3

Socioeconomic Conditions

This chapter considers the potential for the Proposed Actions to result in significant adverse impacts to the socioeconomic character of the surrounding area, which includes its population, housing, and economic activity.

Introduction

Under CEQR, the socioeconomic character of an area is defined by its population, housing, and economic activities. The assessment of socioeconomic conditions usually distinguishes between the socioeconomic conditions of an area's residents and businesses. However, proposed actions may affect either or both segments in the same ways; they may directly displace residents or businesses, or they may alter one or more of the underlying forces that shape socioeconomic conditions in an area, and thus may cause indirect displacement of residents or businesses.

Direct displacement is defined as the involuntary displacement of residents, businesses, or institutions from the actual site of (or sites directly affected by) a proposed project. Indirect or secondary displacement is defined as the involuntary displacement of residents, businesses, or employees in an area adjacent or close to a development site that results from changes in socioeconomic conditions created by a proposed project. Examples include rising rents in an area that result from a new concentration of higher-income housing introduced by a project, which ultimately could make existing housing unaffordable to lower income residents.

The objective of the analysis is to disclose whether any potential changes created by the proposed actions would have a significant adverse impact compared with what would happen in the future without the proposed actions (i.e., the No-Action condition).

An assessment of socioeconomic conditions is warranted when a project would result in:

- Direct displacement of residential population on a development site;
- Direct displacement of existing businesses or institutions on a development site;
- Indirect displacement of residential population in a study area;

- Indirect displacement of businesses or institutions in a study area;
- Indirect displacement of businesses due to retail market saturation; and
- Adverse effects on specific industries.

The Proposed Actions would result in the development of 3.7 million square feet of new construction, including destination entertainment with a music hall, hotel, a gaming facility,[1] convention and meeting space, restaurant and retail space, and office and community facility space. No direct displacement would occur. However, preliminary analyses of indirect business displacement and indirect residential displacement are warranted due to the size of the project, which exceeds 200,000 square feet of commercial space and will have a worker population of approximately 7,400.

Although not required under CEQR, and therefore not analyzed in this chapter as part of socioeconomic conditions analysis, a discussion about the socioeconomic benefits of the project is discussed in **Chapter 1, Project Description.**

Principal Conclusions

The Proposed Project would introduce additional entertainment and recreational uses, retail uses, restaurants, parking, open space, and a hotel to the study area, which would be consistent with existing land use patterns and those being developed in the study area under future No-Action conditions. Existing and No-Action condition land uses in the study area include multiple major regional attractions, including the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Citi-Field, and the NY Hall of Science.

The potential for direct displacement of businesses and residents, as well as retail market saturations, or adverse effects on specific industries, do not meet the thresholds established in the *2021 CEQR Technical Manual*. A preliminary analysis of indirect business displacement was conducted for three analysis subareas surrounding the Development Site—Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Willets Point, and Corona (see **Figure 3-1**). While the Proposed Project does not include new residential uses, it is likely to result in an increase of the residential population in the study area due to the relocation to the study area of a number of employees hired from external markets to work at the Development Site. Therefore, a preliminary analysis of indirect residential displacement was conducted for the quarter-mile study area.

The Proposed Project is intended to provide a year-round integrated entertainment use, comprising destination entertainment and recreational uses, including up to 2,300 hotel rooms, a music hall, gaming facility, convention and meeting space, 316,790 gross square feet (gsf) of restaurants, 134,330 gsf of retail, and 149,270 gsf of visitor amenities. It is therefore expected that visitor demand for accommodations and services would primarily be met on the Development Site. Some visitors would also patronize surrounding neighborhoods.

Indirect Business Displacement in Subareas 1 and 2

There are very few commercial uses to the north and south of the Development Site in Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park, though this subarea contains the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center and other regional attractions found in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Therefore, Subarea 1 is not expected to be affected by the introduction of regional entertainment uses by the Proposed Project. Commercial uses to the east of the Development Site in Subarea 2 – Willets Point

[1] The inclusion of a gaming facility is contingent upon receiving a gaming license from the New York State Gaming Commission.

include the existing Citi Field stadium and the large Willets Point Project site that is planned to be redeveloped with residential, entertainment, and commercial uses in three phases of development. It is anticipated that any new demand created for accommodations or services from the Proposed Project would be readily absorbed in the With-Action condition in Subarea 2 – Willets Point because the subarea is proposed to be built to accommodate regional demand from the proposed soccer stadium and existing nearby regional uses.

Indirect Business Displacement in Subarea 3

The area to the west of the Proposed Project, Subarea 3 – Corona contains a well-established local commercial corridor along Roosevelt Avenue. This subarea has long been established with residential uses and neighborhood-level uses, which have coexisted alongside the existing major attractions in the study area. While the demand for accommodations-type services, such as hotel and restaurants, generated by visitors to the Proposed Project would generally be satisfied by the proposed uses on the Development Site, it is anticipated that the Proposed Project would create some additional demand for accommodations-type services in Subarea 3-Corona. Existing accommodations-type services, and other uses that serve regional visitors in the subarea, already serve visitors of the existing major attractions in the study area, and it is anticipated that these businesses would absorb some of this additional demand. If this new demand is stronger than anticipated, the Proposed Project could result in indirect displacement of businesses in the subarea that typically do not serve regional visitors. However, these existing uses in Subarea 3 - Corona are not unique to the subarea and can be found elsewhere in the subarea, Queens Community District 4, and greater Queens. Potential indirect displacement of these businesses would not significantly alter economic conditions in the subarea—which would continue to be primarily characterized by services, retail, and food service uses that serve both the local population and visitors to regional attractions.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that the introduction by the Proposed Project of new regional entertainment uses to the study area would create significant adverse impacts to the socioeconomic character of the study area.

Indirect Residential Displacement

This preliminary analysis found that the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to the socioeconomic conditions of the study area due to indirect residential displacement. The Proposed Project would introduce approximately 7,400 new workers to the Development Site. It is estimated that approximately 155 of those new workers would be hired from external markets, of which an estimated 79 would move to Queens. Although unlikely, to be conservative, it is assumed that all of those 79 employees and their households would move to the quarter-mile study area. The Proposed Project, as a regional destination, is not expected to draw new residents to the study area. The estimated average incomes of the new employee households would be higher than the average incomes of the study area populations. However, the estimated new population would represent an increase of approximately 2 percent over No-Action conditions, which would not be expected to introduce or accelerate a trend that would potentially lead to the displacement of vulnerable residential populations or create a significant indirect residential displacement adverse impact. Therefore, the Proposed Project does not have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts due to indirect residential displacement.

