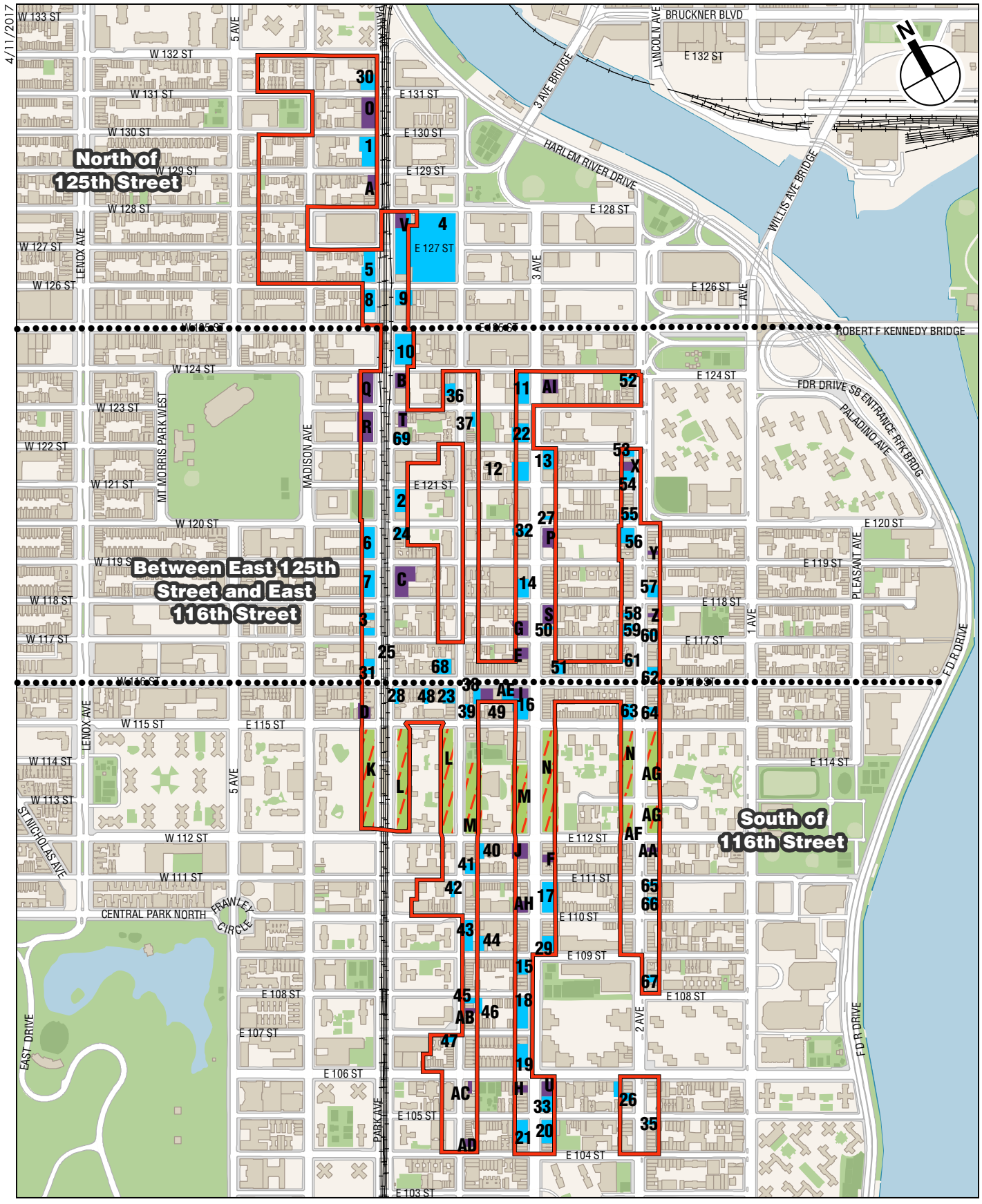
PRIMARY STUDY AREA

NORTH OF EAST 125TH STREET

Urban Design

Streets

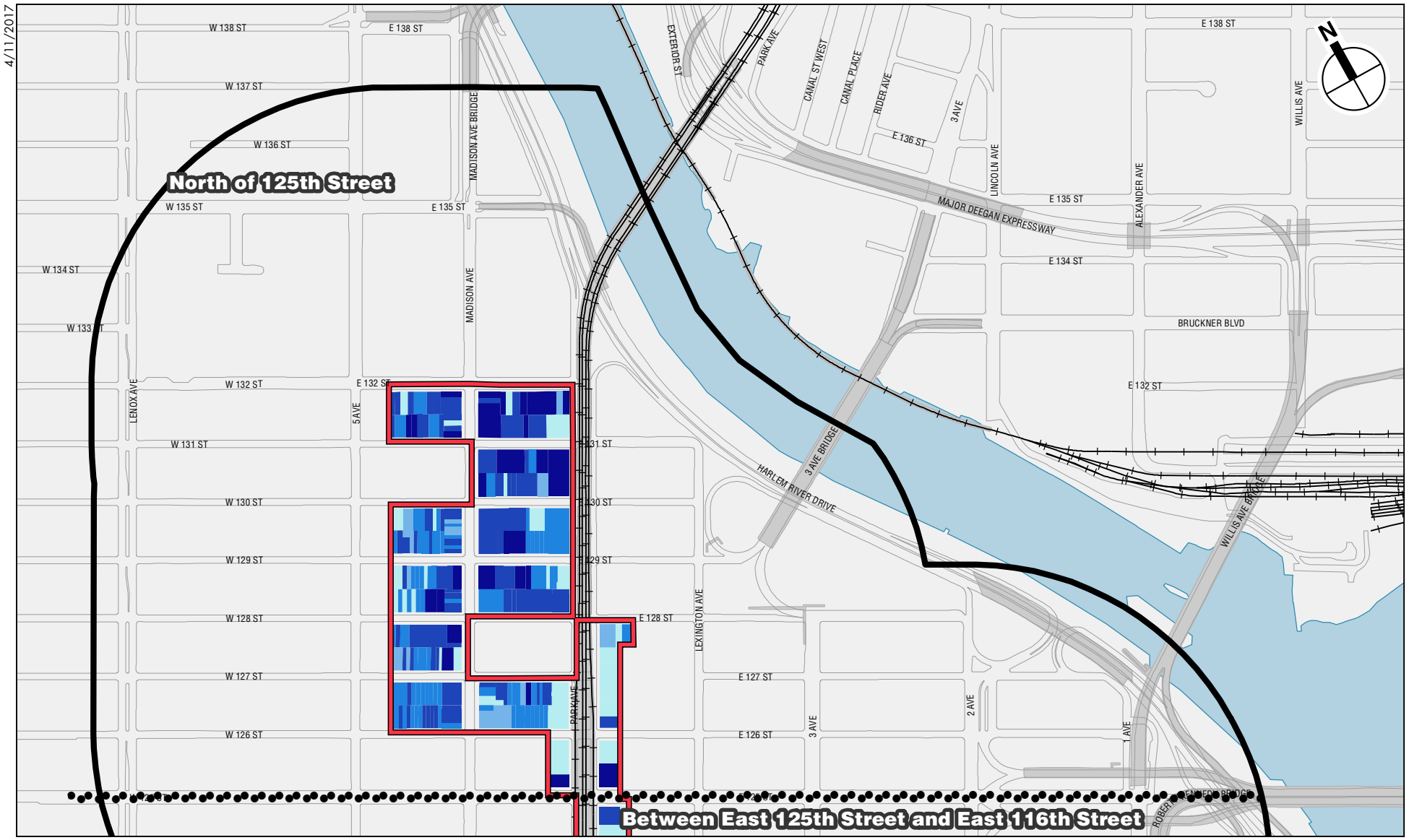
The primary study area subarea north of 125th Street contains one superblock between East 128th and East 126th Streets and between Park and Lexington Avenues where East 127th Street does not extend through the block. Within the primary study area, Park Avenue is a 140-foot-wide, north-south thoroughfare with the Park Avenue viaduct (see Chapter 7, “Historic and Cultural Resources”), an approximately 26-foot-tall, metal-



