

Stevenson Commons EIS

Chapter 16: Neighborhood Character

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the Proposed Actions' potential effects on neighborhood character. As defined in the 2020 City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual, neighborhood character is an amalgam of various elements that give a neighborhood its distinct "personality." These elements may include a neighborhood's land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, and/or noise conditions; but not all of these elements contribute to neighborhood character in all cases. For a proposed project or action, a neighborhood character analysis under CEQR first identifies the defining features of the neighborhood and then evaluates whether the project or action has the potential to affect those defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical analysis areas. Thus, to determine the effects of a proposed action on neighborhood character, the salient features of neighborhood character are considered together. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character impacts are rare, and it would be unusual that, in the absence of a significant adverse impact in any of the relevant technical areas, a combination of moderate effects to the neighborhood would result in an impact to neighborhood character. Moreover, a significant impact identified in one of the technical areas that contribute to a neighborhood's character is not automatically equivalent to a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character, but rather serves as an indication that neighborhood character should be examined.

As discussed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Actions would facilitate new residential and community facility development at Stevenson Commons in the Soundview neighborhood of Bronx Community District 9. The Stevenson Commons site (the "Project Area") at 1850 Lafayette Avenue (Block 3600, Lots 4, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, and 50) comprises the 679,000-square foot (sf) superblock bounded by Lafayette Avenue, White Plains Road, Seward Avenue, and Thieriot Avenue. The eastern portion of the site is currently developed with a mix of residential, retail, community facility, and/or accessory parking uses. The Proposed Actions would encompass the following discretionary approvals:

- Modification to the previously approved Stevenson Commons large scale residential development (LSRD) (CP-22380) to update the previously approved plans and zoning calculations to reflect the proposed predominantly residential development on Block 3600, Lots 4, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, and 50, which is part of the same zoning lot as the previously approved development; and
- Amendment to the previously approved Stevenson Commons City-aided limited-profit housing project and plan on ~~Block 3600, Lot 4~~ pursuant to Article 2 of the New York State Private Housing Finance Law (CP-22381) to reflect the land actually occupied by the existing Mitchell-Lama development.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate new construction on the Stevenson Commons site that would result in an incremental (net) increase compared to No-Action conditions of approximately 735 affordable dwelling units (DUs), including 621 income-restricted housing units and 114 affordable independent residences for seniors (AIRS), 33,995 gross square feet (gsf) of community facility uses, approximately 1.94 acres of publicly accessible open space, and a net decrease of 104 accessory parking spaces (the "Proposed

Project”). New development would be spread across six new buildings on the Stevenson Commons site. Construction of the Proposed Project is expected to begin in the second quarter of 2021 with all components complete and operational by early 2028.

This chapter includes a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character, which was prepared in conformance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*. This chapter describes the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Actions on these defining features. This assessment relies on the technical analyses presented in other chapters of this EIS.

B. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts associated with neighborhood character. The Project Area is located in the Soundview neighborhood of the Bronx, an established residential community defined by a variety of low-density residential, commercial, and institutional building types developed in the 20th century, largely surrounded by yards, open space, and accessory parking. Residential buildings in the area range from low-rise rowhouses set back from the street to high-rise towers-in-the-park such as the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Monroe Houses. Mean annual household incomes of residents living in the study area are lower than the Bronx and New York City, likely attributed in part to the substantial number of NYCHA housing developments in the vicinity of the Project Area. The abundance of street trees and public open space resources within and in close proximity to the secondary study area are defining features of the neighborhood surrounding the Project Area. There is also a substantial amount of surface parking in the secondary study area, both as accessory parking to residences and public facilities, and on-street parking options. The study area is also served by various public transit options.

The Proposed Actions would permit the development of affordable housing, community facility space, and public open space on the western portion of the Stevenson Commons site, which would remain underutilized absent the Proposed Actions. The requested minor modifications would facilitate the development of an additional 735 affordable income-restricted DUs, including 621 income-restricted units and 114 AIRS units, 33,995 gsf of community facility uses, and 1.94 acres of publicly accessible open space. The proposed minor modifications would be consistent with the Stevenson Commons LSRD development, and would be compliant with the underlying R6 zoning district and compatible with the built character of the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, the Proposed Project would support the City’s goals of promoting affordable housing development by maximizing the use of vacant and underutilized land.