Initial Screening Assessment

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a socioeconomic assessment should be conducted if a project may be reasonably expected to create substantial socioeconomic changes within the area affected by the project that would not be expected to occur without the project. The analysis begins with an initial screen that considers threshold circumstances identified in the *CEQR Technical Manual* that can lead to socioeconomic changes warranting further assessment. If the initial screen determines that further assessment is warranted, a preliminary assessment is then undertaken. The purpose of the preliminary assessment is to learn enough about the effects of the proposed actions to either rule out the possibility of significant adverse impacts or determine that a more detailed analysis is required to resolve the issue.

- **Direct Residential Displacement**: Would the project directly displace residential population to the extent that the socioeconomic character of the neighborhood would be substantially altered? Displacement of fewer than 500 residents would not typically be expected to alter the socioeconomic character of a neighborhood.

  The Development Site does not currently contain any residential uses. Therefore, no direct residential displacement would occur.

- **Direct Business Displacement**: Would the project directly displace more than 100 employees; or would the project directly displace a business whose products or services are uniquely dependent on its location, are the subject of policies or plans aimed at its preservation, or serve a population uniquely dependent on its services in its present location? If so, assessments of direct business displacement and indirect business displacement are appropriate.

  The Proposed Actions would not directly displace any existing businesses. There are temporary pop-up events, such as outdoor movie nights and carnivals, that operate in the existing parking lots of Citi Field on a seasonal basis under temporary agreements, but these events are sporadic and not on a regular schedule. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in any direct displacement of businesses.

- **Indirect Displacement due to Increased Rents**: Would the project result in substantial new development that is markedly different from existing uses, development, and activities within the neighborhood? Residential development of 200 units or less or commercial development of 200,000 square feet or less would typically not result in significant socioeconomic impacts. For projects exceeding these thresholds, assessments of indirect residential displacement and indirect business displacement are appropriate.

  The Proposed Actions would result in the addition of more than 200,000 square feet (sf) of commercial space. Therefore, a preliminary assessment of indirect business displacement is warranted. While the Proposed Project does not include new residential uses, it is likely to result in an increase of the residential population in the study area due to the relocation to the study area of a number of employees hired from external markets to work at the Development Site. Therefore, a preliminary assessment of indirect residential displacement is also warranted.

- **Indirect Business Displacement due to Retail Market Saturation**: Would the project result in a total of 200,000 sf or more of retail on a single development site or 200,000 sf or more of region-serving retail across multiple sites?

The Proposed Actions would introduce up to 134,330 gsf of retail.[2] Therefore, an assessment of indirect business displacement due to retail market saturation is not warranted.

› **Adverse Effects on Specific Industries**: Is the project expected to affect conditions within a specific industry?

The Proposed Project would not be expected to affect conditions within a specific industry, affect a substantial number of workers or residents who depend on the goods or services provided by affected businesses, or result in the loss or substantial diminishment of a particularly important product or service within the City. An assessment of adverse effects on specific industries is typically undertaken for projects that involve citywide regulatory changes. The Proposed Actions do not include any citywide changes and are not expected to adversely affect the economic and operational conditions of any specific industries in the City. Therefore, an assessment of adverse effects on specific industries is not warranted.

Based on the screening assessment presented above, the Proposed Actions warrant analyses of indirect business displacement and indirect residential displacement.

Preliminary Assessment for Indirect Business Displacement

Indirect Business Displacement Methodology

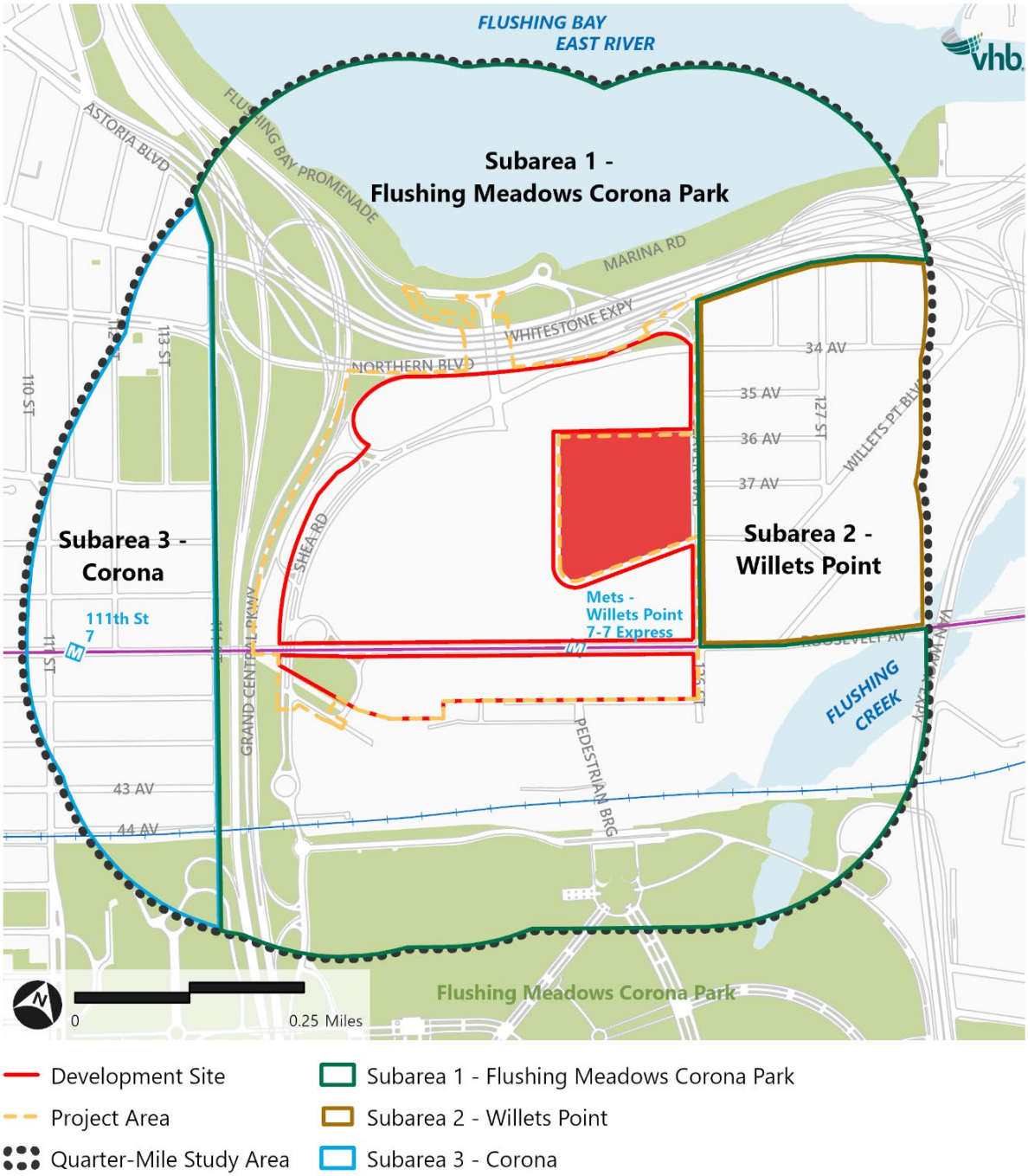
Per *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines, a preliminary assessment of a project's potential to cause indirect business displacement is necessary to determine whether the proposed project may introduce trends that would make it difficult for certain local businesses to remain in the area. Indirect displacement is typically caused by a marked increase in property values and rents or through direct displacement. Direct business displacement would not occur with the Proposed Project, as redevelopment will mostly occur on underutilized asphalt surface parking areas and other areas that are not occupied by existing businesses. This indirect displacement assessment will focus on the potential for the Proposed Actions to result in an increase in area commercial rent or property value, often caused by the introduction of new economic trends.