Projected and Potential Development Sites

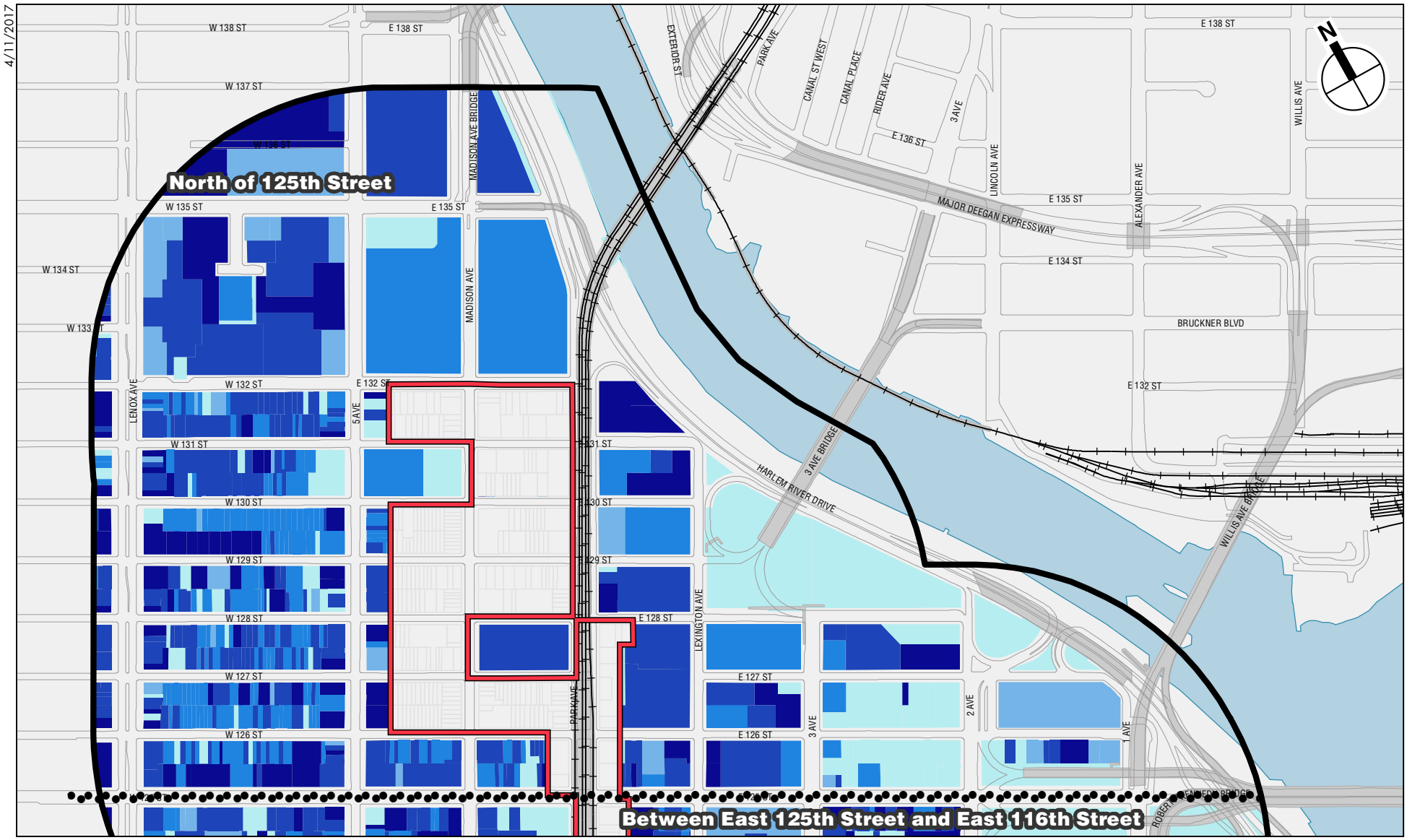
EAST HARLEM REZONING

Figure 8-3



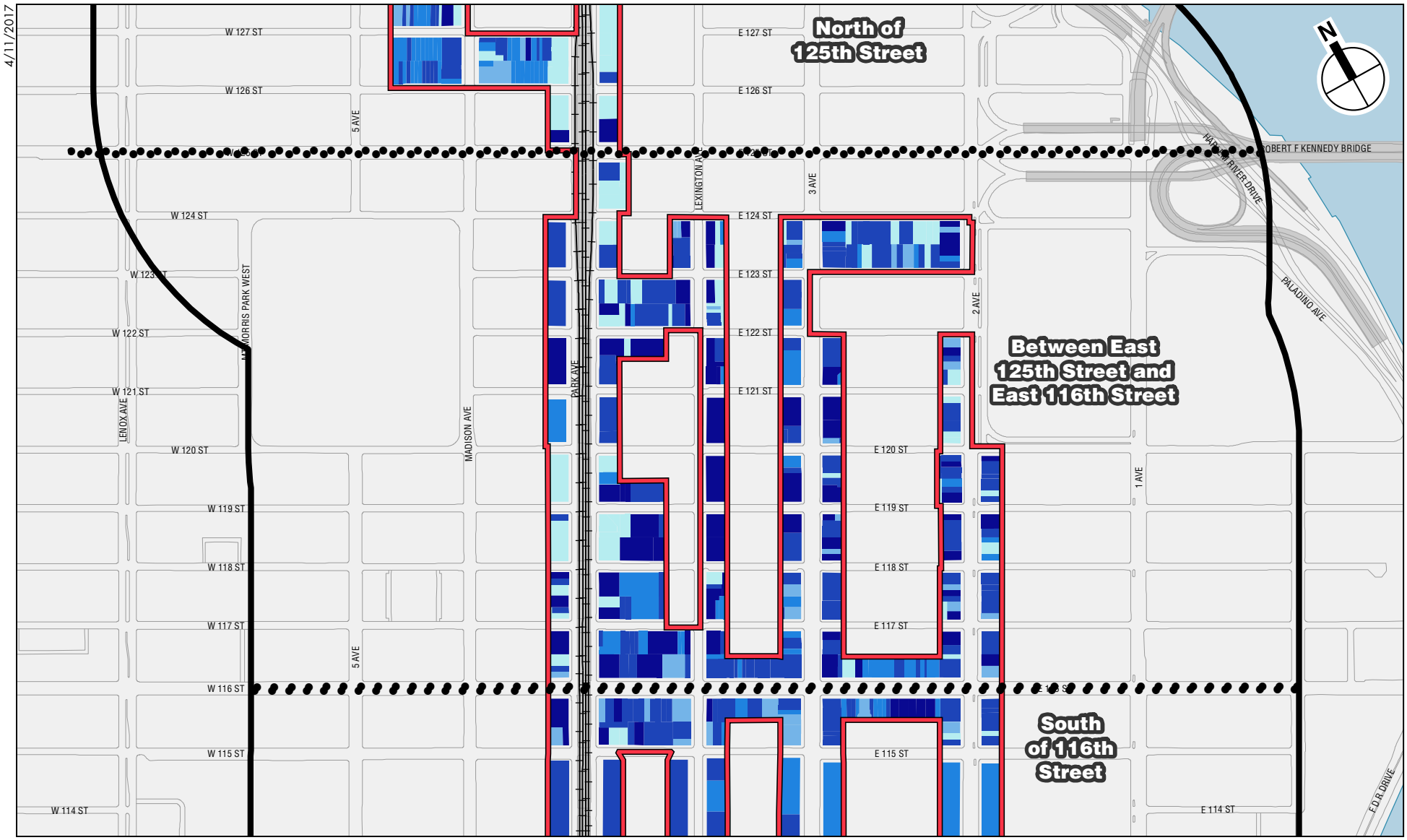
Primary Study Area Built FAR - North of 125th Street Subarea

Figure 8-4.1a

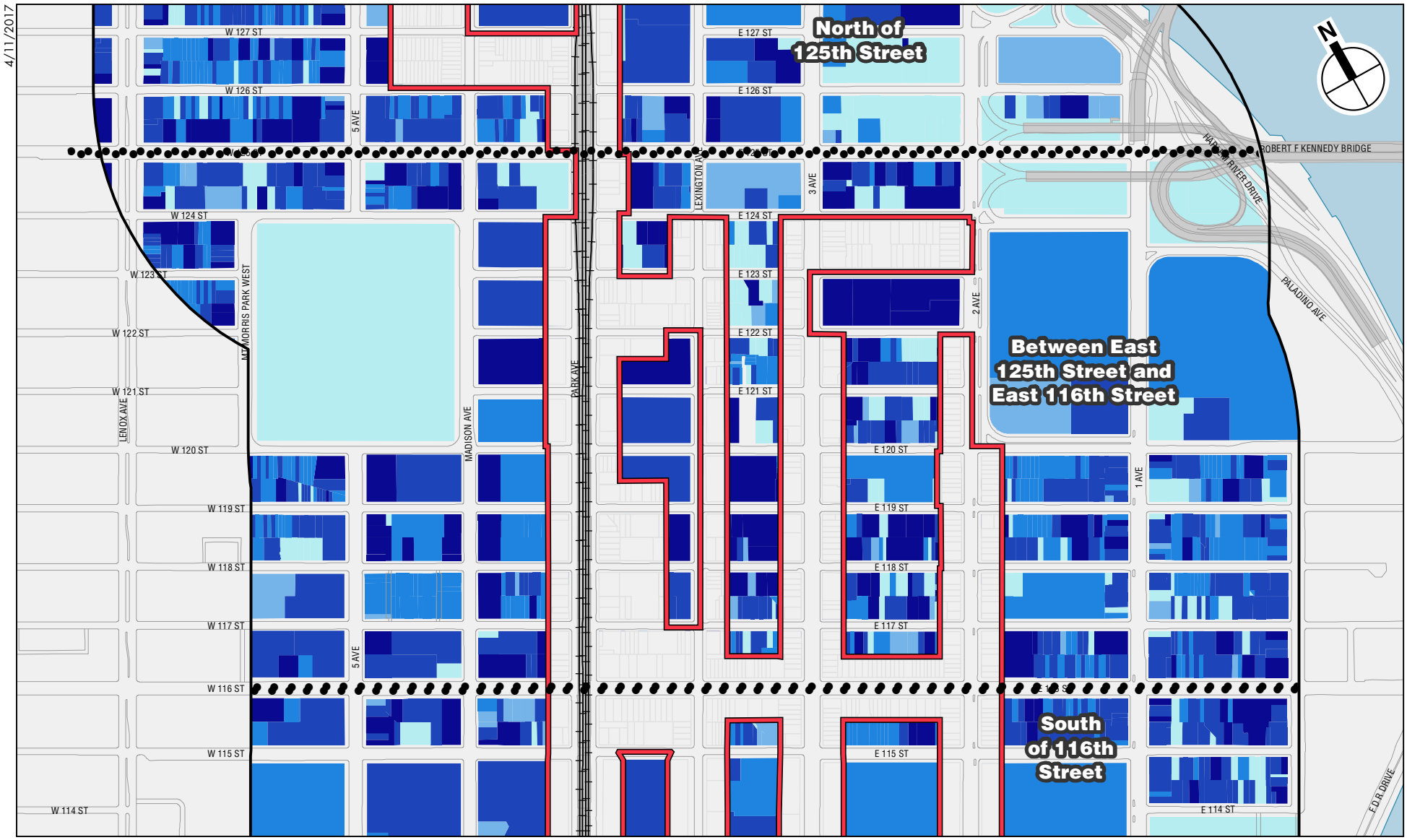


Secondary Study Area Built FAR - North of 125th Street Subarea

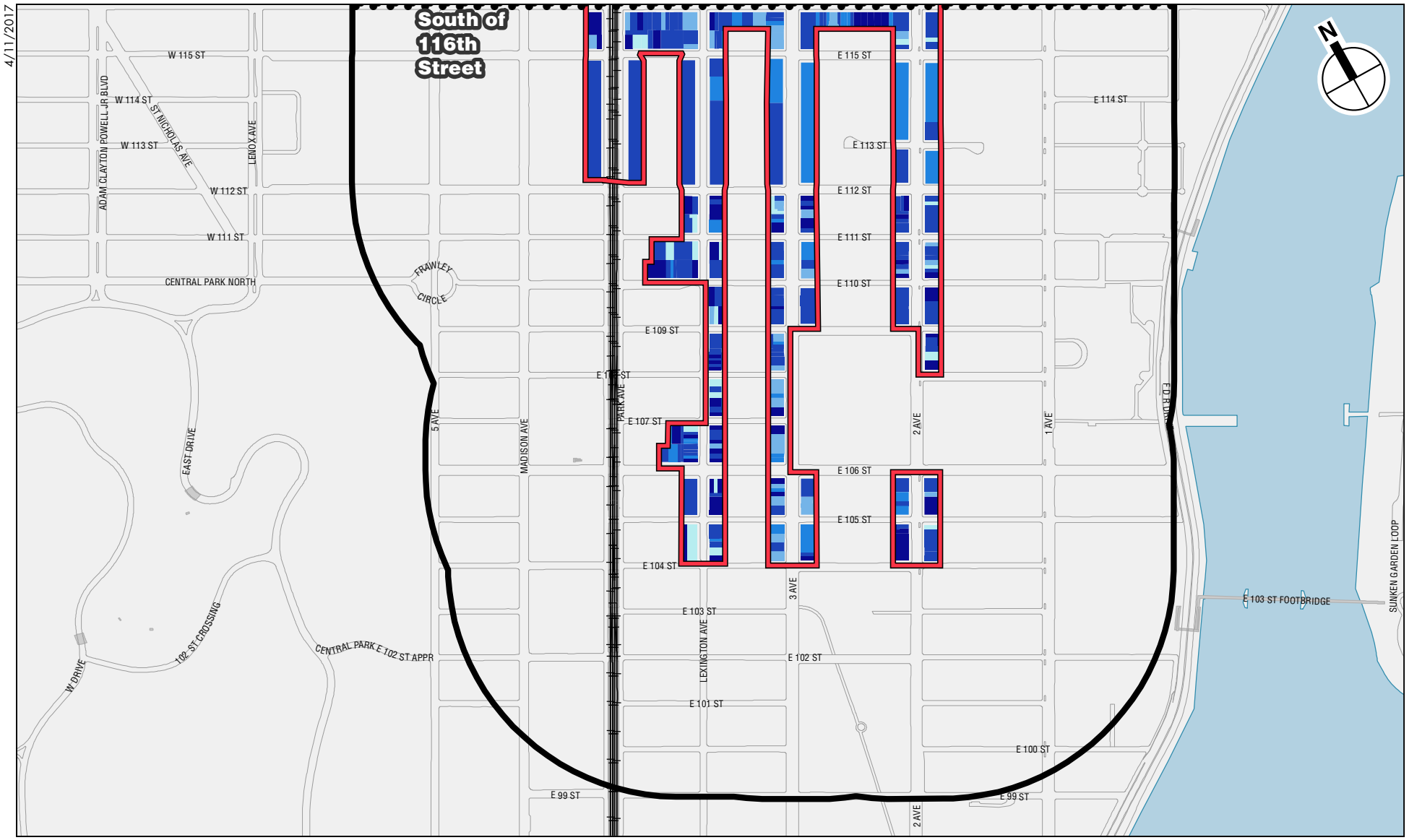
Figure 8-4.1b



Primary Study Area Built FAR - Between East 125th Street and East 116th Street Subarea

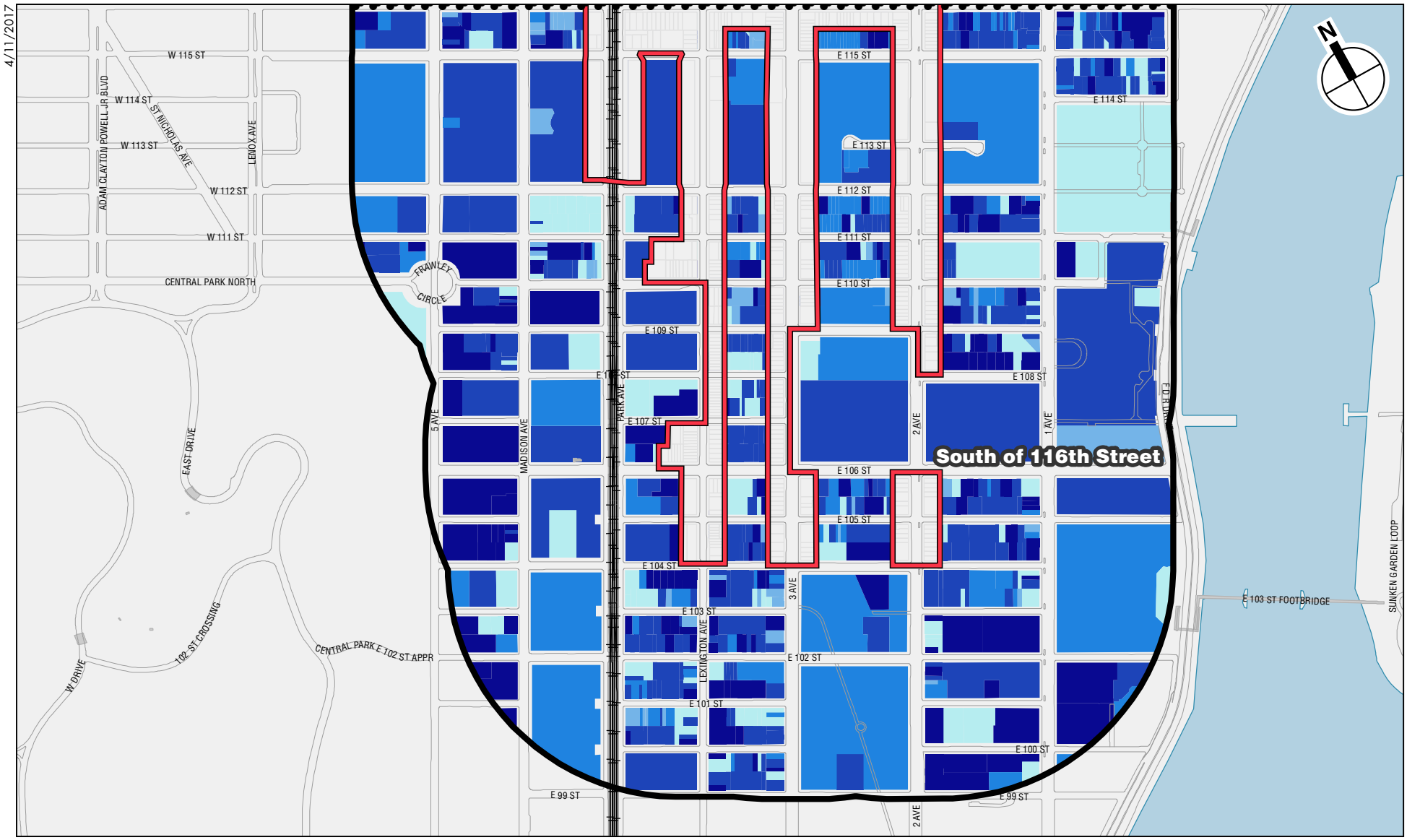


Secondary Study Area Built FAR - Between East 125th Street and East 116th Street Subarea



