

Police Academy – College Point, Queens
CHAPTER 4: URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential for the Proposed Action to have a significant adverse effect on urban design and visual resources. As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the Proposed Action would include a site selection for approximately 35 acres of City-owned land, including a majority of the Department’s Vehicle Impoundment Lot (“Tow Pound”) in College Point, Queens. The proposed action would allow for the development of a modern training complex, to be operated by the NYPD, which would consolidate in one-campus facilities for civilians, recruits, and active police officers that are currently spread across the City. The total development size would consist of approximately 2.4 million gross square feet (gsf) and would include indoor training facilities, classrooms, and related support space, an indoor pistol training facility, a tactical village, an indoor track, a police museum, a visiting police/lecturer lodging facility and approximately 2,000 parking spaces, including a 1,800-space above-grade accessory parking garage and 200 at-grade parking spaces in parking lots and along the Academy’s interior road network (“proposed Academy” or “proposed development”).

The *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* states that urban design components and visual resources determine the “look” of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the size and shape of buildings, their arrangement on blocks, the street pattern, and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. As the Proposed Action would facilitate the development of a public facility, which would be notably different in height and scale from existing development, a detailed urban design and visual resources analysis was conducted to determine whether the Proposed Action would result in significant adverse impacts to these resources. This chapter analyzes existing conditions and the future without and with the Proposed Action for the 2014 analysis year. The study area for urban design and visual resources coincides with the land use and zoning study area, and is defined as extending a quarter-mile from the boundary of the proposed Academy site.

B. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this analysis considers the effects of the Proposed Action on the following elements, which collectively form an area’s urban design:

- *Block Form and Street Pattern.* This urban design feature refers to the shape and arrangement of blocks and surrounding streets, such as a grid pattern with regularly sized, rectangular blocks. These features set street views, define the flow of activity through an area, and create the basic format on which building arrangements can be organized.
- *Building Arrangement.* This term refers to the way that buildings are placed on zoning lots and blocks. The buildings can have small or large footprints, be attached or detached and separated by open space uses, and be varied in their site plans. This urban design feature helps to convey a sense of the overall form and design of a block or a larger area.
- *Building Bulk, Use, and Type.* Buildings are usually described by these characteristics. A building’s bulk is created from an amalgam of characteristics that include its height, length, and width; lot coverage and density; and shape and use of setbacks and other massing elements. The general use of a building (e.g., residential, manufacturing, commercial office) gives an

impression of its appearance and helps to convey visual and urban design character. Building type refers to a distinctive class of buildings and suggests distinguishing features of a particular building. Examples of building type include: industrial loft, church, gas station, and walk-up tenement.

- Streetscape Elements. Streetscape elements are the distinctive physical features that make up a streetscape, such as street walls, building entrances, parking lots, fences, street trees, street furniture, curb cuts, and parking ribbons. These features help define the immediate visual experience of pedestrians.
- Street Hierarchy. Streets may be classified as expressways, arterials, boulevards, collector/distributor streets, or local streets, and they may be defined by their width, type of access, and the presence or absence of at-grade pedestrian crossings. Street hierarchy helps convey a sense of the overall form and activity level of a neighborhood.
- Topography and Natural Features. Topographic and natural features help define the overall visual character of an area and may include varied ground elevations, rock outcroppings and steep slopes, vegetation, and aquatic features.

This analysis also considers the potential effects of the Proposed Action on the area's visual resources, which the *CEQR Technical Manual* defines as unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. Visual resources can include waterfront views, public parks, landmark structures or districts, or natural features, such as rivers or geologic formations.

As recommended by the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this technical analysis evaluates the potential for impacts in two areas—the proposed Academy site and a surrounding study area (see Figure 4-1). The proposed Academy site encompasses a total of approximately 35 acres and includes a majority of the NYPD's existing College Point Tow Pound, an existing vehicle service facility, and a vacant strip of land along College Point Boulevard.