Study Area Definition

The *CEQR Technical Manual* states that the socioeconomic study area boundaries are similar to those of the land use study area. As discussed in **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**, a quarter-mile area surrounding the Development Site was used for the land use study area. Therefore, the study area for the indirect business displacement assessment is a quarter mile surrounding the Development Site. The study area surrounding the Development Site contains distinct neighborhoods with specific economic characteristics. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, the study area is separated into three subareas. Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park is the area from Flushing Bay Promenade to the north to the southern end of the study area. This subarea includes the Development Site and Citi Field. Subarea 2 – Willets Point is located to the east of the Development Site and is generally bounded by Northern Boulevard, Interstate 678, Roosevelt Avenue, and Seaver Way. Subarea 3 – Corona is located to the west of the Development Site and is generally bounded by 114th Street, 44th Avenue, and just west of 111th Street (see **Figure 3-1**).

[2] Entertainment uses proposed on the Development Site, including the proposed music hall and gaming facility, are not typically considered retail uses. For example, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), used by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, considers "Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation", as well as, "Accommodation and Food Services", as separate industries from "Retail Trade".

Figure 3-1 Socioeconomic Indirect Business Displacement Assessment Study Area



Data Sources

Information used in the assessment of indirect business displacement includes employment-by-industry-sector data from ESRI Business Analyst, 2020; CoStar rent and vacancy data; and a review of existing businesses identified through April 2023 field visits in a subarea to the west of the Development Site. The assessment of indirect business displacement also includes analysis of land use patterns and trends, as established in **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**.

Existing Conditions

The Development Site currently contains parking lots that are accessory to the adjacent Citi Field. The quarter-mile study area primarily comprises parking facilities (29% of total land area), followed by transportation and utility-related uses (23% of total land area in study area), and open space (20% of total land area). Approximately 9% of the study area land area is residential, 7% is vacant land, 5% is commercial and office, 3% is industrial and manufacturing, 3% is auto-related uses, 1% is public facilities and institutions, and 1% is mixed residential and commercial. **Figure 3-2** shows the commercial areas within the study area.

As shown in **Table 3-1**, there are approximately 1,485 employees in the quarter-mile study area—507 employees in Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park, 516 employees in Subarea 2 – Willets Point, and 462 employees in Subarea 3 – Corona. Of the standard NAICS[3] sectors (shown in **Table 3-1** as "Type of Job") those with the most employees in the study area are Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; Wholesale Trade; and Accommodation and Food Service. The NAICS categories with the most employees in Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park are the same as the study area if Unclassified Establishments are not included. The NAICS sectors with the most employees in Subarea 2 – Willets Point are Wholesale Trade; Construction; and Retail Trade. In Subarea 3 – Corona, the NAICS sectors with the most employees are Educational Services; Accommodation and Food Service; and Real Estate, Rental & Leasing. According to ESRI Business Analyst,[4] some of the larger employers in the study area, by subarea, are as follows:

- **Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park**: Citi Field and the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center
- **Subarea 2 – Willets Point**: House of Spices and United Steel Products
- **Subarea 3 – Corona**: National Car Service, Public School 143 – Louis Armstrong School, and LaGuardia Hotel