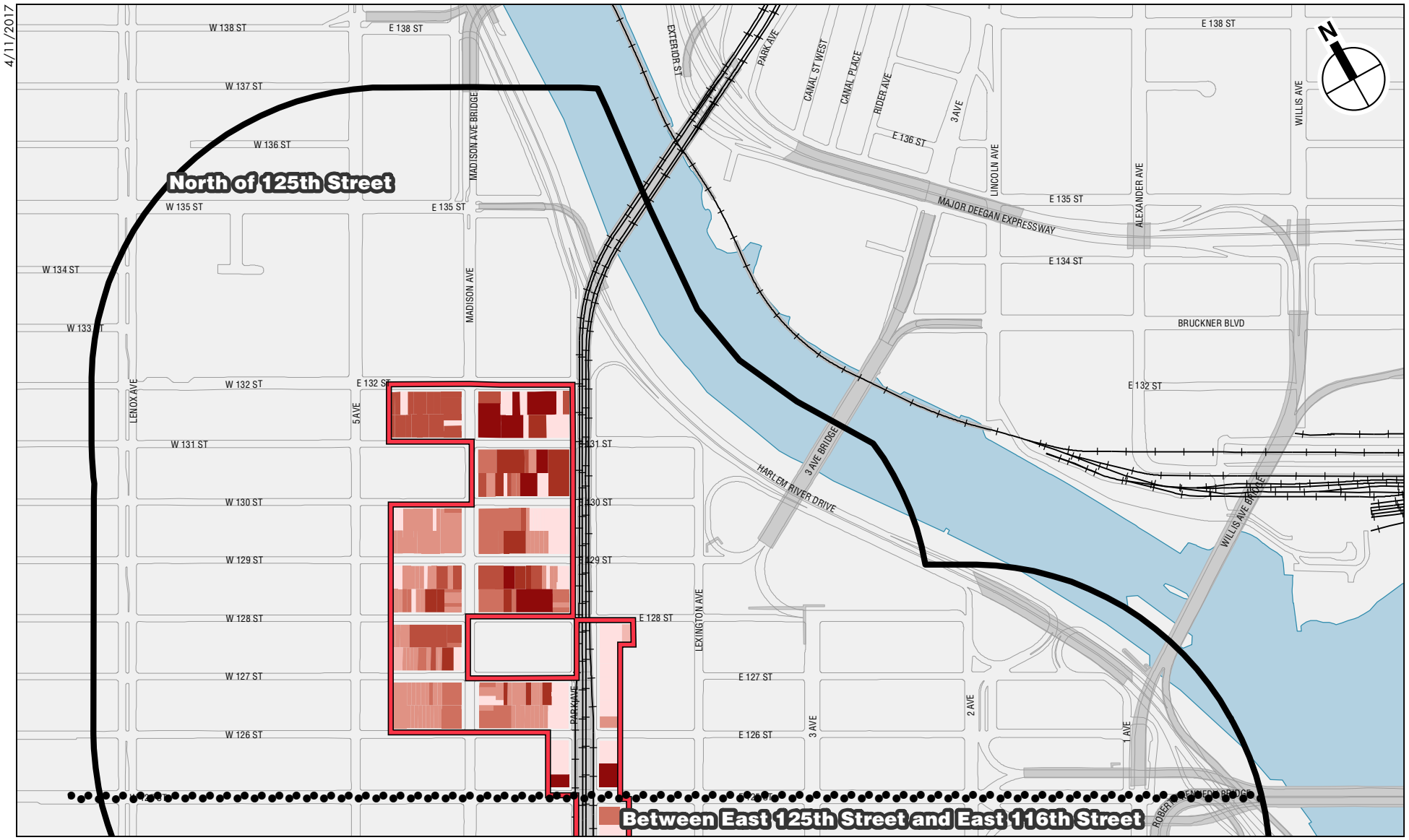
Primary Study Area Built FAR - South of 116th Street Subarea

Figure 8-4.3a



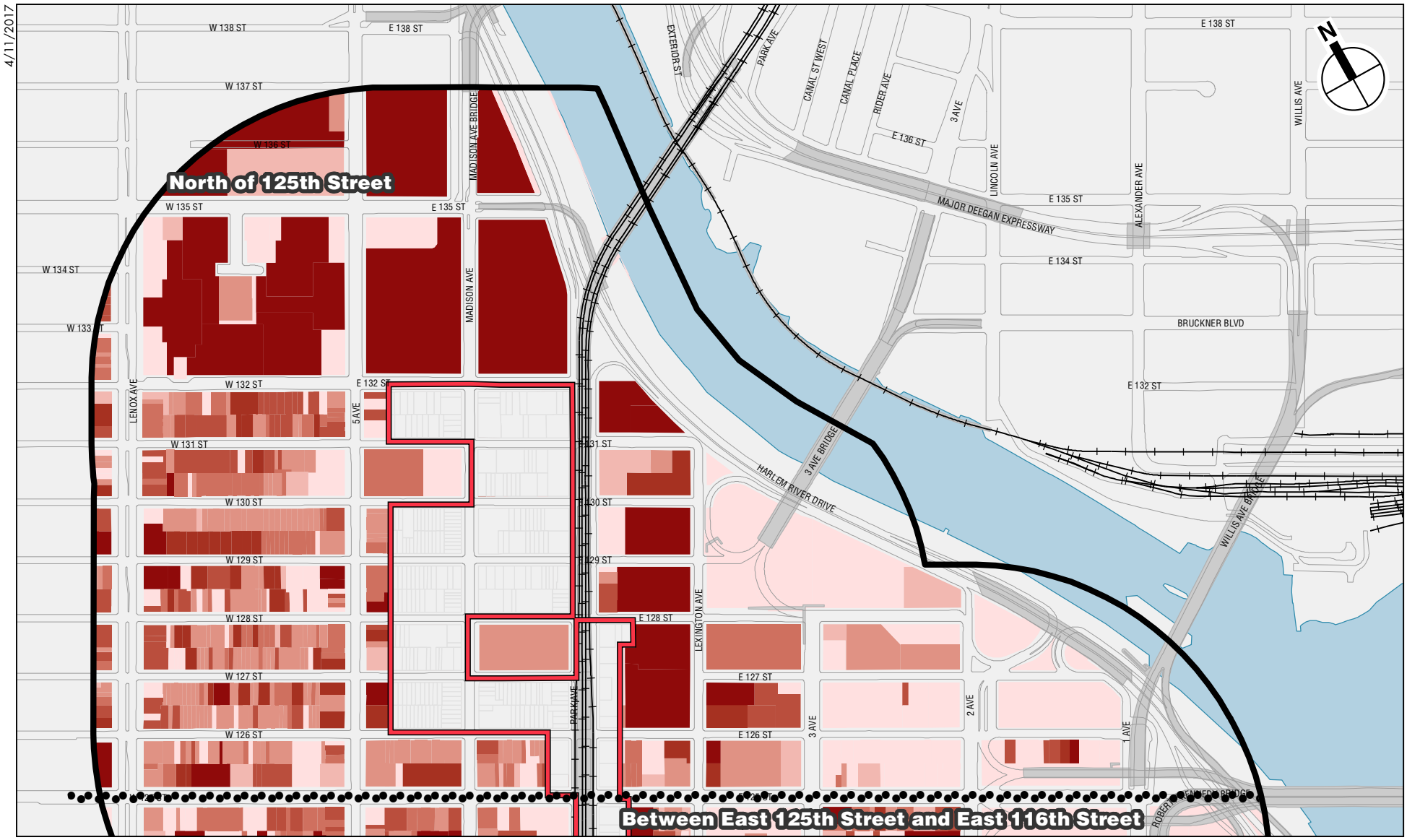
Secondary Study Area Built FAR - South of 116th Street Subarea

Figure 8-4.3b



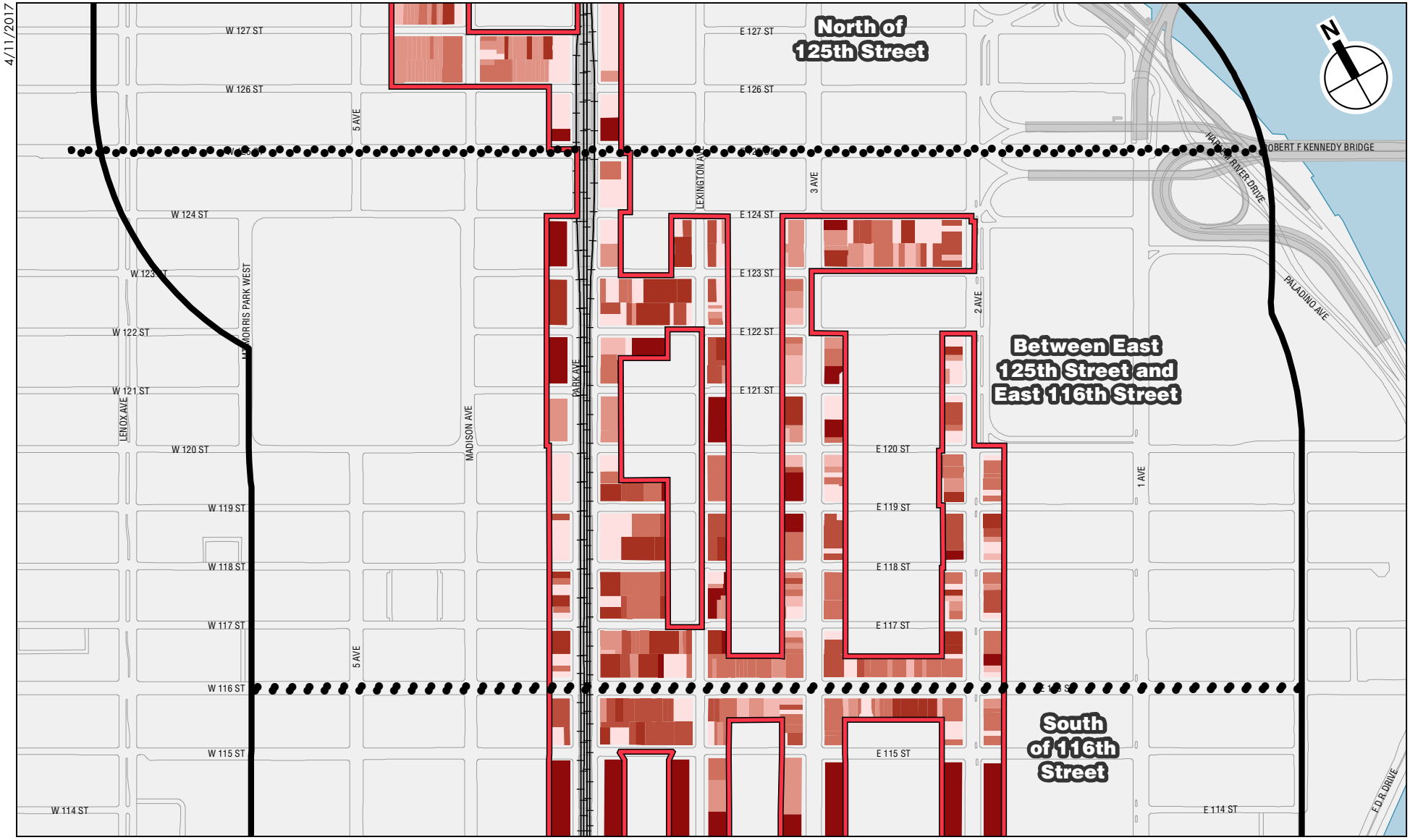
Primary Study Area Building Heights - North of 125th Street Subarea