The urban design study area extends an approximate quarter-mile radius from the proposed Academy site and for the assessment of urban design, has generally been divided into five distinct sub-areas: the area bounded by 28th Avenue, Ulmer Street, 25th Avenue, and Flushing Bay (north of the Site); the area east of Ulmer Street and north of 28th Avenue (northeast of the Site); the area to the east of the Whitestone Expressway (generally bounded by 29th Road, 31st Drive, and the Whitestone Expressway); the area generally bounded by Ulmer Street, the Whitestone Expressway, College Point Boulevard (south of the Site); and the area bounded by College Point Boulevard, 28th Avenue and Flushing Bay/Flushing River (west of the Site), as shown in Figure 4-1.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Urban Design

Project Site

As noted above, the proposed Academy site encompasses a total of approximately 35 acres and is located in the College Point area of Queens, just to the north of the Whitestone Expressway as it crosses the Flushing River. The Site is generally bounded by the 28th Avenue to the north, Ulmer Street to the east, 31st Avenue to the south, and College Point Boulevard to the west (refer to Figure 4-1).

The Site, shaped like an arrowhead, is located at the southern limits of the College Point II Industrial Urban Renewal Area (see Figure 4-2). The Site consists largely of paved, unimproved land. The proposed Academy site includes a City-owned vehicle service station (the City leases the property to the vehicle service station on a month-to-month basis), a City-owned strip of vacant land that is



Site boundaries are approximate



Police Academy - College Point, Queens

Figure 4-2
College Point II Industrial Urban Renewal Area

located between the Tow Pound and College Point Boulevard, and the balance of the Proposed Academy site is comprised of the northern portion of the NYPD's College Point Tow Pound. On a daily basis, the Tow Pound contains approximately 3,000 vehicles, 1,300 motorcycles and 600 auto parts on a paved asphalt lot. All of the vehicles, motorcycles and parts are being relocated to other City-owned sites as the City reorganizes its citywide operations.

Current buildings at the College Point Tow Pound include the 2-story, approximately 17,000 square-foot main administrative building/garage at the 31st Avenue entrance and an outlying building, a one-story, approximately 1,125 square-foot structure which is located near its secondary access along Ulmer Street at the northeastern edge of the property. The southern five acres of the existing Tow Pound, including the main administrative building/garage, is located to the south of the proposed Academy's southern property line. As such, the main administrative building/garage is not located within the limits of the proposed Academy site.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," an exposed drainage ditch (part tidal and part freshwater) in the shape of an inverted "L" bisects the proposed Academy site, separating the eastern third from the western two thirds of the site. The drainage ditch originates in the northeastern section of the proposed Academy site where two 84-inch storm sewers discharge drainage from offsite. The northern and central sections of the ditch are connected via two 84-inch culverts beneath the northern bridge. These culverts have tide gates constructed on the downstream end, limiting tidal flow to the central and southern sections of the ditch. The ditch ultimately drains offsite to the south via three 72-inch pipes located at the southern boundary at 31st Avenue. The structure provides drainage for upland areas of College Point via culverts to Flushing Bay to the south, emptying near the Whitestone Expressway (approximately 700 feet south of the proposed Academy site). The drainage structure was constructed by NYCEDC in the early 1980's. The tide gates were recently replaced by NYCEDC.

The approximately 35-acre proposed Academy site, consisting of the Tow Pound Site, the service station parcel, and the strip of land between the College Point Tow Pound and College Point Boulevard, would be developed as the Police Academy.

The proposed Academy site is located in the area of College Point, Queens that has become known by many as the College Point Corporate Park. Set on 550 acres in northern Queens, this area of College Point has been the focus of a City redevelopment effort for many years (refer to Figure 4-2). With over 175 companies, College Point Corporate Park has established itself as a major business center. Industries represented include office operations, light manufacturing, printing, distribution, and retail. Adding to the park's diversity are major retailers and consumer service operations including Home Depot, Staples, BJ's Wholesale Club, Target, the United States Postal Service, a multiplex cinema, and the New York Times printing plant. An MTA Bus Depot is located north of the proposed Academy site, and Coastal Oil is located southwest of the site. Other local uses include a cement manufacturer, a heavy equipment rental company, and a cable storage company. Municipal uses include a Department of Sanitation site and transfer station and a ConEdison facility.

The Site has frontage on College Point Boulevard, 28th Avenue and Ulmer Street. To the south of the Site, on the project block, to the east of the exposed drainage channel, are several commercial uses and a church. The Department of Motor Vehicles has an office located within this plaza.