[3] North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

[4] ESRI Business Analyst, Business Locator Reports, 2022

Figure 3-2 Socioeconomic Study Area Commercial Uses

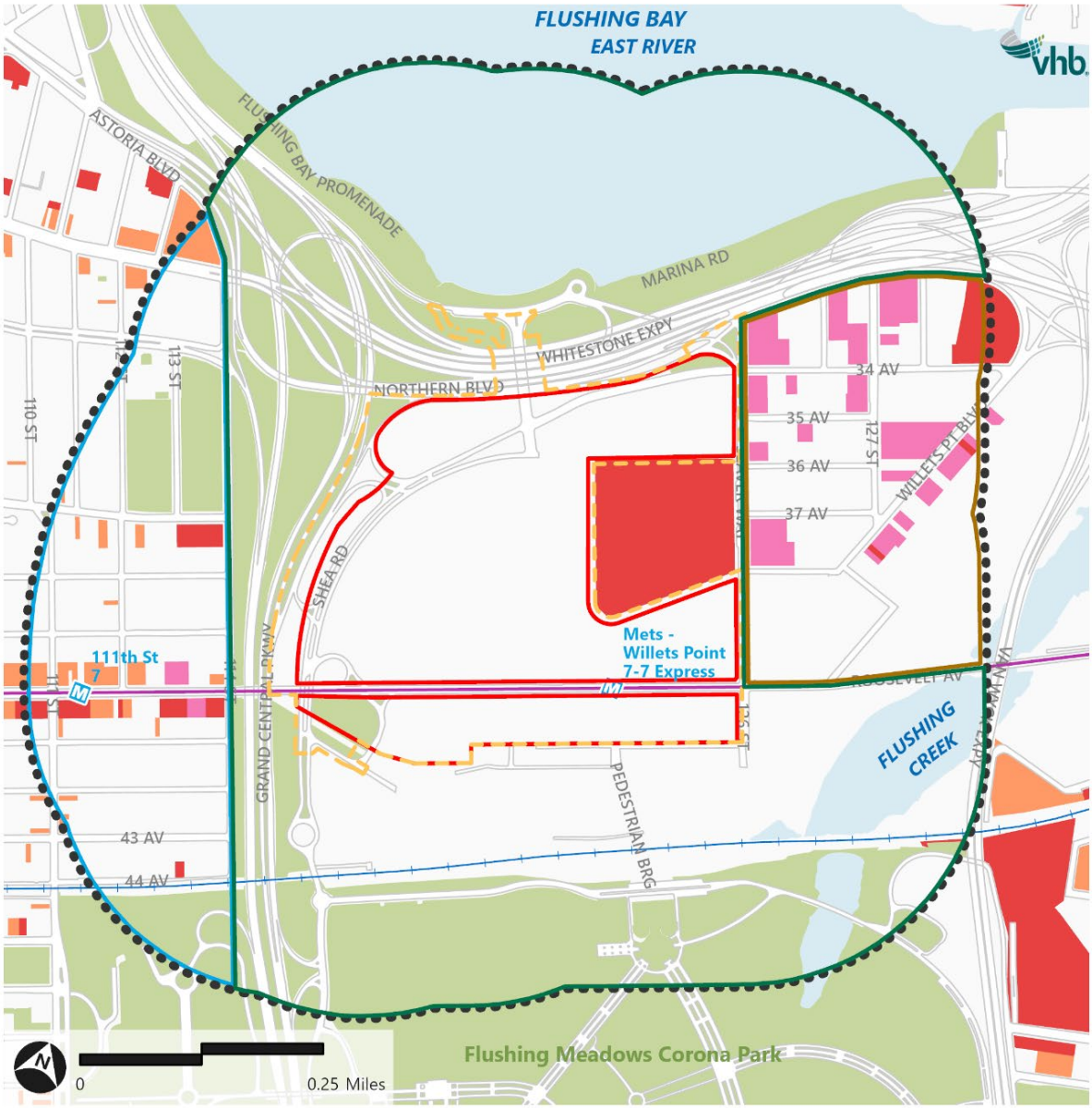


Table 3-1 Employment by Industry Sector

Type of Job (NAICS)	Quarter-Mile Study Area		Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park		Subarea 2 – Willets Point		Subarea 3 – Corona	
	Employees	%	Employees	%	Employees	%	Employees	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Mining	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Construction	148	10.0%	0	0.0%	111	21.5%	37	8.0%
Manufacturing	40	2.7%	7	1.4%	18	3.5%	15	3.2%
Wholesale Trade	210	14.1%	1	0.2%	202	39.1%	7	1.5%
Retail Trade	132	8.9%	3	0.6%	92	17.8%	37	8.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	46	3.1%	29	5.7%	9	1.7%	9	1.9%
Information	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Finance & Insurance	4	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.9%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	45	3.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.6%	41	8.9%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	18	1.2%	2	0.4%	6	1.2%	10	2.2%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%
Administration & Support & Waste Management & Remediation	24	1.6%	2	0.4%	12	2.3%	9	1.9%
Educational Services	130	8.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	130	28.1%
Health Care & Social Assistance	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	377	25.4%	372	73.4%	3	0.6%	3	0.6%
Accommodation & Food Services	149	10.0%	29	5.7%	7	1.4%	113	24.5%
Other Services	66	4.4%	1	0.2%	41	7.9%	24	5.2%
Public Administration	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Unclassified Establishments	93	6.3%	61	12.0%	12	2.3%	20	4.3%
Total	**1,485**	**100.0%**	**507**	**100.0%**	**516**	**100.0%**	**462**	**100.0%**

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Business Summary Report, 2022
Note: Percentages might not add up to 100.0% due to rounding.

Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park

Subarea 1 contains Northern Boulevard, elevated highways, and Flushing Bay Promenade to the north; Citi Field adjacent to the Development Site; several transportation uses, such as the MTA Corona Rail Yard and Casey Stengel Bus Depot; and a portion of Flushing Meadows Corona Park to the south of the Development Site. Flushing Meadows Corona Park is one of the largest parks in New York City, containing several regional attractions such as the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis

Center and the New York Hall of Science, both of which are located in Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

Subarea 2 – Willets Point

Subarea 2 is currently a neighborhood in transition. This area once contained a complex of auto uses, but much of the land planned for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Willets Point Development is currently vacant and expected to be redeveloped by 2027, before full completion of the Proposed Project.

The remainder of the area slated for redevelopment by 2039 in Phase 3 of the Willets Point project remains largely in private ownership. Phase 3 businesses include 88 auto-related businesses, 15 manufacturing and wholesale businesses (including metal manufacturers, a sign manufacturer, a saw manufacturer, food distributors, metal wholesaler, and building supply companies), 4 construction establishments, 3 eating establishments, 2 waste transfer facilities, a gas station, a recycling company, a tour bus operator, and a security systems service. Development activities for Phase 3 of the Willets Point project are anticipated to proceed incrementally, with site acquisition and remediation occurring in advance of new building construction. [5]

Subarea 3 – Corona

Subarea 3 is a predominately residential neighborhood, with a well-established commercial corridor along Roosevelt Avenue that primarily serves the surrounding residential neighborhood with a variety of goods and services. The business corridor along Roosevelt Avenue in Subarea 3 – Corona contains few commercial vacancies, though newly constructed mixed-use buildings just beyond the study area on Roosevelt Avenue contain several commercial vacancies. In April 2023, a field survey was conducted of businesses on the Roosevelt Avenue commercial corridor in Subarea 3, and businesses were categorized using NAICS codes (see **Table 3-2**). The largest industry sector in the Roosevelt Avenue commercial corridor in Subarea 3 is Other Services (except Public Administration), which includes auto repair shops, laundromats and drycleaning services, hair salons and barbers, houses of worship, and other local services. The next largest category of businesses is Retail, with convenience stores, grocery stores, a gas station, and other miscellaneous retail stores. The third largest category of businesses is Accommodations and Food Services, with 12 restaurants and bars and one hotel. The remaining ten businesses in the subarea include cell phone stores, taxi services, check cashing, and other local businesses.

[5] Willets Point Phase 2 Development. CEQR No. 23DME005Q. Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Willets Point Phase 2 Development Project, published February 23, 2024.

Table 3-2 General Types of Business in Subarea 3 – Corona along the Roosevelt Avenue Corridor

NAICS Business Category	Number of Businesses	Type of Business
Other Services (except Public Administration)	21	5 auto repair services, 5 hair salons/barbers, 4 laundromats/dry cleaning, 3 houses of worship, furniture repair, pet grooming, computer repair, tailor
Retail	18	4 convenience stores, 4 grocery stores, general discount store, construction supplies, car stereo store, bakery, clothing store, trading card store, gas station, wine and liquor store, drug store/pharmacy, furniture store
Accommodation and Food Services	13	12 restaurants and bars, hotel
Information	4	3 cell phone stores, telecommunications service providers
Transportation and Warehousing	2	2 taxi service companies
Finance and Insurance	2	Check cashing, money transfer service
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	Travel agency
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1	Engineering services
Total	**62**	

Source: Field visit April 2023

A review of Subarea 3 – Corona through CoStar[6] indicates that this subarea has historically had low vacancy rates. The asking rent was $52 per sf from 2014 through 2016, then started slowly declining from 2017 through early 2020. With the COVID-19 pandemic, asking rents rapidly declined to $36 per sf, then remained stable until a sharp increase to $48 per sf in the third quarter of 2022, which is the most recent data available.