As described elsewhere in this EIS and summarized herein, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts in the areas of land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; shadows; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; or noise. As discussed in greater detail below, the significant adverse traffic and bus impacts that would occur as a result of the Proposed Actions would not affect any defining feature of neighborhood character, nor would a combination of moderately adverse effects (related to any of the above-mentioned technical analysis areas) affect such a defining feature. While the Proposed Actions would result in increased transportation activities and significant adverse traffic and bus impacts, these impacts would not result in a significant change to one of the determining elements of neighborhood character, and the resulting conditions would be similar to those seen in the study area and would not create levels of activity or service conditions that would be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. Thus, the changes in transportation due to the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character. In addition, while incremental vehicle volumes introduced as a result of the

Proposed Actions would increase noise levels adjacent to the Project Area, the increases would not be perceptible to individuals (i.e., would be less than 3.0 dBA) and therefore, would not alter the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

C. METHODOLOGY

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

A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in other technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The key elements that define neighborhood character, and their relationships to one another, form the basis of determining impact significance; in general, the more uniform and consistent the existing neighborhood context, the more sensitive it is to change. A neighborhood that has a more varied context is typically able to tolerate greater change without experiencing significant adverse impacts. If there is no potential for a proposed project to affect the defining features of neighborhood character, a detailed assessment is not warranted. Pursuant to the *2020 CEQR Technical Manual*, the preliminary assessment evaluates the expected changes resulting from the Proposed Actions in the above technical areas using the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Actions would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas, and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character.

Study Area

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study area for a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character is typically consistent with the study areas utilized in the relevant technical areas assessed under CEQR that contribute to the defining features of the neighborhood. Therefore, the study area for this analysis is the same as those used in land use and urban design assessments. The study area for the assessment of the Proposed Actions on neighborhood character extends to include all lots within an approximate 400-foot radius of the Project Area, roughly bounded by Stickball Boulevard to the east, midblock between Seward and Randall Avenues to the south, midblock between Taylor and Beach Avenues to the west, and midblock between Lafayette and Story Avenues to the north.

D. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

Defining Features

Project Area

The Stevenson Commons site comprises the 679,000 sf superblock bounded by Lafayette Avenue to the north, White Plains Road to the east, Seward Avenue to the south, and Thieriot Avenue to the west. The site is occupied by a nine-building Mitchell-Lama housing development that was constructed in 1977. The existing buildings are located on the eastern portion of the block, set back from the street and oriented around a central private open space, and are faced in brick with regular fenestration. They contain a total of 948 affordable rental DUs, 10,648 gsf of local retail uses, and a 36,214 gsf health center. The local retail establishments occupy the one-story base of the adjacent 24-story residential towers in the northeastern corner of the Project Area, which is setback from the street, forming a large plaza. The Stevenson Commons site has an existing built FAR of 1.42, including a residential FAR of 1.35, a community facility FAR of 0.05, and a commercial FAR of 0.02.

The area to the south of the existing buildings on Seward Avenue accommodates a paved parking lot with plantings, as well as a wide paved area leading to the buildings and a private street leading to an entrance from Lafayette Avenue. To the north of the building on Lafayette Avenue is a setback from the street with plantings and public open space. The northern lawn is also improved with trees, plantings, lighting fixtures, and features multiple paved pathways connecting the Stevenson Commons site's Lafayette Avenue entrance to the Lafayette Avenue sidewalk and outdoor amenity space. The inside area of the existing Stevenson Commons development consists of a private open space that features a playground, plantings, paved walkways, benches, and seating areas.

The western portion of the Project Area is occupied by surface accessory parking spaces and private open spaces, including private tennis and handball courts. These private open spaces, which also include passive grassy areas, total approximately 3.1 acres, and are used exclusively by current residents, although the grass field is currently not operational for the tenants due to safety concerns. The Project Area includes three surface parking lots; however, only 462 of the 570 at-grade parking spaces on the site are currently functional, as a portion of the parking square footage is used for onsite maintenance and storage.