Figure 8-5.1a

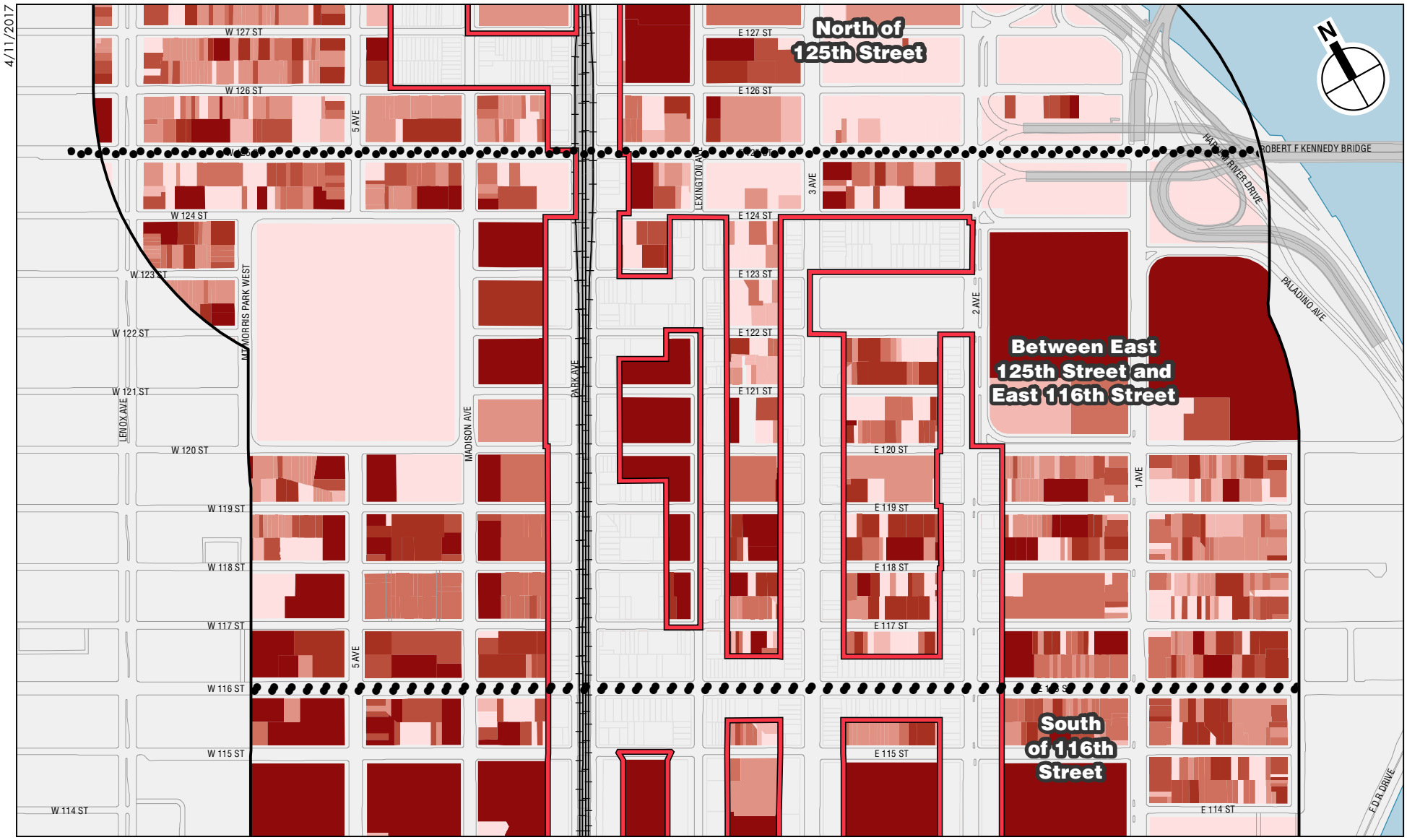


Secondary Study Area Building Heights - North of 125th Street Subarea

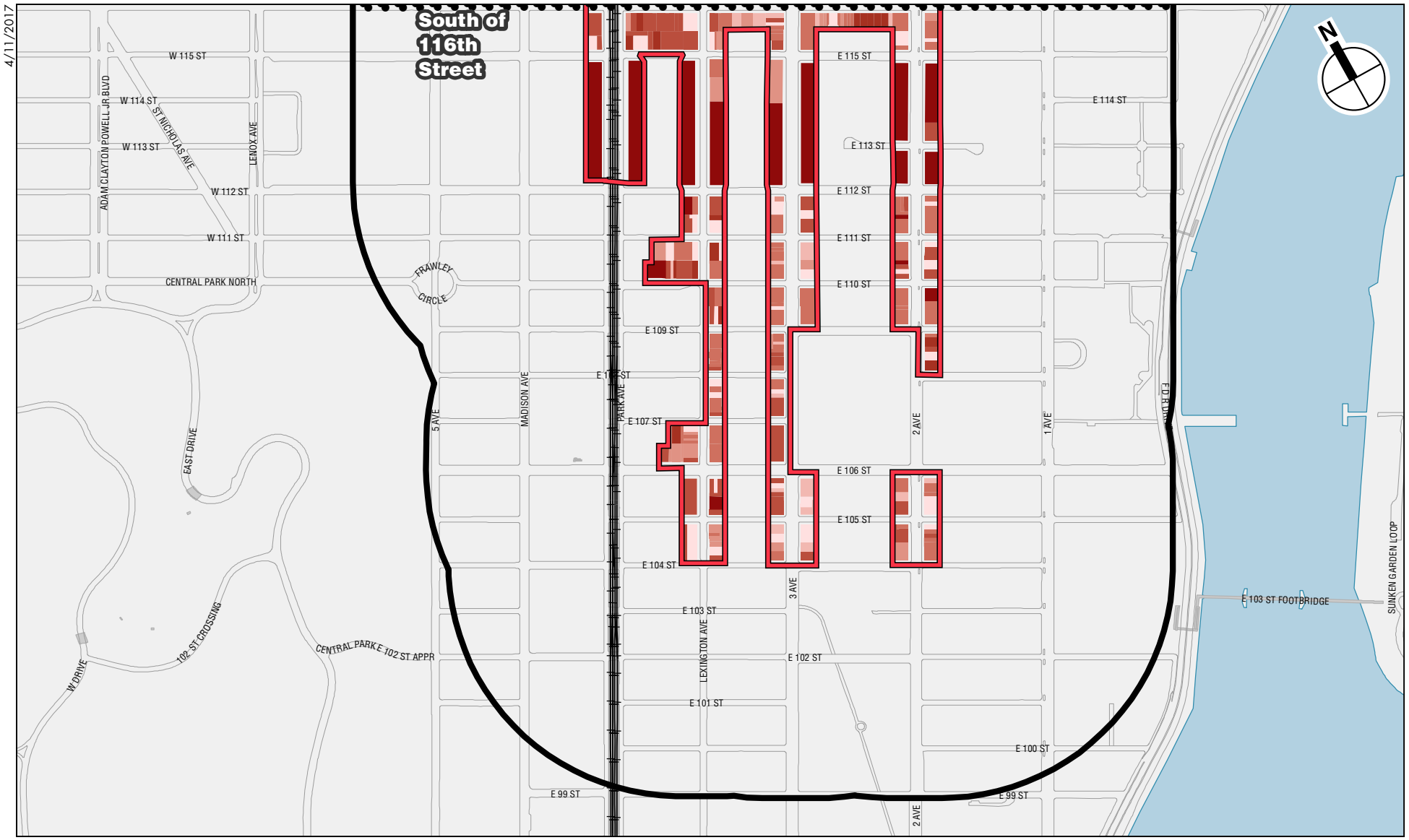
Figure 8-5.1b



Primary Study Area Building Heights - Between East 125th Street and East 116th Street Subarea

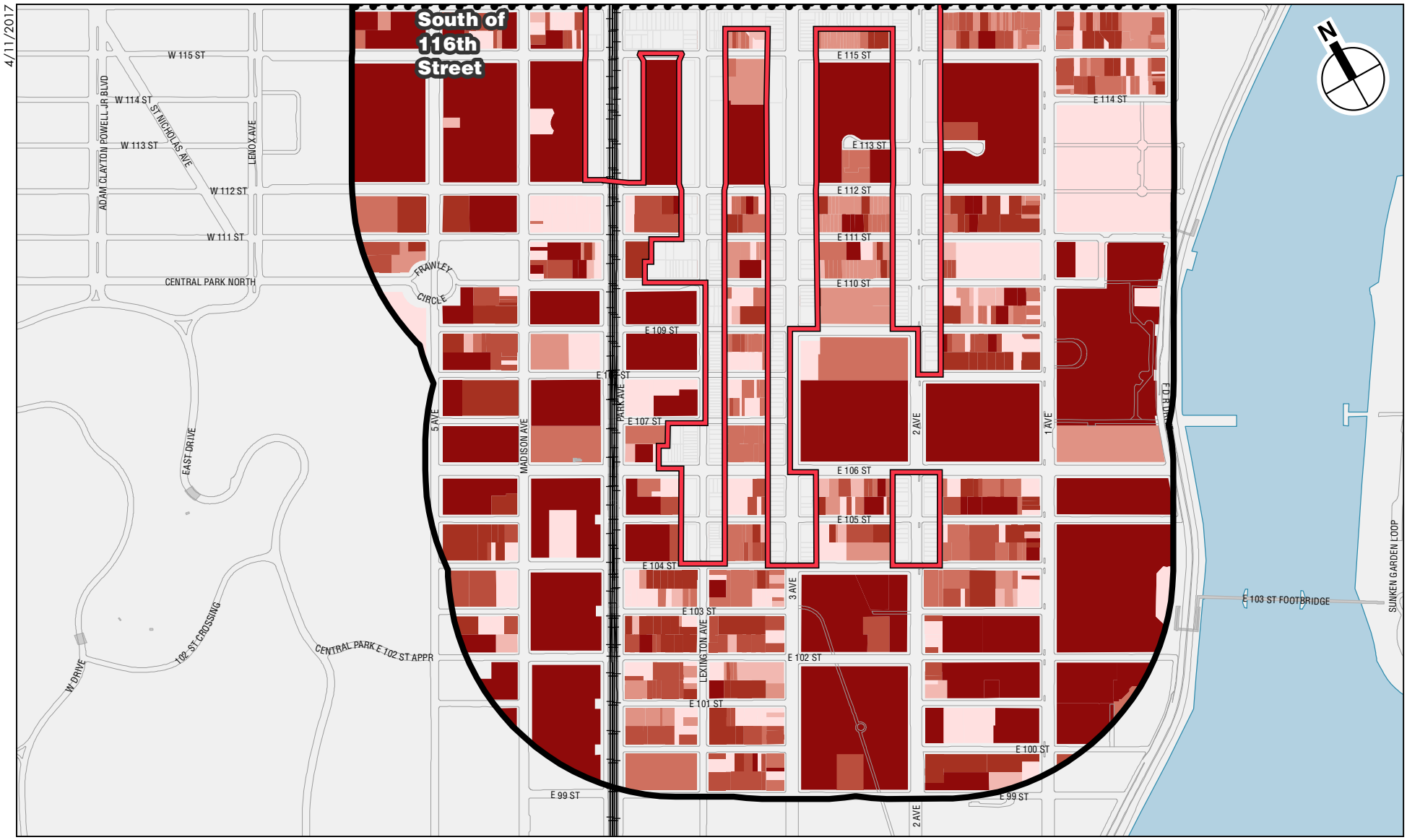


Secondary Study Area Building Heights - Between East 125th Street and East 116th Street Subarea



Primary Study Area Building Heights - South of 116th Street Subarea

Figure 8-5.3a



Secondary Study Area Building Heights- South of 116th Street Subarea

EAST HARLEM REZONING

Figure 8-5.3b

trussed railroad structure, extending above the center portion of the avenue (see **Figure 8-6**, photo 1). The Park Avenue viaduct is a defining built feature in the study area and physically and visually divides the study area. Surface parking and the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) vehicle storage is located below the viaduct. Flanking the viaduct, the Park Avenue roadway carries one north-bound travel lane and one south-bound travel lane, each with curbside parking. Along Park Avenue, there are several vacant lots, surface parking, and smaller buildings adjacent to larger ones, which provide large blank walls that have recently been painted with colorful murals. The murals reflect themes of education, neighborhood issues, and social issues. Park Avenue lacks a consistent streetwall, and the disjointed nature of the built environment has led to minimal pedestrian activity. Madison Avenue is an 80-foot-wide thoroughfare with two north-bound travel lanes and curbside parking on both sides of the street. Fifth Avenue is a 100-foot-wide thoroughfare with two south-bound travel lanes with curbside parking on both sides of the street. Active ground-floor uses are limited on both avenues; however, recent development has sought to encourage street activity by creating community spaces, cultural centers, and playgrounds.

East 132nd Street is a major east-west thoroughfare within the study area. The 80-foot-wide, two-lane street carries two-way traffic with curbside parking on either side of the street. East 132nd Street has a limited visual connection and no physical connection to the waterfront and dead-ends into a private parking lot for a new mixed-use building east of the Park Avenue Viaduct. Pedestrian foot traffic is heaviest around major intersections and community facilities. Between East 131st and East 126th Streets the cross streets are 60 feet wide with one-way traffic and curbside parking on both sides (see **Figure 8-6,** photo 2). The southern boundary of the subarea, East 125th Street, is a 100-foot-wide street with four lanes of two-way traffic, including a dedicated bus lane, and curbside parking. East 125th Street acts as a major corridor in the neighborhood with access to the No. 4, 5, and 6 lines of the NYCT subway located just outside of the primary study area and Metro-North Railroad's Harlem-125th Street Station. The numerous public transit options along East 125th Street increases pedestrian foot traffic to the adjacent area. Both sides of East 125th Street has a mix of active retail, vacant storefronts, and cultural and community facilities. There are several vacant lots or lots currently under construction. The southwest corner of Park Avenue at East 125th Street is currently a construction site. The entire Park Avenue frontage between East 124th and East 125th Streets is under construction.

Street furniture throughout the primary study area includes standard cobra head street lamps, traffic lights, bus stop signs and shelters, fire hydrants, trash cans, mailboxes, and parking meters. Mature street trees line the avenues while recently planted street trees are located along the narrower cross streets.

Several transit elements are located in the primary study area north of East 125th Street. There are several New York City Transit (NYCT) bus routes along Park, Madison, and Fifth Avenues, and East 126th Street, which include covered, partially enclosed glass bus stops and route signage. East 125th Street is a major transit corridor with multiple bus routes, a dedicated bus lane, and a Metro-North Railroad station located at Park



The Park Avenue Viaduct rises above the center portion of Park Avenue with parking below. As seen from East 132nd Street looking south. **1**



East 129th Street is a typical cross street North of East 125th Street with low-rise buildings and mature street trees. View from Fifth Avenue looking west. **2**

Existing Conditions—Primary Study Area

Avenue and East 125th Street, which contributes to heavy vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the northern portion of the primary study area.

Natural Features and Open Space

Throughout the primary study area, the topography is generally flat. North of East 125th Street, natural features are generally limited to a street trees and shrubbery. At Madison Avenue between East 130th and 131st Streets is a publicly accessible playground and recreational space with several mature trees, landscaping, and seating enclosed by a metal fence (see **Figure 8-7,** photo 3).