No-Action Condition

As discussed in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, absent the Proposed Actions, it is assumed that the Development Site would continue operating under existing conditions; it would remain as paved parking areas for Citi Field.

[6] CoStar is a commercial real estate information company that provides a database of real estate data, www.costar.com accessed December 7, 2023.

Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park

Subarea 1 would remain the same in the No-Action condition, other than infrastructure improvements proposed for Flushing Bay Promenade, Mets – Willets Point Long Island Railroad Station, and Porpoise Bridge.

Subarea 2 – Willets Point

All of Subarea 2 is proposed to be redeveloped through the proposed Willets Point Phase 1, Willets Point Phase 2, and Willets Point Phase 3 projects. As planned, the first two phases of the Willets Point projects would redevelop the area east of Seaver Way with approximately 2,500 residential units, community facility uses, a soccer stadium, a 250-key hotel, and approximately 84,000 sf of retail by 2027. It is not yet known what type of retail would be developed at the Willets Point site. However, with a substantial new residential community and a soccer stadium proposed, it is likely that the new retail uses would primarily serve these two uses.

No specific development plan has been determined and no developer has been designated for Willets Point Phase 3, and it is beyond the build year of the Proposed Project. However, the reasonable worst-case development scenario for the Willets Point Phase 3 development is proposed as 3,785 residential units, 211,000 sf of retail, 500,000 sf of office space, a 450-key hotel, 144,000 sf of community facility space, open space, parking, and a public elementary school to be completed in 2039.[7] Prior to redevelopment, it is assumed that the Phase 3 area would remain similar to existing conditions.

Subarea 3 – Corona

No new developments or improvements were identified in the No-Action condition for Subarea 3 – Corona.

With-Action Condition

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of indirect business displacement seeks to determine whether a proposed project may introduce trends that would make conditions difficult for vulnerable, or at risk, businesses, meaning those that are either essential to the local economy or the subject of regulations or publicly adopted plans to preserve, enhance, or otherwise protect them, to remain in the area.

The Proposed Project would introduce additional entertainment and recreational uses, retail uses, restaurants, parking, open space, and a hotel to the area. As discussed in **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**, these uses would be consistent with both existing land uses and those being developed in the area under future No-Action conditions and would not result in significant adverse impacts to land use.

The Proposed Project would provide new entertainment uses with a regional draw, much like, and complementary to, the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, the planned soccer stadium in the Willets Point Phase 2 project, and the existing Citi Field stadium—all of which are located in the study area.

[7] Willets Point Phase 2 Development Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement CEQR No.: 23DME005Q (February 23, 2024).

As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, the Proposed Project is intended to provide a year-round integrated entertainment use comprised of destination entertainment and recreational uses, including up to 2,300 hotel rooms; a music hall; gaming facility; convention and meeting space; 316,790 gsf of restaurants; and other accommodations services, such as 134,330 gsf of retail and 149,270 gsf of visitor amenities, that would serve visitors to the entertainment facilities. It is therefore expected that visitor demand for accommodations services would primarily be met on the Development Site. However, it is also anticipated that some of these visitors would visit the surrounding neighborhoods. For this analysis of indirect business displacement, businesses that could be at risk of indirect displacement would be those that do not serve or benefit from the existing local market or the potentially increased regional market that serves the visitors to the surrounding regional uses, such as the Proposed Project. Examples of these types of uses would generally include manufacturing or warehousing uses, auto-related services, and other uses that typically serve areas broader than the local market, and do not serve temporary visitors to an area.

Although not required under CEQR, and therefore not analyzed as part of this socioeconomic conditions analysis, the Proposed Project would result in several benefits to the socioeconomic character of the study area. These include providing a wide range of different job opportunities to the local community, partnering with local suppliers and vendors, and patronage of local businesses from visitors to the Proposed Project. Local hiring efforts would be supported by opening onsite and nearby recruitment centers, through partnerships with workforce development organizations, and by offering a robust onsite training program. These and related benefits are discussed further in **Chapter 1, Project Description.**

Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park

Other than the Proposed Project, Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park would continue to have few commercial uses. Therefore, socioeconomic conditions in Subarea 1 – Flushing Meadows Corona Park are not expected to be affected by the introduction of the Proposed Project.

Subarea 2 – Willets Point

Subarea 2 – Willets Point is directly across Seaver Way from the Proposed Project and is being redeveloped with new regional entertainment and accommodation uses, including a soccer stadium, hotel and retail, and residential uses—all of which are expected to be completed by 2027 through Willets Point Phases 1 and 2. The commercial uses in Willets Point Phases 1 and 2 will therefore serve both a local and regional customer base. It is anticipated that visitors to the Development Site would patronize the new businesses and attractions to be established in Subarea 2 – Willets Point because of the close proximity and proposed entertainment uses. However, the new uses in Subarea 2 – Willets Point are expected to be able to accommodate additional demand from regional visitors as well as new residents of the proposed Willets Point development.

The approximately 120 businesses that currently exist in the Phase 3 area of the Willets Point development may remain before 2039. These businesses were analyzed for direct displacement in the Willets Point Phase 2 Development Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSSEIS). The Willets Point Phase 2 Development FSSEIS found that displacement of these businesses would not create a significant adverse impact because none of the businesses offer goods or services that are of substantial economic value to the region or New York City, as defined under CEQR; alternative sources of similar goods and services are provided elsewhere in the study area or region;

and these goods and services are not unique to the study area or a broader trade area.[8] The businesses that would potentially remain until 2039 are primarily auto-related uses. These uses would likely not serve the visitors to the Proposed Project but are unlikely to be at risk of indirect displacement as a result of any potential additional demand for accommodations and food services generated by visitors to the Proposed Project, since new uses in Willets Point Phases 1 and 2 are expected to be able to accommodate any such potential additional demand. It is therefore not anticipated that visitors to the Proposed Project would alter the expected economic conditions in Subarea 2 – Willets Point in the With-Action condition.

Subarea 3 – Corona

Visitors to the Proposed Project would also be expected to patronize Subarea 3 – Corona. Subarea 3 – Corona contains businesses that primarily serve local residential uses, though the third-largest category of businesses along the Roosevelt Avenue commercial corridor, Accommodations and Food Services, serves both the local neighborhood and visitors to nearby regional uses like the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center and Citi Field. The restaurants and the hotel in Subarea 3 – Corona would continue to serve visitors to the existing regional uses and can be expected to also serve visitors to the Proposed Project, though visitors generated by the Proposed Project are anticipated to be limited.