¼-Mile 400-Foot Secondary Study Area

The blocks comprising the secondary study area are rectilinear in form, and are largely comprised of tree-lined streets with a variety of low-density building types developed in the 20th century, spurred first by the expansion of the Lexington Avenue subway in 1920, and then by the completion of the Bruckner Expressway in the 1960s. The neighborhood surrounding the Project Area has undergone little new development since the mid-20th century, and remains much as it did in the late-1970s.

The majority of buildings in the study area are residential and institutional/public facilities surrounded by yards, open space, and accessory parking. Residential buildings in the area range from low-rise rowhouses set back from the street to high-rise towers-in-the-park such as the ~~New York City Housing Authority~~ (NYCHA) Monroe Houses at 1760 Monroe Avenue. As detailed further in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," mean annual household incomes of residents living in the study area is lower than residents of the Bronx and New York City, which is likely attributed in part to the substantial number of NYCHA housing developments in the vicinity of the Project Area.

Public facilities and institutions in the study area are largely concentrated along White Plains Road, Lafayette Avenue, and Soundview Avenue, and include a U.S. Postal Service facility, a nursing/rehabilitation center, houses of worship, several schools, and the New York Public Library (NYPL) Soundview Branch. There are also a number of street-level retail establishments in the northwest portion of the study area, including the Shops at Bruckner Boulevard.

Several local and regional open spaces are located in and immediately adjacent to the study area, including Story Playground (2.1 acres), Castle Hill Park (8.8 acres), Pugsley Creek Park (83.6 acres), and Soundview Park (205.3 acres). The abundance of open space resources within and in close proximity to the secondary study area is a defining feature of the neighborhood surrounding the Project Area.

There is also a large amount of surface parking in the secondary study area, both as accessory parking to residences and public facilities, and on-street parking options. Additionally, the study area is served by various public transit options, including ferry service at the Soundview Ferry Terminal in Clason Point Park, several New York City Transit (NYCT) local bus routes along the major thoroughfares of White Plains Road, Lafayette Avenue, and Soundview Avenue (Bx5, Bx27, Bx36, Bx39), and NYCT subway service (No. 6 train) along Westchester Avenue.

Assessment of the Potential to Affect the Defining Features of the Neighborhood

The sections below discuss potential changes resulting from the Proposed Actions in the following technical areas that are considered in the neighborhood character assessment pursuant to the *CEQR Technical Manual*: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; shadows; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the Proposed Actions and resultant Proposed Project would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas, and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character. As described below, defining features of the study area's neighborhood character would not be adversely affected either through the potential of any significant adverse impact or in combination with any other moderate effects in the relevant technical areas.

Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on land use, zoning, and public policy, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. The Proposed Actions would allow a new development containing a mix of residential and community facility uses that would be in keeping with the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood. The Proposed Actions would be consistent with the Stevenson Commons LSRD plan, and would be built at a density and bulk compatible with the underlying R6 zoning of the Project Area.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, ~~and~~ Public Policy," no significant adverse impacts related to land use, zoning, or public policy would occur in the future with the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would not adversely affect surrounding land use, nor would the Proposed Actions generate land uses that would be incompatible with land use, zoning, or public policy within the secondary study area.

The proposed affordable residential units, community facility uses, and public open space replacing an underutilized portion of the Stevenson Commons site would be comparable to existing and planned developments in Soundview, and would directly support several major City policies aimed at increasing

supply of affordable housing in New York City. The Proposed Actions would facilitate a mixed-use development in an area well-served by mass transit, and would also result in the creation of new public open space in the Project Area. The Proposed Project would constitute a substantial improvement with respect to land use compared to the current and No-Action conditions of surface parking and private open space on the western half of the site, which ~~do not~~ provide community facility space, affordable housing, or public open space to residents of the surrounding area.