Buildings

Generally, the primary study area north of East 125th Street is low-rise with a mix of three-story (approximately 40-foot-tall) rowhouses with small-footprints (approximately 1,850- to 2,500-square-foot [sf]), four- to six-story (approximately 68- to 80-foot-tall) older brick apartment buildings that have larger footprints (approximately 3,100- to 4,900 sf), and several religious complexes that tend to have large footprints, wide façades, and tall steeples. The religious complexes add visual interest to the area and act as community centers within the neighborhood. The complexes often include schools or daycares as well as community outreach programs that result in increased pedestrian foot traffic. Many of the older residential buildings have cornices and still retain their stoops. Along the cross streets, the buildings tend to be narrower and setback from the street by fenced paved yards (see **Figure 8-7,** photo 4). Additionally, there are vacant lots, paved parking lots enclosed by chain-link fencing, industrial buildings, and a gas station along Park Avenue. There are three historic churches, one school that that occupies a full block, and four residential buildings that differ from the low-rise, small footprint residential pattern. All Saint's Church located at 47 East 129th Street is a brick-and-stone building that rises approximately 100 feet in height and has a large, approximately 25,000 sf footprint and high lot coverage. The complex extends from East 130th Street to East 129th Street with the bulk of the massing along Madison Avenue (see **Figure 8-8,** photo 5). The building has ornate carved stone details and an articulated facade that add visual interest along Madison Avenue. An entrance to the church is located on East 129th Street and there are entrances to the school on Madison Avenue and East 130th Street. At the start of school and at dismissal, pedestrian traffic in the area is heavy. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church located at 2067 Fifth Avenue is a stone building that rises to a height of approximately 67 feet. The building has a large (approximately 14,000 sf) footprint with the longest façade (approximately 155 feet long) fronting onto East 127th Street. The main entry to the church is located on Fifth Avenue with a secondary entry on East 127th Street. At 1975 Madison Avenue, the Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church is an approximately 63-foot-tall church with an approximately 12,000 sf building footprint. While the façade fronting onto Madison Avenue is fairly narrow, the church extends approximately 130 feet along East 126th Street. Located at 22 East 128th Street, the Harlem Renaissance School is five stories (approximately 78 feet tall) and has an approximately 10,000 sf building footprint with a wide façade fronting onto East 128th Street. The high school adds heavy



A playground and mature street trees located at East 131st and Madison Avenue. View looking southwest. **3**



Three-story rowhouses with raised stoop entries and fenced paved yards located along East 127th Street. View from west of Madison Avenue looking southwest. **4**



All Saint's Church has a large footprint with the bulk of the massing along Madison Avenue. View from Madison Avenue at East 129th Street looking northeast. **5**



Two recently-constructed buildings at Madison Avenue and East 131st Street rise six and seven stories. View from Madison Avenue at East 131st Street looking northeast. **6**

pedestrian foot traffic to the area at the start of school and at dismissal time, with the primary school entrance along East 128th Street. The brick-and-stone tall building rises without setbacks and with one central, raised entry. The building at 58 East 132nd Street, located at the northern boundary of the primary study area, is a seven-story (approximately 60-foot-tall) new brick building with historicizing details. The large building rises without setbacks, has high lot coverage, and has a long façade fronting onto East 132nd Street. The recently constructed building at 2081 Madison Avenue is a seven-story (approximately 76-foot-tall), multi-colored brick building that rises without setbacks and fronts onto both the avenue and the side street, with approximately 150 feet of frontage on Madison Avenue. A small open space separates the building from a similarly designed building located at 45 East 131st Street that rises eight stories (approximately 87 feet tall) (see **Figure 8-8**, photo 6). The six- and seven-story (approximately 70-foot-tall) recently constructed building at 57 East 128th Street has a long façade fronting onto East 128th Street, and is articulated in two portions, with the western portion built out to the street, and the eastern portion of the building set back from the street approximately 36 feet with a paved area containing several mature trees. The shaded, paved area in front of the eastern portion of the building acts as an outdoor gathering space for residents and community members. A six-story (approximately 70-foot-tall) older brick building at 2041 Fifth Avenue has high lot coverage, with an approximately 120-foot-long façade on East 126th Street (see **Figure 8-9**, photo 7). Currently, the ground floor has no active use.

View Corridors and Visual Resources

Views within the primary study area tend to be long due to the flat topography, with the longest views along Madison Avenue, the widest street in the study area. Along Madison Avenue, views extend north toward the Harlem River and include several NYCHA complexes with mature trees and tall, brick buildings (see **Figure 8-9**, photo 8). Views to the south along Madison Avenue include mature street trees and the tall buildings in Midtown Manhattan, including 432 Park Avenue. As described above, the Park Avenue viaduct dominates and truncates the views along Park Avenue. The cross streets within the primary study area are typically narrow, and views are short due to the intervening Park Avenue viaduct. The low-rise side streets act as view corridors with older adjoining buildings and tree-lined streets.

Visual resources within the primary study area include three. The Church of All Saints on Madison Avenue between East 129th and East 130th Streets is a multi-colored, brick-and-stone building with an undulating façade and a belfry that is approximately 100 feet tall and extends beyond the steeply gabled roof. It can be seen along the length of Madison Avenue throughout the primary study area and along East 129th and East 130th Streets. It can be seen west of the Park Avenue viaduct, but views are limited to the area immediately adjacent to the east side of the viaduct. The brownstone Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church on Madison Avenue and East 126th Street has a 63-foot-tall belfry that can be seen along Madison Avenue throughout the primary study area and east along East 126th Street up to the Park Avenue viaduct. Views west along East 126th Street toward the church are limited by the intervening buildings and mature



An older, six-story building extends along East 126th Street with smaller, three-story buildings beyond. View from Madison Avenue looking northeast. **7**



The wider Madison Avenue provides long views toward the north. Taller NYCHA complex buildings can be seen in the background on the right side while the All Saint's Church is seen on the right side in the middle-ground. View from Madison Avenue at East 128th Street looking north. **8**

street trees. Saint Andrew's Church on Fifth Avenue and East 127th Street is a stone building with a tall (approximately 67 feet) clock tower with an elongated pyramidal, polychrome slate roof. The church and bell tower are visible along East 127th Street throughout the primary study area, but views along Fifth Avenue are limited as the church is set back from the street and mature street trees along the avenue further screen views of the resource.

BETWEEN EAST 125TH STREET AND EAST 116TH STREET

Urban Design

Streets

The subarea is similar to the North of East 125th Street subarea and most of Manhattan in that it is developed with a rectilinear street grid, with wide north-south avenues, and narrow east-west cross streets creating rectangular blocks. Third and Second Avenues are the primary north-south thoroughfares. Third Avenue is a 100-foot-wide street with four lanes of northbound traffic with curbside parking on either side of the street. Along the avenue, both sides of the street are developed with active ground floors, most of which contain retail spaces; new development has continued this trend and has also added community facilities within the area. The active ground floors and new community facilities activate the street with pedestrian foot traffic, typically heavy, on this street. Second Avenue is a 100-foot-wide street with three lanes of southbound traffic, a dedicated bus lane, one lane of parking, and a protected bike lane (see **Figure 8-10**, photo 9). Despite the recent investment in transportation along Second Avenue, the street remains less active than Third Avenue. Many of the ground floor retail spaces are vacant and several of the smaller buildings have industrial uses which draws few pedestrians to the area. Lexington Avenue is a 75-foot-wide street with two lanes of southbound traffic and curbside parking on either side of the street. Pedestrian activity along Lexington Avenue is primarily focused on schools and community facilities. Active ground floors are limited, and many of the spaces that do exist are currently vacant. The Park Avenue viaduct, described above, continues above the center portion of Park Avenue between East 125th and East 116th Streets. Below the viaduct is surface parking and a commercial garden center. East 125th and East 116th Streets are the major east-west thoroughfares. East 125th Street, described above, has substantial vehicle and foot traffic. East 116th Street is the southern boundary of the area and is a 100-foot-wide street with four lanes of two-way traffic and curbside parking on either side of the street (see **Figure 8-10**, photo 10).

Between East 125th and East 116th Streets, the 60-foot-wide east-west streets have one vehicular lane with curbside parking on either side of the street. East 119th Street has a bike lane along the south side of the travel lane. Street furniture includes standard cobra head street lamps, traffic lights, bus stop signs and shelters, fire hydrants, trash cans, mailboxes, and parking meters.

Several transit elements are located in the Between East 125th and East 116th Streets subarea. There are several NYCT bus routes along Park, Lexington, Third and Second



Second Avenue is a wide thoroughfare with a dedicated bus lane, protected bike lane, and three lanes of southbound traffic. Older three- to six-story buildings are seen in the foreground with newer, tall towers in the background. View from East 119th Street looking northwest. **9**



East 116th Street is a wide street with two-way traffic and a fairly uniform street wall. View from near Third Avenue looking east. **10**

Existing Conditions—Primary Study Area

Figure 8-10

Avenues, and East 125th and East 116th Streets, but most transit is concentrated located along Lexington and Third Avenues with connections to east-west bus service at East 125th and East 116th Streets. The No. 6 line of the NYCT subway runs below Lexington Avenue with entrances at Lexington Avenue and East 116th Street.

The sides of many of the larger buildings, including apartment buildings and schools, are painted with large-scale murals. These colorful paintings include works by international artists for festivals including Los Muros Hablan and the Monument Art Project, as well as pieces done by neighborhood artists with themes relevant to the community. Many of the pieces are several stories tall and add color and visual interest to the streetscape.

Natural Features and Open Space

The topography is generally flat, with only a very slight incline from south to north. Natural features in the primary study area between East 125th and East 116th Streets are limited to street trees and small parks. Open spaces in this portion of the primary study area include playgrounds and community gardens. The Dr. Ronald E. McNair Playground, a NYC Park, is located on the mid-block between Lexington and Third Avenue and extends from East 123rd to East 122nd Streets (see **Figure 8-11**, photo 11). The space contains playground equipment along East 123rd Street with newly planted trees, small grassy areas, and benches. Along East 122nd Street, a raised, circular grassy area is surrounded by paved paths, benches, trees, and shrubbery. The entire park is enclosed by a decorative metal fence. Dream Street Park, also a NYC Park on East 124th Street between Third and Second Avenues is a large, grassy area enclosed by a metal fence with a large mural painted on the entire side of the building that forms the eastern boundary of the park and is clearly visible from East 124th Street. While located outside of the primary study area, Marcus Garvey Park is visible from the cross streets within the study area.

Buildings

Between East 125th Street and East 116th Street, the buildings in the primary study area subarea are generally low-rise along the cross streets with a mix of three- to six-story older brick apartment buildings, and are taller and larger along the avenues (see **Figure 8-11**, photo 12). The tallest of these buildings, 1982 Lexington Avenue, is a 32-story (approximately 279-foot-tall) brick building with balconies that rises without setbacks and is built to the sidewalk along Lexington Avenue between East 122nd and East 121st Streets. Just south of 1982 Lexington Avenue, 1980 Lexington Avenue is an 11-story (approximately 101-foot-tall) L-shaped, concrete building that rises without setbacks. While the building has a large footprint, it has low lot coverage and is set back from the street behind mature trees. 1940 Lexington Avenue is a 10- and 12-story (approximately 110-foot-tall) brick building that rises without setbacks and has a large footprint but low lot coverage and is set back from Lexington Avenue behind landscaping including trees and shrubbery. 2180 Third Avenue is an eight-story (approximately 56-foot-tall) building with a brick, glass, and metal façade. The building has a large footprint and high lot coverage and is built to the sidewalk along Third Avenue and East 119th Street. Just north of this building, 2182 Third Avenue is an 11-story (approximately 137-foot-tall) recently



Ronald McNair Park is located between East 123rd and East 122nd Streets with a playground along East 123rd Street and a grassy area near East 122nd Street. View from East 122nd Street looking north. **11**



A mix of three- to six-story buildings are located along East 122nd Street while larger buildings, like the 32-story building in the background, are located along the larger avenues. View from East 122nd Street near Second Avenue looking southwest. **12**

Existing Conditions—Primary Study Area

constructed building with a setback above the seventh floor. The building has a large footprint and is clad in tan brick with large window openings (see **Figure 8-12,** photo 13).

While the cross streets are generally smaller-scale and residential, one exception to the smaller sized residential buildings is St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church Complex (see Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources") located mid-block at 113 East 117th Street and 114 East 118th Street. The church is clad in gray limestone and is 82 feet tall with two 114-foot-tall towers topped with copper roofing. A one-story brick hyphen connects the church building to the school, which faces onto East 118th Street (see **Figure 8-12,** photo 14). The school building is four stories (approximately 50 feet tall) with a stone base and red brick façade. Additionally, along the south side of East 119th Street is the New York City Police Department (NYPD) 25th Precinct building, a four-story mid-20th century boxy brick building with a large footprint and heavy massing. The building is built to the sidewalk with high lot coverage (see **Figure 8-13**, photo 15). A paved surface parking lot used by the NYPD is located immediately west of this building.

View Corridors and Visual Resources

Views within the primary study area between East 125th and East 116th Streets tend to be long with the longest views along the Third Avenue. Along Third Avenue, views extend north toward the Harlem River and the open green space at Harlem River Park, outside of the study area. Views along the avenue also include several large residential towers located just outside the primary study area, and mature street trees both within the primary study area and just beyond. Generally the cross streets within the primary study area are narrow, tree-lined residential streets and views are short, ending at the Park Avenue viaduct to the west and First Avenue to the east. East 116th Street, as described above, is wide and views along the street extend to the east and include views of the Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Bridge superstructure and the towers of the Little Hell Gate Bridge in the distance. To the west, views include mature street trees and several older buildings, but end at the Park Avenue viaduct.

Visual resources within the subarea include a historic building and numerous large murals painted on the sides of buildings. On the south side of East 121st Street, The Harlem Courthouse (see Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources") is clad in brick, terra cotta, and stone with a round tower and octagonal belfry that rises approximately 85 feet (see **Figure 8-13**, photo 16). Despite being located mid-block, the gabled roofline and unusual belfry of the church are visible along East 121st Street east and west of the building, and along Lexington Avenue north and south of the building throughout the primary study area.