It is expected that the demand for accommodations, food services, entertainment, and other uses generated by visitors to the Proposed Project will primarily be addressed by the hotel, restaurants and other uses located on the Development Site itself. It is therefore unlikely that the Proposed Project would generate a significant demand for additional regional serving uses within Subarea 3 - Corona that would not be met by the existing businesses.

In the event that the demand for accommodations, food services, entertainment and other uses generated in Subarea 3 - Corona by visitors to the Development Site is greater than anticipated, this demand could be absorbed either in the few commercial vacancies in the study area, or in the newly constructed mixed-use buildings adjacent to the study area on Roosevelt Avenue which contain several commercial vacancies.

In the event that the demand for accommodations, food services, entertainment, and other uses generated by visitors to the Proposed Project in Subarea 3 is greater than anticipated, it is possible that a small number of existing businesses in Subarea 3 could experience increased market pressure through increased commercial rents and could cease operations or relocate their operations outside Subarea 3. The businesses that could be affected by this market pressure would be those retail or service businesses that would not directly benefit from an increased visitor population from the Proposed Project, and which do not primarily attract their patronage from local residents. Examples of these types of uses in Subarea 3 Corona could include warehousing uses, auto-related services, and other types of regional focused uses that do not rely heavily on patronage from local residents and typically do not serve temporary visitors to an area. These uses are not unique to the local neighborhood, and are found throughout Queens and in Subarea 3 - Corona as well as other areas of Queens Community District 4, which includes Subarea 3 - Corona. Because these businesses are not unique to the neighborhood, do not primarily attract their patronage from local residents, and would not benefit from increased visitors, potential closures or relocation of these businesses would not be expected to result in a significant adverse impact. Very few of these businesses exist in the

[8] Willets Point Phase 2 Development Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement CEQR No.: 23DME005Q (February 23, 2024).

study area, therefore, it is not expected that any potential indirect displacement of these uses would significantly alter the economic characteristics of Subarea 3 – Corona.

Subarea 3 businesses, including restaurants, retail, and many services, that primarily serve the local population, including those that also serve visitors to the surrounding regional uses, such as the Proposed Project, are not expected to be adversely impacted by the Proposed Project. These businesses would continue to have the same or a potentially higher demand for their goods and services from the existing residential neighborhood, which would not be affected by direct or indirect residential displacement, as well as from the surrounding regional uses, including the Proposed Project, and can be expected to withstand the limited market pressure for additional accommodations and food uses outside the Development Site that the Proposed Project may generate in Subarea 3.

Any potential changes to the economic characteristics of the subareas would either be beneficial or would not be large enough to significantly alter existing economic characteristics. Therefore, a detailed assessment of indirect business displacement is not warranted and the Proposed Project does not have the potential to result in significant impacts due to indirect business displacement.

Preliminary Assessment for Indirect Residential Displacement

Indirect Residential Displacement Methodology

Per *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines, a preliminary assessment of a project's potential to cause indirect residential displacement is necessary to determine whether the proposed project may either introduce a trend or accelerate a trend of changing socioeconomic conditions that may potentially displace a vulnerable population to the extent that the socioeconomic character of a neighborhood would change.

The first step of the preliminary analysis is to determine if the proposed project would add new population with higher average incomes compared to the average incomes of the existing populations and any new population expected to reside in the study area without the project. While most analyses of indirect residential displacement involve residential projects, particularly those which would introduce a costlier type of housing compared to existing housing and the housing expected to be built in the future No-Action condition, the *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines suggest that a preliminary assessment of indirect residential displacement may also be warranted for large (over 200,000 sf) non-residential projects which may have the potential to introduce a new population to the study area. If the expected average incomes of the new population would exceed the average incomes of the study area populations, then the next step of the analysis is conducted. Step 2 of the assessment involves calculating the size of the new population in comparison to the estimated future population of the study area. If the new population is estimated to increase the study area population by more than 5 percent, then the assessment proceeds to Step 3. Step 3 considers whether the study area has experienced a trend toward increasing rents and concludes with criteria that determine whether a detailed analysis should be conducted. This preliminary assessment follows the step-by-step preliminary assessment guidelines described in Section 322.1 of the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

Data Sources

Information used in the socioeconomic analysis includes data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Census, 2020 Census, 2006–2010 American Community Survey (ACS), and 2018–2022 ACS, compiled through the NYC Population FactFinder. The 2018–2022 data reflects 5-year averages of income distribution, mean income, and median rent for the trailing 12 months in 2022 inflation-adjusted dollars. The mean income and median gross rent of each Census Tract were compiled by the NYC Population FactFinder. Census data for 2010 and 2020 were used for population estimates.

The quarter-mile study area contains four census tracts, however, two of these census tracts (Queens Census Tracts 383.01, which is primarily comprised of the Project Site and Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, and 383.02, which is primarily comprised of the Willets Point area) currently do not contain residential populations or housing. Therefore, data for this assessment is based only on Queens Census Tracts 399.01 and 399.02, both in the Corona neighborhood, unless otherwise noted.

Real estate property listing data was obtained from www.streeteasy.com, www.apartments.com, and www.craigslist.com. Area Median Income (AMI) for the New York City region was obtained from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