As such, the Proposed Actions would result in a development that, in addition to being appropriate for the Project Area, would complement the residential and community facility land use character of the secondary study area.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on socioeconomic conditions, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As discussed in Chapter 3, “Socioeconomic Conditions,” the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts on direct residential displacement, direct business/institutional displacement, indirect residential displacement, indirect business/institutional displacement, or adversely affect specific industries in the Project Area or surrounding study area.

The Proposed Actions would not result in the direct or indirect displacement of any residents or businesses or adverse effects on specific industries. The proposed 735 additional DUs of affordable housing in the Project Area would be marketed to households earning between 30 percent and ~~100-130~~ percent of Area Median Income (AMI). The preliminary assessment of potential indirect residential displacement provided in Chapter 3, “Socioeconomic Conditions,” found that, although the Proposed Project would not generate market-rate units, given the income levels of the residents in the surrounding area, it is possible that residents introduced by the Proposed Actions could have incomes higher than those of the surrounding area. However, as the Proposed Actions would only increase the study area’s residential population by less than five percent, the Proposed Actions would not introduce a substantial new population that could noticeably affect residential real estate market conditions in the area. The affordable housing added by the Proposed Actions would help to maintain a diverse demographic composition within the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not introduce a new concentration of higher-income residents that could alter rental market conditions in the study area. The area would retain its mixed-use character and the Proposed Actions would create opportunities for new affordable housing, including affordable housing for seniors, in an area with strong demand for such housing.

Open Space

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on publicly accessible open space, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As detailed in Chapter 5, “Open Space,” the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on the City’s open space resources.

The Proposed Actions would not directly displace or alter any of the local or regional open spaces located in or immediately adjacent to the study area, and the Proposed Project would not result in a reduction of open space ratios in the study area that would consequently overburden existing facilities or further exacerbate a deficiency in open space. Moreover, the Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of 1.94 acres of publicly accessible open space in the western portion of the Project Area that would include a variety of public amenities and programming, including tennis courts, pathways, gardens,

landscaping, and seating. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to open space would occur as a result of the Proposed Actions, but rather, the introduction of 1.94 acres of publicly accessible open space in the Project Area would add to the variety of public open space options in the study area, thereby enhancing the character of the neighborhood.

Shadows

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential shadows of the Proposed Project, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As detailed in Chapter 6, “Shadows,” the Proposed Actions would result in incremental shadow coverage (i.e., additional, or new, shadow coverage) on portions of one sunlight-sensitive open space resource: Space Time Playground. However, the extent and duration of the incremental shadows on this open space resource would not significantly reduce or completely eliminate direct sunlight exposure on any of the open space resource’s sunlight-sensitive features; nor would they significantly alter the public’s utilization or enjoyment of the open space resource’s facilities, or threaten the viability of vegetation or other sunlight-sensitive features within the open space resource. Therefore, incremental shadows from the Proposed Project on Space Time Playground would not be considered a significant adverse impact, in accordance with *CEQR Technical Manual* methodology, and would not significantly alter any of the defining characteristics of the neighborhood surrounding the Project Area.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to the potential effects of the Proposed Actions on historic and cultural resources, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As detailed in Chapter 7, “Historic and Cultural Resources,” the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts to historic or cultural resources. As the Project Area does not contain any designated or eligible historic architectural resources, the Proposed Actions would not result in any direct impacts to historic resources. Additionally, as detailed in Chapter 6, “Shadows,” the Proposed Actions would not generate incremental shadows on any sunlight-sensitive features of surrounding historic resources. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse shadows impacts on historic resources.

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse indirect impacts on historic architectural resources. The Proposed Actions would not adversely alter the context or setting of the nearby State/National Register of Historic Places (S/NR)-eligible P.S. PS 100 so as to affect those characteristics that make the building eligible for listing on the S/NR. The Proposed Project would be visible when looking west at P.S. PS 100 from Taylor Avenue; however, this change in setting would not be adverse. The study area is a dense urban environment with multiple existing mid-rise and high-rise buildings that currently form the backdrop for P.S. PS 100. The school was built to accommodate the rapidly growing population of Soundview as a result of the newly constructed urban renewal housing of the mid-20th century, including the eight- to 15-story Monroe Houses immediately west of the S/NR-eligible historic resource and the 16-story Carol Gardens Apartments immediately east. As such, the mid- and high-rise buildings that would be constructed in the Project Area a result of the Proposed Actions would not be out of context in the backdrop of P.S. PS 100, and would not adversely alter the visual setting of the school.