Several large, colorful murals are painted on the sides of buildings. These murals tend to have themes relating to the culture of the neighborhood, the environment, and the life of various community members. Depending on the size of the murals, they can be seen down the block, while some are only visible from closer distances.



13 Third Avenue is lined with a mix of older, three- to six-story buildings and recently constructed buildings, such as the 11-story building seen on the right side.
View from Third Avenue at East 121st Street looking southwest.



14 St. Paul's roman Catholic Church Complex, located on the mid-block, has two tall towers with copper roofing that can be seen along East 117th Street. View from East 117th Street at Lexington Avenue looking northeast.

Existing Conditions—Primary Study Area
Figure 8-12



15 The NYPD's 25th Precinct building has a large footprint high lot coverage, and and the brutalist style gives the building a solid appearance. View from East 119th Street at Lexington Avenue looking southwest.



16 The Harlem Courthouse, with its distinctive roofline and tower, can be seen along East 121st Street and Third Avenue. View from Lexington Avenue at East 121st Street looking east.

Existing Conditions—Primary Study Area
Figure 8-13

SOUTH OF EAST 116TH STREET

Urban Design

Streets

The South of East 116th Street subarea, similar to those subareas to the north, has wide north-south avenues and narrow east-west cross streets. The blocks between East 115th and East 112th Streets are superblocks formed by the NYCHA Johnson Houses and Jefferson Houses residential complexes. As described above, Third and Second Avenues are the primary north-south thoroughfares with Lexington Avenue carrying two-lanes of southbound traffic. The Park Avenue viaduct transitions from a steel-support structure north of East 111th Street to a masonry retaining wall system to the south. North of East 111th Street, the area below the raised tracks contains El Mercado, a seasonal open-air market enclosed by a colorful metal fence between East 116th and East 115th Streets, and La Marqueta, an indoor market with large windows with metal grates and concrete block walls between East 115th and East 112th Streets (see **Figure 8-14**, photo 18). South of East 111th Street, arched openings in the stone viaduct structure allow for vehicular and pedestrian through-traffic at each street, with wider arches for vehicular traffic flanked by smaller arches for pedestrians. The narrow pedestrian archways are unlit, limiting their use at night (see **Figure 8-15**, photo 19). This urban design feature acts as a physical and visual barrier between areas east and west of it.

Within the South of East 116th Street subarea, East 106th Street is the main east-west thoroughfare. The approximately 100-foot-wide street has two lanes of two-way traffic divided by a painted median (see **Figure 8-15**, photo 20). Each side of the street has a dedicated bike lane and curbside parking. At major intersections there are raised, concrete islands with street trees and art installations. On both side of East 106th Street, there are neighborhood cultural centers, churches, playgrounds, and ground-floor retail spaces that contribute to a lively corridor. South of East 116th Street, the 60-foot-wide east-west streets have one vehicular lane with curbside parking on either side of the street. East 108th and East 107th Streets end at Third Avenue. Street furniture within the primary study area includes standard cobra head street lamps, decorative ornamental mast arm lamp posts, traffic lights, bus stop signs and shelters, fire hydrants, trash cans, mailboxes, and parking meters.

Natural Features and Open Space

Throughout the primary study area subarea of South of East 116th Street, the topography is generally flat. Natural features are limited to green spaces surrounding large-scale residential complexes, small parks and playgrounds, and community gardens. The El Camino Community Garden on East 110th Street is a narrow space with raised planting beds, walkways with pavers, and small table sets. El Sitio Feliz is a larger community garden located between East 103rd and East 104th Streets, east of Third Avenue (see **Figure 8-16,** photo 21). White Playground is a newly renovated playground on the south side of East 106th Street that acts as a pedestrian draw and adds to the activity along the street.



A mural by Brazilian artist, Alexandre Keto, painted on the back of P.S. 7 is one of several colorful murals located within the study area. View from East 119th Street and Third Avenue looking northwest. **17**



El Mercado and La Marqueta, two indoor and outdoor markets, are located under the Park Avenue Viaduct between East 116th and East 112th Streets. View from East 116th Street looking south. **18**



19 The Park Avenue Viaduct south of East 111th Street has masonry retaining walls and arched openings for vehicular and pedestrian through-traffic.



20 East 106th Street is a wide street with a painted median and a raised concrete island for pedestrian use at intersections with art installations. Buildings along the street vary in scale and there is not a uniform street wall. View from East 106th Street and Third Avenue looking southeast.



El Sitio Feliz community garden is a large community garden located between East 104th and East 105th Streets, east of Third Avenue that features growing plots and a painted mural. The smaller portion of the garden is located along East 105th Street. View from East 105th Street looking southwest. **21**



Along Third Avenue buildings tend to be four to six stories and built out to the sidewalk. View from Third Avenue at East 105th Street looking northwest. **22**

The majority of the area south of East 116th Street within the study area is the lowest lying in elevation and within the FEMA 100 year flood zone. The Harlem River Creek, which is depicted on historic maps of East Harlem, is currently layered under the neighborhood and channeled under a mainline sewer under 110th Street that carries wastewater to the Ward's Island treatment plant.

Buildings

The buildings of the primary study area south of East 116th Street are less cohesive. Along the avenues, buildings are between four and six stories and generally built to the sidewalk (see **Figure 8-16**, photo 22). These buildings have small footprints, tend to be narrow, but have high lot coverage. In contrast, the NYCHA buildings between East 115th and East 112th Streets and Park and First Avenues are between 6 and 14 stories (approximately 82 to 165 feet) with larger X- and Z-shaped footprints, low lot coverage, and set back from the street by landscaping. Additionally, there are several vacant lots along Lexington and Second Avenues south of East 106th Street.

View Corridors and Visual Resources

Views within the primary study area south of East 116th Street are longest along the north-south avenues. Views along Third Avenue, the widest of the avenues, include tall residential towers within the study area as well as those outside of the area, and mature trees surrounding many of the developments (see **Figure 8-17**, photo 23). Along the cross streets, views tend to be more limited as the streets are narrower and tree-lined. Views east along East 107th and 108th Streets end at Third Avenue and the large Franklin Plaza residential complex located between Third and Second Avenues that visually and physically divides the primary study area in these locations. East 108th Street continues through Poor Richard's Playground as a pedestrian only street and East 107th Street continues with a non-delineated and offset pedestrian path through the Franklin Plaza residential complex. The longest east-west views are along East 115th Street which to the east include the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics, a four-story, brick-clad school constructed in 1941 (see **Figure 8-17**, photo 24). The central cupola and temple front with a triangular pediment and Corinthian columns can be seen along East 115th Street from just east of the Park Avenue viaduct.

Visual resources located within the subarea include a historic building and painted murals and tiled mosaics. Located at 1680 Lexington Avenue, Former P.S. 72 (see Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources") is a four- and five-story brick building with a tall entrance and stair towers. The towers can be seen along East 106th Street from the Park Avenue viaduct to Second Avenue, from east of the Park Avenue viaduct on East 105th Street to just west of Third Avenue and along Lexington Avenue within the primary study area (see **Figure 8-18**, photo 25).

Murals within the area include smaller mosaic murals, such as "Julia de Burgos" by Manny Vega on East 106th Street just east of Lexington Avenue, and larger painted murals. The artwork south of East 116th Street tends to reflect the musical and artistic



Tall NYCHA buildings are set back from Third Avenue by mature street trees and landscaping. View from Third Avenue at East 115th Street looking south. **23**



Views east along East 115th Street include the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics. View from Second Avenue. **24**

Existing Conditions—Primary Study Area



Former Public School 72 has tall entrance and stair towers that can be seen from nearby streets. View from East 105th Street and Lexington Avenue looking northwest. **25**

heritage of the community as well as the Puerto Rican roots of many of the long-time residents.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

As described above, the secondary study area extends an approximate ¼ mile from the boundary of the primary study area. Similar to the primary study area, the secondary study area is divided into three subareas for the purposes of this assessment.

NORTH OF EAST 125TH STREET

Urban Design

The secondary study area subarea North of East 125th Street has a rectilinear street grid west of Lexington Avenue and becomes more irregular toward the east. Several superblocks exist north of East 132nd Street, and blocks of varying shapes and sizes are created by raised entrance ramps to Harlem River Drive, a five- to six-lane highway that visually and physically separates the neighborhood from the East River. Construction along the road and construction related equipment and structures further add to the division while entrance ramps act as a physical barrier in the eastern portion of the area (see **Figure 8-19**, photo 26). Three bridges—Metro-North Harlem River Lift Bridge, Third Avenue Bridge, and Willis Avenue Bridge—are located partially within the subarea. Constructed between 1954 and 1956, the Metro-North Harlem River Lift Bridge is a steel vertical lift bridge with two towers and is a historic resource. The Third Avenue Bridge is a swing-span bridge with lattice trusses that connects East 129th and East 128th Streets in Manhattan to Third Avenue in the Bronx. The Willis Avenue Bridge was completed in 1901, and consists of a swing span with lattice trusses and curved top chords; it is a historic resource. It connects First Avenue in Manhattan to Willis Avenue in the Bronx.

The northern portion of the subarea tends to have larger buildings that include several NYCHA housing complexes and the Harlem Hospital. The Abraham Lincoln Houses at East 135th Street and the Harlem River Drive are 6- to 14-story (approximately 60- to 170-foot-tall) brick buildings that rise without setbacks and are set within landscaped grounds (see **Figure 8-19,** photo 27). The area west of Fifth Avenue is of a generally smaller scale, with narrower buildings that are typically four to six stories and clad in brick. Lenox Avenue, a major north-south thoroughfare, has wide sidewalks and a raised median with newly planted street trees. The buildings along this avenue are slightly taller than those along the cross streets and occupy larger street frontages along the avenue; they typically have ground-floor stores including a café at 404 Lenox Avenue, a grocery store at 380 Lenox Avenue, and Sylvia's, a well-known Harlem restaurant at 328 Lenox Avenue (see **Figure 8-20,** photo 28). These businesses, especially the iconic Sylvia's, draw pedestrians to the area and contributes to the street activity. East of Third Avenue, the secondary study area North of 125th Street is characterized by car dealerships that have large footprints and bulky massings with adjacent surface parking lots with tall, modern lights; parking lots; and one- to two-story masonry buildings with large footprints and high lot coverage.



At-grade entrance ramps to Harlem River Drive creates irregular block shapes and a physical barrier in the study area. Green spaces and parks, such as the Crack is Wack Playground seen in the background, occupy the blocks created by the ramp network. View from Second Avenue at East 127th Street looking northeast. **26**



The Abraham Lincoln Houses are set within landscaped grounds. View from Fifth Avenue at East 132nd Street looking northeast. **27**

Existing Conditions—
Secondary Study Area
Figure 8-19



Buildings along Lenox Avenue occupy larger street frontages and tend to have ground-floor stores. The steeple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints can be seen in the background. View from Lenox Avenue at East 130th Street looking southeast. **28**



Harlem River Park contains a synthetic turf field, a playground, and athletic fields which are connected by pedestrian overpasses, visible on the left side of the photo. View from East 128th Street between Third and Second Avenues looking northwest **29**

Existing Conditions—
Secondry Study Area

Open spaces within the secondary study area subarea north of East 125th Street are primarily located on the irregularly shaped blocks along the eastern boundary of the subarea. Harlem River Park, bounded by Lexington Avenue, Harlem River Drive, and East 128th Street, contains paved athletic courts, a synthetic turf field, a playground, mature trees, and seating (see **Figure 8-20**, photo 29). The area is divided by the raised ramps to Harlem River Drive with pedestrian overpasses connecting the various park areas.

View Corridors and Visual Resources

Views within the secondary study area subarea north of East 125th Street are longest along Lenox Avenue and East 125th Street due to their width and relatively flat topography of these thoroughfares. Along Lenox Avenue views are long, and to the south the buildings of Midtown Manhattan are visible, including such prominent visual landmarks as the Empire State Building and the Citigroup Center Tower. Visual resources along Lenox Avenue include Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church, located just outside the area at West 123rd Street. Its tall, thin steeple can be seen on Lenox Avenue from as far north as West 135th Street. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at West 128th Street has a pyramidal steeple and square belfry that can be seen from various locations north and south of the church along Lenox Avenue (see **Figure 8-20**, photo 28). Along East 125th Street, views are longest to the east and include an unobstructed view of the west tower of the RFK Bridge Manhattan approach, which is a visual and historic resource. Views of the East River and the other bridges are extremely limited within the subarea due to Harlem River Drive, raised entrance ramps to the highway, intervening buildings, and mature street trees. However, partial views of the Metro-North Harlem River Lift Bridge, Third Avenue Bridge, and Willis Avenue Bridge can be seen from the Harlem River Park. Two murals by famed artist Keith Haring are located within the Harlem River Park handball court within the "Crack is Wack" playground. The murals, completed in 1986, are currently encased in a protective shelter while reconstruction occurs on the adjacent Harlem River Drive.