As shown in Figure 4-3, the project site has limited streetscape elements. The entire Tow Pound portion of the Site (except for the main entry at 31st Avenue) is surrounded by a tall fence, which obstructs views into the Tow Pound. Similarly, the vacant strip of land between College Point Boulevard and the Tow Pound is also fenced and obstructs public views into the Site. Existing sidewalks around the project site vary from 12 to 16 feet wide. Street trees are planted along Ulmer Street, 28th Avenue and College Point Boulevard. Utility poles are located along the streets in the area,

which carry various services throughout the College Point neighborhood. There are currently two curb cuts located on the Ulmer Street frontage, one on the 28th Avenue frontage, and two on the College Point Boulevard frontage. Although the 31st Avenue frontage would not be included within the proposed project, it should be noted that there are two curb cuts providing access at the NYPD tow pound's primary entrance and a third curb cut which provides access to the adjacent drainage ditch (which would be part of the proposed Academy site).

Study Area

The approximate quarter-mile urban design study area extends north to 25th Avenue and south to the point where the Whitestone Expressway crosses the Flushing River. The eastern boundary is 29th Road, while the western boundary includes the entire coastline from a point south of 25th Avenue, south to the Whitestone Expressway. The study area is characterized by the outer edges of several distinct areas of College Point that do not have a strong connection to each other, as they are generally separated by broad thoroughfares and large transportation, commercial, manufacturing, and light industrial uses which visually and physically divide the study area into five subareas. As noted above, the five sub-areas include the following: the area to the north of 28th Avenue and west of Ulmer Street (Sub-Area I); the area north of 28th Avenue and east of Ulmer Street (Sub-Area II); the area to the southeast of the Whitestone Expressway (Sub-Area III); the area to the southeast of the project site that is generally bounded by College Point Boulevard, the Whitestone Expressway, Linden Place, and 28th Avenue (Sub-Area IV); and the area to the west of College Point Boulevard between 28th Avenue and the Whitestone Expressway (Sub-Area V). See Figure 4-4, "Photo Locations" for the sub-areas and identification of photo locations.

Topography, natural features, street hierarchy, street pattern, and block shapes are discussed below for the entire quarter-mile study area. Building bulk, use, type, and arrangement, as well as streetscape features are discussed separately and in more detail for each subarea listed above. Figure 4-4 shows the location of photographs referenced in the discussion below.

Overall, the urban design of the study area is defined by a number of large transportation, commercial, manufacturing, and light industrial facilities that occupy large sites surrounded by accessory parking lots, low-density residential areas featuring detached and semi-detached homes as well as some mid-density assisted living facilities along the waterfront to the north of 27th Avenue. Several big box commercial uses are located within the study area boundaries, including a Home Depot, which is located to the south of the proposed Academy Site, Toys 'R Us, and Office Depot which are to the east, along with a multiplex cinema. A variety of other low-rise commercial office buildings, warehouses and/or small manufacturing facilities are located to the west/southwest of College Point Boulevard.

The nearest buildings to the proposed Academy site are the 2-story office building and the bus maintenance facility at the MTA's College Point Bus Depot, located immediately north of the proposed development site, across 28th Avenue. The remainder of the MTA property is occupied with at-grade bus parking. A variety of other light manufacturing, transportation and commercial uses are also located immediately to the north of the proposed Academy site. Detached residences are concentrated along the south side of 26th Avenue, west of 125th Street and on the north side of 26th Avenue, west of 127th Street.

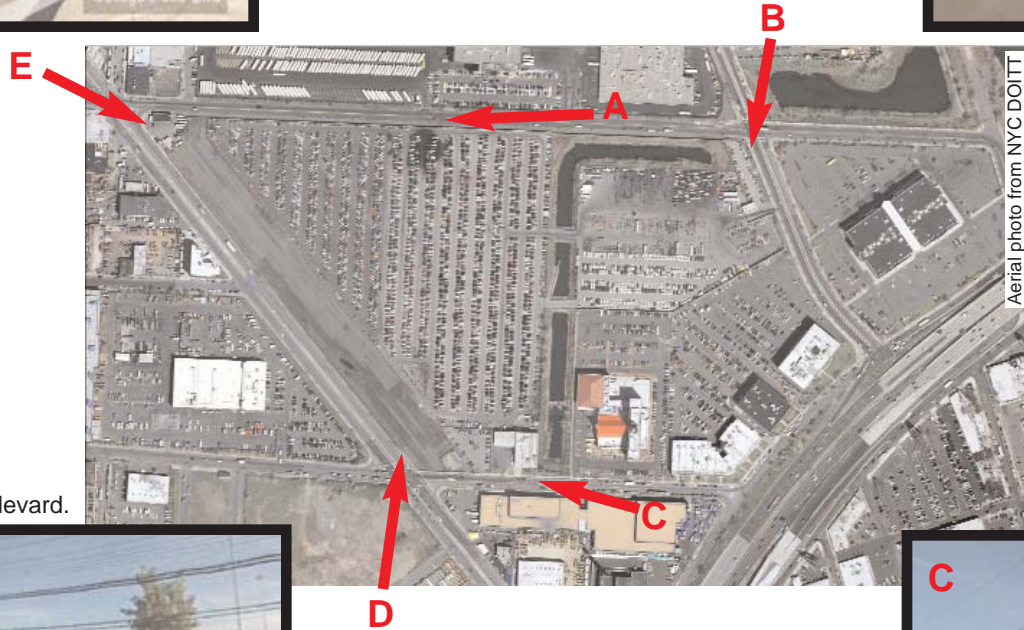
The irregular street pattern consists of highly trafficked thoroughfares and side streets. Most of the buildings throughout the study area—including commercial, manufacturing, light industrial, and residential buildings—are low-lying buildings, though there are a few buildings and structures in the area that are over five stories tall (including a hotel which is located at 30th Avenue and College Point Boulevard and the 9-story church building which is located to the south of the proposed site, just east of the drainage ditch).