Additionally, in the future with the Proposed Actions, no incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements would be introduced to any historic resource’s setting. The Proposed Project would not alter the relationship of P.S. PS 100 to the streetscape, as all streets in the study area would remain open and the S/NR-eligible historic resource’s relationships to adjacent streets would remain unchanged in the future with the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Project would not eliminate or screen public views of

P.S.PS 100, which would remain visible in view corridors on adjacent public streets and sidewalks. No primary facades, significant architectural ornamentation, or notable features of the S/NR-eligible school would be obstructed by the Proposed Project. The Proposed Actions would not result in development that would diminish the qualities that make the S/NR-eligible P.S.PS 100 historically and architecturally significant. As such, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse indirect or contextual impacts on historic architectural resources.

Furthermore, as there are no historic architectural resources located within 90 feet of the Project Area, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse construction-related impacts to historic resources. As such, the Proposed Actions would not adversely affect the architectural character of the historic resources in the study area, and therefore no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character can be expected in relation to historic and cultural resources.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As discussed in Chapter 8, “Urban Design &and Visual Resources,” the Proposed Actions would facilitate development that is not currently permitted as-of-right in the Project Area, which would create a notable change in the urban design character of the area. Compared to the future without the Proposed Actions, the visual appearance, and thus the pedestrian experience of the Project Area, would change considerably. However, this change would not constitute a significant adverse impact on the area’s urban design and visual resources, thus not negatively affecting a pedestrian’s experience of the area.

Development anticipated in the Project Area in the future with the Proposed Actions is expected to positively affect the urban design of the area and improve the pedestrian experience. The Proposed Project would replace surface parking lots and underutilized areas of the Project Area, enlivening the streetscape and serving as an extension of the residential and community-oriented uses in the surrounding area. The Proposed Project would fill an existing void by replacing existing underutilized land with active pedestrian-oriented uses that would complement those found in the primary and secondary study areas. The Proposed Actions would also enhance the streetscape by introducing new street trees, plantings, and street walls along Seward, Lafayette, and Thieriot Avenues, similar to the existing streetscapes to the south and west of the Project Area, and improving pedestrian access. The Proposed Project would serve as a transition between the lower-scale buildings found to the south and west and the high-rise buildings in northern portions of the Project Area and study area. The development facilitated by the Proposed Actions would be constructed on an existing superblock, and would not entail any changes to topography, street patterns, street hierarchy, block shapes, or natural features. In addition, the Proposed Project would not alter views of study area visual resources. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources, but rather, would greatly enhance the streetscape experience adjacent to the Project Area with active ground-floor community-oriented uses and publicly accessible open space resources, and therefore would improve neighborhood character.

Transportation

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Actions on transportation, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As described in Chapter 11, “Transportation,” the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse traffic impacts and significant adverse impacts to bus

service. No significant adverse subway service, pedestrian, or parking impacts would occur as a result of the Proposed Actions.

The Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse traffic impacts at ~~ten~~11 lane groups at ~~six~~seven intersections in the weekday AM peak hour, ~~three~~two lane groups at two intersections in the midday, ~~six~~seven lane groups at four intersections in the PM, and ~~three~~six lane groups at three intersections in the Saturday peak hour. As discussed in Chapter 18, "Mitigation," the identified significant adverse traffic impacts could be fully mitigated at ~~six~~two lane groups at ~~two intersections~~one intersection in the weekday AM peak hour, ~~three~~one lane groups at ~~two intersections~~one intersection in the midday peak hour, ~~six~~two lane groups at ~~four intersections~~one intersection during the PM peak hour, and ~~two~~four lane groups at two intersections in the Saturday peak hour through implementation of traffic engineering improvements such as signal timing changes and lane restriping. Impacts to a total of ~~four~~nine lane groups would remain unmitigated at ~~four~~six intersections in the weekday AM peak hour, one lane group at one intersection in the weekday midday peak hour, five lane groups at three intersections in the weekday PM peak hour and two lane groups at one intersection in the Saturday peak hour.