BETWEEN EAST 125TH STREETAND EAST 116TH STREET

Urban Design

The secondary study area subarea Between East 125th Street and East 116th Street has a rectilinear street grid with superblocks formed by Marcus Garvey Park, located between Madison and Lenox Avenues, East 124th and East 120th Streets; and NYCHA housing complexes bounded by Second Avenue and Harlem River Drive, and East 124th and East 120th Streets. In general, the area is characterized by older, masonry, low-rise, three- to six-story residential buildings with the larger of these concentrated along the avenues. Along the cross streets, the buildings are sometimes set back from the sidewalk by raised stoops and enclosed yards, while the buildings along the avenues are constructed out to the sidewalks (see **Figure 8-21**, photo 30). East of First Avenue, the area retains older buildings and local businesses that reflect the area's early Italian



Recently constructed rowhouses are set back from the sidewalk by raised stoops and enclosed yards. View from East 120th Street at Madison Avenue looking southeast. **30**



The 28-story building located at 1485 Fifth Avenue can be seen above the lower-scale buildings in the area. View from Park Avenue between East 120th and East 119th Streets looking west. **31**

Existing Conditions—
Secondary Study Area
Figure 8-21

influence. This includes Patsy's at First Avenue and East 118th Street, one of the oldest pizzerias in New York City.

The Wagner Houses and two tall towers differ from this low-rise pattern. The Wagner Houses, a NYCHA housing complex bounded by East 124th and East 120th Streets and Second Avenue and Harlem River Drive, rise 9 to 16 stories (approximately 62 to 142 feet tall) are set within large landscaped grounds and separated from the sidewalk by mature trees. Fifth on the Park is a 28-story, approximately 280-foot-tall residential building located at 1485 Fifth Avenue. The two-tone brick and glass-clad building has multiple setbacks started at the 11th floor (see **Figure 8-21**, photo 31). This building dates from the mid-2000s. 8 West 118th Street is a 21-story (approximately 200-foot-tall) brick building with a central, tall tower and a one-story base that is built out to sidewalk. The building was constructed in the mid-1970s. The East River Plaza, located at the eastern edge of the subarea between East 119th and East 116th Street has a large footprint (approximately 268,210 sf) footprint with high lot coverage, but rises only five to seven stories (approximately 88 to 104 feet tall).

The Taino Towers at 221 East 122nd Street, are four 35-story (approximately 360-foot-tall) buildings between East 123rd and East 122nd Streets. The complex occupies a full block with two three-story, L-shaped bases fronting onto Third and Second Avenues. The concrete towers rise without setbacks, but projecting balconies help to break up the verticality of the towers. The bases of the buildings provide retail space and institutional uses along the avenues; however. they do not add to an active street along the narrower cross streets.

A network of raised and at-grade ramps connects East 124th and East 116th Streets to the highways. The remainder of the cross streets tend to narrow east of First Avenue and dead end just east of the study area. This creates an unsafe pedestrian experience and street activity is very low. Located beyond the study area and east of the highway is a slightly raised pedestrian esplanade accessed by raised pedestrian ramp at East 120th Street, however connections to the esplanade within the area are limited and there are few wayfinding signs to help pedestrians navigate the complex street network.

Marcus Garvey Park, located at the western edge of the subarea, is a large square within the secondary study area subarea. The approximately 20-acre park contains two playgrounds, a recreation center, a pool and bathhouse, an amphitheater, and landscaping including lawns, mature trees and shrubs (see **Figure 8-22**, photo 32). The park attracts pedestrians and the area around the park is busy with foot traffic and recreational park users.

Smaller greenspaces, such as community gardens and school playgrounds, are scattered throughout the area.

View Corridors and Visual Resources

Between East 125th Street and East 116th Street, Marcus Garvey Park is the primary visual resource within the secondary study area subarea, providing an open green space and visual amenity to the neighborhood (see **Figure 8-22**, photo 32). The park is visible



Marcus Garvey Park provides open green space and is a visual amenity in the neighborhood. View from East 123rd Street at Madison Avenue looking west. **32**



The Jefferson Houses are arranged within landscaped superblocks that include mature trees, pathways, seating, and athletic courts. View from within the superblock bounded by Second and First Avenues, East 115th and East 112th Streets looking northwest. **33**

Existing Conditions—
Secondary Study Area
Figure 8-22

along Madison Avenue north and south of the park and in views west along the cross-streets between East 124th and East 120th Streets that terminate at the park.

Views east in this subarea of the secondary study area are limited due to the presence of large housing complexes, the network of entrance ramps, a narrowing of cross streets east of First Avenue, and the raised pedestrian esplanade that all restrict views. However, views from the eastern boundary of the study area include narrow and partially obstructed views of the RFK Bridge. Views of the river from the streets are blocked by the raised esplanade.

SOUTH OF EAST 116TH STREET

Urban Design

Similar to the primary study area's South of East 116th Street subarea, that of the secondary study area is less visually cohesive than the areas to the north. The topography is more varied, with a slight incline toward the west at the southern boundary, and a slight decline from south to north. Large housing complexes with buildings that range from 7 to 31 stories (approximately 60 to 276 feet tall) are arranged within landscaped superblocks throughout the area (see **Figure 8-22**, photo 33). The blocks between Park and Third Avenues south of East 104th Street and the mid-blocks between Lexington and Third Avenue are primarily developed with one- to four-story older masonry buildings. This mix of very large, more modern residential complexes and smaller, older buildings results in a varied streetwall and a less cohesive urban design (see **Figure 8-23**, photo 34).

Duke Ellington Circle (formerly Frawley Circle) is located at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and East 110th Street. The traffic circle circulates traffic traveling along East 110th Street around two semi-circles while traffic traveling south on Fifth Avenue bifurcates the semi-circles. The flow of vehicular traffic at Duke Ellington Circle is unique in Manhattan. The semi-circles each have three raised tiers planted with mature trees and decorative lampposts are raised on stone plinths around the outer edge. A sculpture depicting Duke Ellington standing next to a grand piano is located at the western semi-circle. Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Drive, an at-grade, six-lane highway, forms the eastern boundary for a portion of the subarea. An access road runs parallel to the highway and is divided from it by a concrete barricade. A raised pedestrian ramp at East 110th Street provides access to a raised esplanade adjacent to the highway.

Thomas Jefferson Park, an approximately 15-acre park, is located on an irregularly shaped superblock bounded by First Avenue and FDR Drive and East 114th and East 111th Streets. It has athletic fields, recreational courts, two pools, a recreation center, and landscaping including mature trees. The park acts as a pedestrian attraction and adds to the street activity level in the surrounding area. The landscaped grounds of the housing complexes, including the mature trees that surround many of the superblocks, are additional natural features in the study area.



A mix of smaller, older buildings and newer, taller buildings creates a varied streetwall and a less cohesive urban design in the southern subarea. View from Second Avenue at East 103rd Street looking north. **34**



The mature trees located within the Duke Ellington Circle can be seen in the distance. View from East 110th Street at the Park Avenue viaduct looking west. **35**

Existing Conditions—
Secondary Study Area

View Corridors and Visual Resources

Views in the secondary study area South of East 116th Street subarea are long, particularly to the east. Views east along the cross streets south of East 111th Street include the Harlem River, Randall's Island, and the RFK Bridge which constitute visual resources to viewers in the study area. Thomas Jefferson Park, with its green spaces and trees, is visible along First Avenue for several blocks north and south of the park, and along the length of East 112th Street throughout the study area. Views south on East 110th Street (Central Park North) and views west along the cross streets south of East 110th Street terminate at Central Park, a prominent visual resource located just beyond the study area. Views of Manhattan's largest park include its mature trees, stone walls that border the park, and landscaping which form the western boundary of the study area south of East 110th Street. Duke Ellington Circle is visible along East 110th Street from just west of the Park Avenue viaduct and from various locations north and south of the circle along Fifth Avenue (see **Figure 8-23**, photo 35).

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

In the 2027 future without the Proposed Actions, it is anticipated that current urban design trends and general development patterns in the primary and secondary study areas would continue. These trends and patterns are characterized by a mix of uses, including residential, commercial and community facility development. As detailed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," development is anticipated on 79 sites within the primary study area—61 of these developments would occur on projected development sites—and 44 sites are expected to be developed in the future without the Proposed Actions in the secondary study area.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

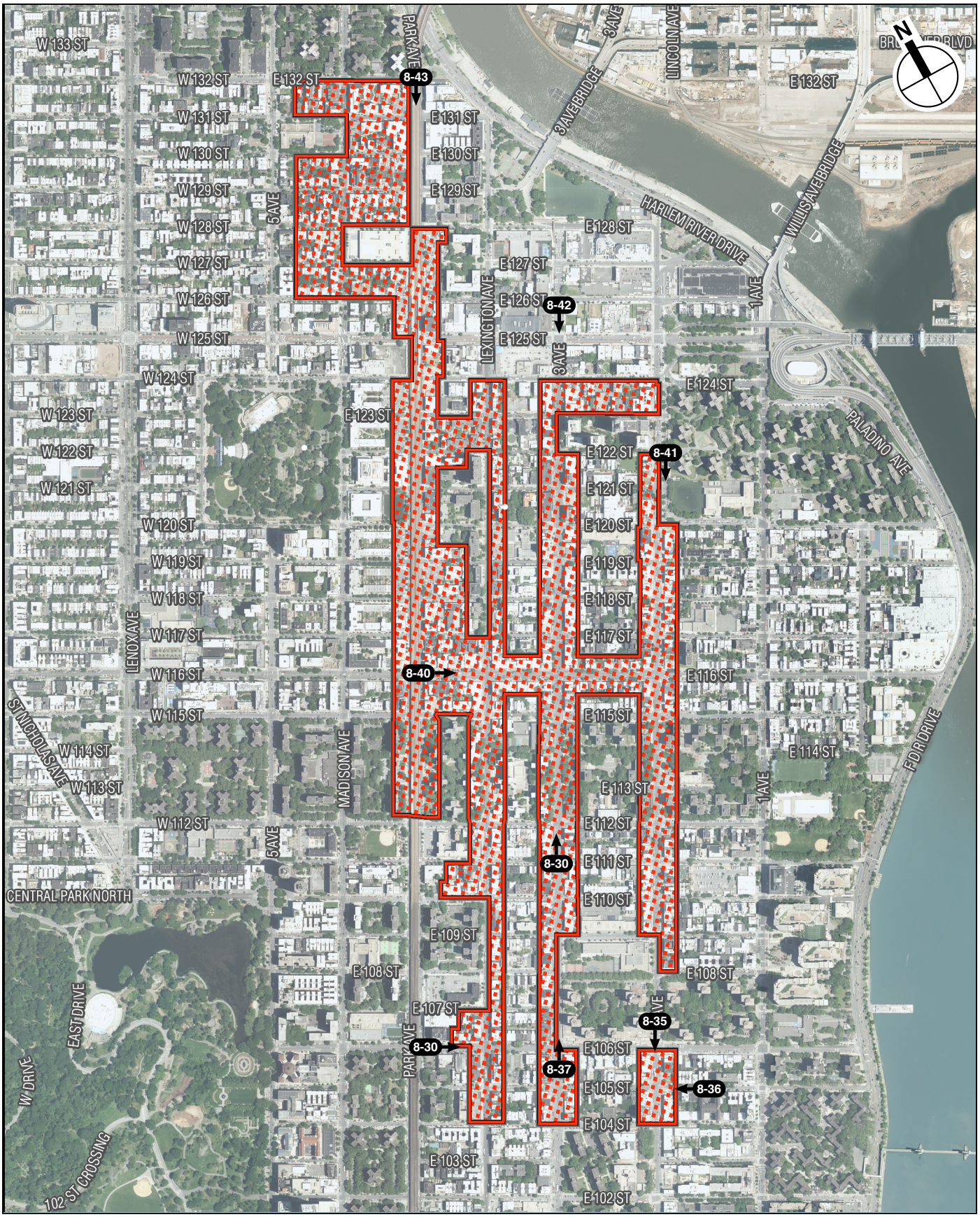
URBAN DESIGN

Under the No Action Condition, greater density would be added along the avenues, particularly along Third and Second Avenues with the construction of new buildings of similar height and footprint on currently vacant lots or under-developed lots (see **Figures 8-24 through 8-32**). Sixty-one of the projected development sites are anticipated to be developed with primarily mixed-use buildings with ground-floor retail and residential above. These buildings would be between two and approximately 10 stories and would be built out to the lot line. These new buildings would continue the trend of slightly taller new buildings being constructed among smaller, older buildings and would continue to improve the pedestrian experience with additional ground-floor retail spaces.

VIEW CORRIDORS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Views in the primary study area would not change significantly in the No Action Condition as the new buildings would be contained within existing blocks and would be in keeping with the general scale of the area, and the long views along the wider avenues

4.13.17



Project Area

8-30 *Figure Number and View Direction*

0 1,000 FEET

EAST HARLEM REZONING

Key to Massing Diagrams
Figure 8-24



Existing Condition **36a**



No Action Condition **36b**



Proposed With Action Condition **36c**

LEGEND

- *No Build Development*
- *As of Right Development on Development Sites*
- *Development with the Proposed Actions*

Comparison Massing – Second Avenue at East 106th Street Facing South

Figure 8-25



Existing Condition **37a**



No Action Condition **37b**



Proposed With Action Condition **37c**

LEGEND

- *No Build Development*
- *As of Right Development on Development Sites*
- *Development with the Proposed Actions*

Comparison Massing – East 106th Street at Second Avenue Facing West

Figure 8-26



Existing Condition **38a**



No Action Condition **38b**



Proposed With Action Condition **38c**

LEGEND

- *No Build Development*
- *As of Right Development on Development Sites*
- *Development with the Proposed Actions*

Comparison Massing – Third Avenue at East 106th Street Facing North

Figure 8-27



Existing Condition **39a**



No Action Condition **39b**



Proposed With Action Condition **39c**

LEGEND

- *No Build Development*
- *As of Right Development on Development Sites*
- *Development with the Proposed Actions*

Comparison Massing – East 106th Street at Park Avenue Facing East

Figure 8-28



Existing Condition **40a**



No Action Condition **40b**



Proposed With Action Condition **40c**

LEGEND

- *No Build Development*
- *As of Right Development on Development Sites*
- *Development with the Proposed Actions*

Comparison Massing – Third Avenue at East 112th Street Facing North Current Condition

Figure 8-29



Existing Condition **41a**



No Action Condition **41b**



Proposed With Action Condition **41c**

LEGEND

- *No Build Development*
- *As of Right Development on Development Sites*
- *Development with the Proposed Actions*

Comparison Massing – East 116th Street at Park Avenue Facing East

Figure 8-30



Existing Condition **42a**



No Action Condition **42b**



Proposed With Action Condition **42c**

LEGEND

- *No Build Development*
- *As of Right Development on Development Sites*
- *Development with the Proposed Actions*

Comparison Massing – Second Avenue at East 121st Street Facing South

Figure 8-31



Existing Condition **43a**



No Action Condition **43b**



Proposed With Action Condition **43c**

LEGEND

No Build Development

As of Right Development on Development Sites

Development with the Proposed Actions

Comparison Massing – Third Avenue at East 125th Street Facing South

Figure 8-32

would be retained. No buildings would be constructed near visual resources north of East 125th Street, so views of the churches along Madison and Fifth Avenues would be retained. Buildings that would be constructed near visual resources such as the Harlem Courthouse and former P.S. 72 would be a similar height or shorter than the visual resources and would not block views of the resources along the avenues or side streets. A large complex located outside of the primary study area between Third and Second Avenues, East 126th and East 127th Streets would narrow views north along Third Avenue and limit views of Harlem River Park and the Harlem River.