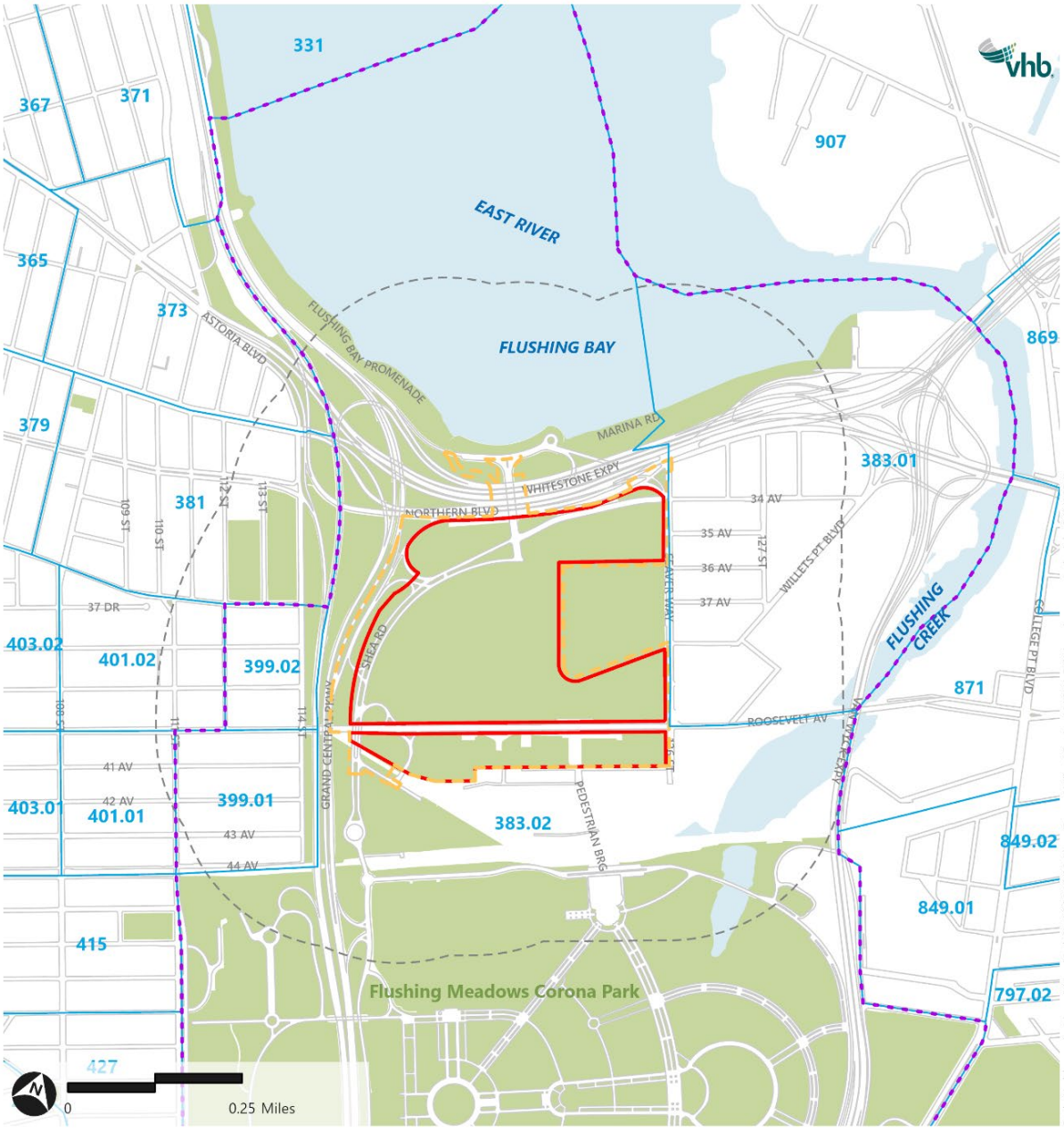
Study Area Definition

The *CEQR Technical Manual* states that a quarter-mile socioeconomic study area is appropriate unless the project could increase the population by more than five percent as compared with the population expected to reside in a quarter-mile study area in the future No-Action condition. The Project Site is located in Queens Census Tract 383.02; the remaining census tracts in the quarter-mile study area are Queens Census Tracts 383.01, 399.01, and 399.02 (see **Figure 3-3**).[9] The quarter-mile population has an existing population of 5,160. Development of the Willets Point area would occur in the No-Action condition, which would increase the No-Action population to 11,532. Assuming 79 Project Site employees and their households[10] move to the study area (see discussion below), the With-Action population would be 11,768, a 2 percent increase over the No-Action condition. Therefore, a quarter-mile study area is appropriate.

[9] As noted in Data Sources, only data from Queens Census Tracts 399.01 and 399.02 is used for this assessment.

[10] The average household size is from the 2020 US Census for Queens Community Districts 403, 404, and 407, compiled via Population FactFinder.

Figure 3-3 Socioeconomic Indirect Residential Displacement Assessment Study Area



Existing Conditions

The population of the quarter-mile study area was 5,160 in 2020, which is an increase of 24.9 percent over the 2010 Census population of 4,132 (see **Table 3-3**). The population of both Queens and New York City as a whole has increased over the same time period by 7.8 percent and 7.7 percent, respectively.

Table 3-3 Area Population

Area	Population 2010	Population 2020	% Change
Study Area	4,132	5,160	24.9%
Queens	2,230,722	2,405,464	7.8%
New York City	8,175,133	8,804,190	7.7%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census and 2020 Census

The number of households and housing units in the study area in 2020 were 1,172 and 1,217, respectively. In 2010, there were 1,025 households and 1,131 housing units, representing increases of 14.3 percent and 7.6 percent, respectively (see **Table 3-4**). Queens and New York City showed 8.6 percent and 8.4 percent increases in the number of households, respectively, and both had an increase of 7.3 percent in the number of housing units.

Table 3-4 Household and Housing Data

Area	2010 Households	2020 Households	% Change	2010 Housing Units	2020 Housing Units	% Change
Study Area	1,025	1,172	14.3%	1,131	1,217	7.6%
Queens	780,117	847,210	8.6%	835,127	896,333	7.3%
New York City	3,109,784	3,370,448	8.4%	3,371,062	3,618,635	7.3%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census and 2020 Census

The majority of occupied housing units in the study area are rental units (81.1 percent) rather than owned units (18.9 percent), see **Table 3-5**. The percentage of occupied rental units is less in Queens (59.8 percent) and in New York City as a whole (70.2 percent).

Table 3-5 Housing Tenure

Area	% Vacant	% Renter Occupied Units	% Owner Occupied Units
Study Area	3.7%	81.1%	18.9%
Queens	5.5%	59.8%	40.2%
New York City	6.9%	70.2%	29.8%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census and 2020 Census
Notes: % Vacant, as defined by the U.S. Census, includes vacant housing units for rent or sale, units that are occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere, and vacant units held off the market

Median gross rent for the study area is $1,953 and was $1,669 in 2010 (see **Table 3-6**). Median gross rent in Queens is $1,847, a 15.9 percent increase from 2010. Median gross rent for New York City is $1,714, an 18.6 percent increase from 2010. A review of current rental listings on www.streeteasy.com, www.apartments.com, and www.craigslist.com shows average rents of $1,900

for studios, $2,500 for one-bedroom units, $3,000 for two-bedroom units, and $3,100 for three-bedroom units.[11]

Table 3-6 Median Gross Rent

Area	Years 2006-2010	Years 2018-2022	Change	Percent Change
Study Area	$1,669	$1,953	-[1]	-[1]
Queens	$1,594	$1,847	$253	15.9%
New York City	$1,445	$1,714	$269	18.6%

Source: 2006-2010 ACS 5-year Estimate and 2018-2022 ACS 5-year Estimate
Notes:
[1] The Margin of Error (MOE) of the difference between 2006-2010 ACS 5-year Estimates and 2018-2022 ACS 5-year Estimates is greater than one-third of the estimated difference; therefore, the change and percentage change cannot be estimated with confidence.