Additionally, the Proposed Actions would result in significant adverse impacts on northbound and southbound Bx39 bus service in the AM peak hour. As detailed in Chapter 18, "Mitigation," the identified significant adverse bus service impact could be fully mitigated by the additional of two standard buses in the northbound direction and one standard bus in the southbound direction in the AM peak hour.

As noted above, the character of the study area, like that of many neighborhoods in New York City, is in part defined by the levels of vehicular and pedestrian activity that exist. While the Proposed Actions would result in increases to pedestrian volumes, sidewalks in the surrounding area have sufficient capacity to absorb new pedestrian users and analyzed sidewalks would continue to operate under fluid conditions or better, and would not represent a significant adverse impact on the character of the neighborhood.

The introduction of new vehicles and buses, despite the anticipated impacts that are disclosed in Chapter 11, "Transportation," would also not represent a significant adverse impact on the character of the neighborhood, as the study area and surrounding neighborhood are already characterized by moderate vehicle volumes, predominately in the form of auto and bus traffic. As noted above, implementation of traffic engineering improvements would fully mitigate the significant adverse impacts resulting from the Proposed Actions at ~~six~~two lane groups at ~~two intersections~~one intersection in the weekday AM peak hour, ~~three~~one lane groups at ~~two intersections~~one intersection in the midday peak hour, ~~six~~two lane groups at ~~four intersections~~one intersection during the PM peak hour, and ~~three~~four lane groups at ~~three~~two intersections in the Saturday peak hour. However, impacts would remain unmitigated at ~~four~~nine lane groups at ~~four~~six intersections in the weekday AM peak hour, one lane group at one intersection in the weekday midday peak hour, five lane groups at three intersections in the weekday PM peak hour, and two lane groups at one intersection in the Saturday peak hour. As the ~~four~~ intersections at which these unmitigated traffic impacts would occur are currently characterized by high levels of traffic, and would operate under congested conditions in the future without the Proposed Actions, the traffic impacts associated with the Proposed Actions would not be expected to result in substantial changes to neighborhood character. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character would result from the Proposed Actions.

Noise

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the Proposed Actions, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant

technical areas discussed in this section. As detailed in Chapter 14, “Noise,” the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse noise impacts.

Noise levels in proximity to the Project Area in the future with the Proposed Actions would not be perceptible, as the increased traffic volumes generated by the Proposed Actions would fall well below the applicable *CEQR Technical Manual* significant adverse impact threshold (3.0 dBA). In terms of noise exposure categories, noise levels along area roadways adjacent to the Project Area in the future with the Proposed Actions would be classified as “Marginally Acceptable” along ~~Thieriot and Seward~~ Lafayette and Thieriot Avenues, same as under the No-Action condition. As a result of the Proposed Actions, noise levels along Lafayette and Thieriot Avenues would increase from “Marginally Acceptable” to “Marginally Unacceptable”; however, this increase would not be perceptible to individuals. The noise levels in proximity to the Project Area are typical of many neighborhoods in New York City, and would remain so in the With-Action condition. As noise is not a defining feature of the neighborhood, the anticipated small increases in noise levels in the area as a result of the Proposed Actions would not constitute a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character.

Potential for Combined Effects on Neighborhood Character

As stated in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, if a proposed project would have the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood through a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical areas, then a detailed assessment may be required.

Though development facilitated by the Proposed Actions would result in small to moderate effects in all technical areas that contribute to neighborhood character, these combined effects would not result in any significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character. The Proposed Project’s uses and building forms would be in keeping with the established character of the surrounding study area. In addition, the Proposed Project would greatly enhance the streetscape experience adjacent to the Project Area and provide publicly accessible open space, thereby improving neighborhood character.

Therefore, based on the results of the preliminary assessment, there is no potential for the Proposed Actions to result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character, and further analysis is not warranted.