A number of existing murals could potentially lose their visibility due to adjacent development or be removed as a result of development in the No Action Condition. Additionally, ongoing building maintenance at each location could temporarily affect the visibility of murals.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

Several tall buildings with large footprints would also be constructed in the secondary study area in the future without the Proposed Actions. 1800 Park Avenue, located between East 124th and East 125th Streets, would be an approximately 20-story building with an approximately 36,000-sf building footprint would be a mixed-use building with ground-floor retail, community facility space, and residential above. Lexington Gardens, an 8- to 15-story (approximately 172-foot-tall) building would replace surface parking on the block bounded by Lexington and Park Avenues, and East 107th and East 108th Streets. 149 East 125th Street would be an 11-story building with a curved façade along East 126th Street and a portion of the façade cantilevered over existing retail along East 125th Street. A large-scale development would occupy the majority of the block bounded by Third and Second Avenues, East 126th and East 127th Streets. These developments would add larger-scale buildings to the area. The secondary study area, particularly the subarea between East 125th Street and East 116th Street, is already an area without a cohesive urban design with a mix of large housing developments, such as the Johnson Houses and Jefferson Houses located on the superblocks between East 115th and East 112th Streets, and the smaller, narrower rowhouses located along many of the cross streets, particularly north of East 125th Street.

VIEW CORRIDORS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

View corridors within the secondary study area are long along the avenues and East 125th, East 116th, and East 106th Streets. The No Action developments that would occur along these corridors would not alter the view corridors, and views would remain long as they would be developed within the existing street grid and would maintain existing street walls. Views toward Marcus Garvey Park, Duke Ellington Circle, and Central Park along the western boundary of the secondary study area would remain unchanged as would views east toward the RFK Bridge superstructure and the towers of the Little Hell Gate Bridge, Harlem River, and Randall's Island.

E. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

With the Proposed Actions, the primary study area would be rezoned with the objective to create new opportunities for mixed-income housing and the preservation of existing affordable housing, community facilities, and economic development while preserving the built neighborhood character where needed. The Proposed Actions would also establish a Special District that would enhance the pedestrian experience by promoting non-residential active ground floors, and establishes urban design controls such as minimum and maximum base heights, lowering the amount of required parking, and eliminating plaza bonuses. The Proposed Actions would seek to encourage new commercial development and growth potential along the fragmented and underutilized corridors of East 125th Street, East 116th Street, Third Avenue, and Park Avenue by encouraging development on vacant sites (see **Figure 8-3**).

Under the Proposed Actions, new developments could be considerably taller than those currently in the primary study area, with base heights of buildings slightly taller than those existing (see **Figures 8-24 through 8-41**). The Proposed Actions would also allow for residential uses along key corridors, such as Park Avenue, where new residential is currently not allowed. Thus, the redevelopment under the Proposed Actions would affect the area's urban design, specifically the building height, bulk, and use of the area, as described below.

NORTH OF EAST 125TH STREET

Urban Design

The nine building sites that would be developed under the Proposed Actions are concentrated along Park Avenue would generally be between 75 and 200 feet tall and would combine light manufacturing, ground-floor commercial, and residential uses (see **Figures 8-33 and 8-34**). The potential buildings would be similar in size to the larger buildings already located along Park Avenue north of East 125th Street but would bring more active use to the ground floors and reactivate the streetscape. To ensure quality housing, residential units would only be placed in the buildings above the third floor and the Park Avenue viaduct. The proposed zoning change would limit the base heights of new buildings to between 40 and 60 feet before a setback and would limit the maximum height of buildings to 75 feet. Additionally, the contextual zoning would require new buildings maintain the streetwall and would limit curb cuts. These zoning requirements would ensure that the lower-scale cross streets in the subarea north of East 125th would be preserved and would discourage teardowns and the development of out-of-scale buildings. Contextual zoning would ensure that new infill development complements the existing residential character by promoting consistent building height and size.



Existing Condition **44a**



No Action Condition **44b**



Proposed With Action Condition **44c**

LEGEND

- *No Build Development*
- *As of Right Development on Development Sites*
- *Development with the Proposed Actions*

Comparison Massing – Park Avenue at East 132nd Street Facing South

Figure 8-33



Current Condition **45a**



Potential With Action Condition **45b**

Illustrative Rendering of Park Avenue at East 125th Street Facing North

Figure 8-34



Current Condition **46a**



Potential With Action Condition **46b**

Illustrative Rendering of Park Avenue at Metro-North Platform

Figure 8-35



Current Condition **47a**



Potential With Action Condition **47b**

Illustrative Rendering of Park Avenue at East 121st Street Facing South

Figure 8-36



Current Condition **48a**



Potential With Action Condition **48b**

Illustrative Rendering of Park Avenue at East 119th Street Facing North

Figure 8-37



Current Condition **49a**



Potential With Action Condition **49b**

Illustrative Rendering of Lexington Avenue at East 107th Street Facing North

Figure 8-38



Current Condition **50a**



Potential With Action Condition **50b**

Illustrative Rendering of East 116th Street at Third Avenue Facing West



Current Condition **51a**



Potential With Action Condition **51b**

Illustrative Rendering of East 116th Street at Lexington Avenue Facing West

Figure 8-40



Current Condition **52a**



Potential With Action Condition **52b**

Illustrative Rendering of Third Avenue at East 109th Street Facing South

Figure 8-41

View Corridors and Visual Resources

North of East 125th Street, view corridors would not be altered with the Proposed Actions. The views along Park Avenue are already limited due to the raised Park Avenue viaduct and the buildings that would be built under the Proposed Actions would not further limit views. The three churches that are visual resources in the subarea would also remain visibly prominent and views toward each would not be affected.

BETWEEN EAST 125TH STREET AND EAST 116TH STREET

Urban Design

The Proposed Actions would allow for much taller buildings to be developed along the avenues, particularly along Park and Third Avenues, while retaining a lower-scale on the mid-block. Within the subarea 45 sites could be developed, and all would be concentrated along the avenues, particularly along Park, Third, and Second Avenues (see **Figures 8-35 and 8-36**). On Potential Sites Q and R, parking lots located along Park Avenue between West 124th and West 125th Streets, would be replaced with two buildings that would rise approximately 295 feet to 330 feet with base heights of 60 to 75 feet. The large height would allow the first three floors to be developed with non-residential use while providing denser residential development in the area. Project Site 10, located between East 125th and East 124th Street and Park Avenue would be redeveloped with an approximately 270-foot-tall residential and commercial building. The building would have a set back after 80 feet. Project Site 56, located on the southwest corner of East 120th Street and Second Avenue would be redeveloped with an approximately 185-foot-tall residential building with ground-floor stores. These buildings would be taller than most of the existing buildings, but would be similar in scale to 1982 Lexington Avenue, an approximately 279-foot-tall building. While the buildings would alter the urban design by adding much taller buildings to the area, the setbacks between four and six stories would maintain a consistent streetwall. The larger buildings would also increase density in the area and added mixed-income households to the area which would sustain new and existing business. Additionally, the active ground-floors of the buildings would increase foot traffic and developing vacant lots and surface parking would improve the pedestrian experience. Additionally, the larger buildings would add greater density in the area than what is currently permitted as-of-right. The increased density would expand the customer base in the area, which would sustain existing and new businesses thus increasing foot traffic within the area and improving the pedestrian experience. The area between East 125th Street and East 116th Street has a mix of smaller buildings with narrower fronts along the cross streets and larger buildings, with wider fronts along the avenues. The larger, taller buildings that would be built with the Proposed Actions along the avenues would be in keeping with the larger-scale buildings already located along the avenues and would be appropriate in scale for these major thoroughfares.

View Corridors and Visual Resources

Larger buildings would be constructed along the avenues with the Proposed Actions, limiting the views along Third and Second Avenues; however, because of the width of the avenues, views would not be completely lost. Along Third Avenue, views north would already be limited by the 380-foot tall No Action project located between Third and Second Avenues, East 126th and East 127th Streets. Buildings that would be constructed under the Proposed Actions would not further alter the view corridors since they would be constructed within the existing street grid. The narrower, tree-lined cross streets would be maintained, and views along the wider east-west cross streets would not be affected.

The Harlem Courthouse, located on East 121st Street between Lexington and Third Avenues, would remain visible from Lexington Avenue and along East 121st Street. Current views of the courthouse from Third Avenue would be further limited by the replacement of a two-story building on Projected Site 12 with a taller building; however, views would be retained near the intersection of East 121st Street and Third Avenue and it would not result in an adverse impact.

Many of the existing murals within the area between East 125th Street and East 116th Street are painted on walls that are immediately adjacent to projected and potential development sites and would be affected by the Proposed Actions. However, many of these murals are temporary in nature and additional murals are often added to the area. Thus, the vibrant street art would still be retained in other locations throughout the neighborhood.

SOUTH OF EAST 116TH STREET

Urban Design

Under the Proposed Actions, 54 sites could be developed with a mix of tall buildings and smaller buildings concentrated along Lexington, Third, and Second Avenues and along East 116th Street between Park and Third Avenues (see **Figures 8-37 through 8-40**). The area, which is more inconsistent than the other two subareas, is expected to have a more consistent streetwall with the Proposed Actions. Taller buildings would be constructed along Third Avenue—including an approximately 300-foot-tall building on Projected Site 17 and an approximately 290-foot-tall building on Projected Site 18, which would be larger than the NYCHA buildings that rise 14 stories (approximately 165 feet), but would be constructed out to the lot line and would have base building heights of between 75 feet and 85 feet which would help to create a unified streetwall.

New low-rise buildings would be constructed within NYCHA developments along Park, Lexington, Third, and Second Avenues. These one-story buildings would be constructed out to the lot line and would contribute to an active street by introducing new retail to the area and breaking up the large superblocks. While greenspace would be lost along the street, the landscaping and mature trees located within the NYCHA developments would be retained, and walkways through the sites would continue to connect the developments to the avenues.

Similar to the area to the north, the new development South of East 116th Street would help to reactivate key corridors. The increase in residential density would improve the customer base, helping to support and sustain existing and new retail uses. Improved pedestrian conditions, particularly along Park Avenue, would increase the sense of safety in the area and help to reconnect the areas on either side of the viaduct.

View Corridors and Visual Resources

Views within the primary study area south of East 116th Street would continue to be long along Third Avenue. While taller buildings would be constructed along East 115th Street, these would be contained within the existing street grid and views east toward the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics would be maintained. The development on Potential Development Site AC and AD would be approximately 75to 105 feet and would be taller than the neighboring buildings which are approximately 65 feet tall, but would not limit views to Former P.S. 72 along East 106th Street, East 105th Street, and along Lexington Avenue.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

While the Proposed Actions would not result in any new development in the secondary study area, many of the primary study area projected and potential development site buildings located at, or near, the edge of the primary study area would be visible from the secondary study area. However, by focusing the tallest development along Park and Third Avenues, the intervening buildings located on the mid-blocks would serve as a visual transition. In addition, the secondary study area is already characterized by a wide variety of building typologies, including several tall housing developments, industrial and manufacturing areas, and low-rise rowhouses and older apartment buildings. The With Action developments in the primary study area would add vibrancy to Park Avenue and reactivate the commercial corridors along East 125th Street, East 116th Street, Third, Second, and Park Avenues by expanding the residential and retail uses, adding mixed-income housing, and drawing pedestrians to the area. While the With Action developments would be taller than the existing buildings, the taller buildings would be limited to the wider avenues within the primary study area. The taller buildings would be visible from the secondary study, but because they would be concentrated along the avenues, they would be located at a distance from the secondary study area and would not have a direct impact on the urban design of the area.

VIEW CORRIDORS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Similar to views within the primary study area, views within the secondary study area are longest along the wider avenues. As no development would occur in the secondary study area, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impact to view corridors or views to visual resources. Like the No Action Condition, views toward Marcus Garvey Park, Duke Ellington Circle, Central Park, the RFK Bridge superstructure, the towers of the Little Hell Gate Bridge, Harlem River, and Randall's

Island would remain unchanged in the With Action Condition. None of the murals located in the secondary study area would be affected by development under the With Action Condition due to their distance from any development site. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on visual resources in the secondary study area. ✷