Based on 2018–2022 ACS 5-year Estimates, average household income in the study area is $86,849, and was $101,916 in 2010. Median household income in the study area is $80,988. The average income in the study area is lower than in Queens ($109,287) and in New York City ($122,667). Median income in the study area is slightly lower than Queens ($82,431) and higher than in New York City ($76,607) (see **Table 3-7**). Household income distribution is not included in this assessment because statistically significant data is not available for household income distribution in the study area.

Table 3-7 Average and Median Household Income

Area	2006–2010 Average Household Income	2018–2022 Average Household Income	Average Household Income Percent Change	2006–2010 Median Household Income	2018–2022 Median Household Income	Median Household Income Percent Change
Study Area	$101,916	$86,849	-[1]	-[2]	$80,988	-[1]
Queens	$94,732	$109,287	15.4%	$74,604	$82,431	10.5%
New York City	$105,106	$122,667	16.7%	$67,850	$76,607	12.9%

Source: 2006-2010 ACS 5-year Estimate and 2018-2022 ACS 5-year Estimate
Notes:
[1] The Margin of Error (MOE) of the difference between 2006–2010 ACS 5-year Estimates and 2018–2022 ACS 5-year Estimates is greater than one-third of the estimated difference; therefore, change and percentage change cannot be estimated with confidence.
[2] Statistically significant data is not available.

No-Action Condition

In the No-Action condition, the Development Site would continue operating under existing conditions; it would remain as a paved parking area for Citi Field under the current lease agreement with the City. No residential uses would be introduced at the Development Site, and no new residential development is anticipated in the Corona section of the study area. However, the Special Willets Point District (SWPD) area is anticipated to be redeveloped through the proposed Willets Point Phase 1, Willets Point Phase 2, and Willets Point Phase 3 projects. As planned, the first two phases of the Willets Point projects would redevelop the area east of Seaver Way with approximately

[11] www.streeteasy.com, www.apartments.com, and www.craigslist.com accessed July 25, 2024 for the Corona and North Corona Neighborhood Tabulation Areas due to small sample sizes in the study area.

2,500 residential units (all affordable or senior units), community facility uses, a soccer stadium, a 250-key hotel, and approximately 84,000 sf of retail by 2027. These projects would introduce a new population of approximately 6,372[12] to the study area, for a total No-Action condition population of 11,532.

With-Action Condition

As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, the Proposed Project is intended to provide a year-round integrated entertainment use comprising destination entertainment and recreational uses including up to 2,300 hotel rooms, a music hall, gaming facility, convention and meeting space, restaurants, retail, visitor amenities, and open space. No residential uses would be introduced at the Development Site. However, the Proposed Project would introduce a significant number of workers to the Development Site with approximately 7,400 new jobs. Of these workers, it is estimated that most would be hired locally within New York City, and approximately 2.1 percent, or 155 employees, would be hired from external markets due to technical skill and experience requirements. Based on existing commuting patterns which show that the vast majority of employees who work in New York City commute from existing places of residence in neighborhoods different from their workplace, it is estimated that only approximately 24 of these 155 employees would move to the area surrounding the Development Site, 55 would move to the rest of Queens, and the remaining 76 employees would relocate elsewhere[13]. In order to provide a conservative analysis, it is assumed that all 79 new Queens households would live in the quarter-mile study area. The Proposed Project, as a regional destination, would draw a significant number of visitors to the Project Site. However, it is not expected to draw new residents to the area, other than potentially some of the new employees who would relocate from outside of New York City.

As described in the **Existing Conditions** section above, average market-rate listed rents for the study area range from $1,900 for a studio apartment to $3,100 for a three-bedroom apartment. The unit mix required by the 79 new households is not known. Therefore, a unit mix is assumed based on the listed market-rate units in the area to include approximately 12 percent studios, 53 percent one-bedroom units, 24 percent 2-bedroom units, and 12 percent three-bedroom units. [The range of average incomes for the new tenants can be estimated by assuming that the new households would pay 30 percent of their income on housing. This ratio is based on the HUD definition of cost-burdened families which states that those paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing may have difficulty affording other necessities. Using these assumptions, it is estimated that the new households of employees that relocate to the study area would have average annual incomes ranging from $76,000 to $124,000 (see **Table 3-8**), or a weighted average of approximately $104,706 based on the assumed unit mix.]

[12] Based on the average renter household size of 2.65 residents per non-senior unit in Queens Community District 7 and 1.5 residents per senior unit.

[13] Based on 2018-2022 ACS 5-year Estimate and US Census LEHD On the Map commuting data. New York City residents travel to work throughout the City with an average commute time of 41 minutes. Data shows that workers in the study area travel to their worksites from all five boroughs, with only 15.3% residing within the study area. For purposes of this analysis, a larger study area encompassing ZIP codes 11354, 11355, and 11368 was utilized to align with data sources and include the surrounding neighborhoods for establishing local commuting patterns.

Table 3-8 Estimated Income for Market-Rate Units

Unit Type	Average Rent	Estimated Monthly Income	Estimated Average Annual Income
Studio	$1,900	$6,333	$76,000
1-Bedroom	$2,500	$8,333	$100,000
2-Bedroom	$3,000	$10,000	$120,000
3-Bedroom	$3,100	$10,333	$124,000

Notes:
Average rent is based on rental listings from July 2024, as described in the Existing Conditions section. Estimated average monthly income and annual income assumes that the household pays 30 percent of income on rent.

Using the above CEQR methodology of a weighted average based on the mix of unit types that would be occupied, the average income of new households moving to the study area is estimated to be at least $104,706., which would be higher than the average household income for the study area of $86,849. The average income is likely to be even higher because the employees moving to New York City will be highly specialized in their fields, though, as noted above, most hiring will occur within New York City,

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, if a proposed project is expected to introduce new population with similar average incomes to the existing average income of the study area, then no further analysis is warranted; however, if the estimated income of the new population exceeds the average income of the study area population, then Step 2 of the analysis should be conducted.

Step 2 of the Indirect Residential Displacement Preliminary Analysis, per the *CEQR Technical Manual*, is to determine if the project's increase in population is large enough to affect real estate market conditions in the study area. In the With-Action condition, the Proposed Project will increase the No-Action condition study area population from 11,532 to 11,768, a 2 percent increase. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, if the population increase is less than 5 percent within the study area, these conditions would not be expected to affect real estate market conditions and no further analysis is warranted. As a result, the Proposed Project does not have the potential to result in significant impacts due to indirect residential displacement.