E. Southeast along College Point Boulevard.



A. West along 28th Avenue.

B. South along Ulmer Street.



Aerial photo from NYC DOITT

D. North along College Point Boulevard.



Street-level photos from Google Streetview.

C. West along 31st Avenue.





Site boundaries are approximate

Topography and Natural Features

Throughout the quarter-mile study area, the topography is generally level, though the land slopes slightly from north to south and towards the coastline of Flushing Bay and Flushing River. Flushing Bay is located approximately a quarter-mile west of the proposed Academy. The mouth of the Flushing River is also located approximately a quarter-mile to the south of the proposed Academy site. As described in greater detail in the Project Description, a man-made drainage ditch bisects the site. This structure helps to drain the Flushing Airport site, which is located to the northeast, along with the upland areas. The approximately 25-acre College Point Sports Park is located to the west of the former Flushing Airport site, within a quarter-mile of the proposed Academy site. Given the predominant manufacturing characteristics of the immediate area, including large at-grade parking lots, greenery is provided primarily by street trees. The residential areas in the northern portions of the study area consist of landscaped yards.

Block Form, Street Pattern and Street Hierarchy

The study area has a highly irregular street pattern that consists of a network of arterials, local streets and private roadways, as well as the Whitestone Expressway. In the vicinity of the proposed Academy site, the broad thoroughfares of College Point Boulevard and Ulmer Street establish the major north-south corridors. Generally, superblocks comprise the study area to the south of 26th Avenue, with the northern area comprised of a more typical street grid. Several large irregularly shaped superblocks have also had a strong impact on the street patterns and block shapes throughout most of the study area (the predominantly manufacturing sections). The study area also contains a number of short streets, which only extend for one, or just a few blocks, especially west of College Point Boulevard.

College Point Boulevard is the major north-south arterial along the western edge of the quarter-mile study area, with two travel lanes in each direction, plus exclusive left turn lanes at the approaches to intersections. Parking is restricted along the east and west curbs during all periods of the day, Monday through Sunday. College Point Boulevard is a NYCDOT-designated truck route.

Ulmer Street also runs north-south in the vicinity of the project site, which is located along the eastern edge of the proposed Academy site, and terminates at the Whitestone Expressway's northern service road (westbound traffic). Ulmer Street is one lane in each direction with No-Standing Anytime posted along both curbs.

Linden Place runs north-south with one travel lane in each direction and No-Standing Anytime along both the east and west curbs. This arterial primarily carries traffic between the Whitestone Expressway and Northern Boulevard.

The Whitestone Expressway (I-687), located approximately 400 feet to the southeast of the proposed Academy, isolates the College Point neighborhood from the Flushing neighborhood. The Whitestone Expressway is a limited access multi-lane highway with adjacent service roads. The expressway begins to the north on the Whitestone Bridge and terminates at the Van Wyck Expressway (I-678) interchange with the Grand Central Parkway. In the study area, the Whitestone Expressway has interchanges at 20th Avenue and Linden Place. The Linden Place interchange provides access directly to the southeast of the proposed Academy site. The northern service road carries traffic in the westbound direction with two travel lanes. The southern service road carries traffic in the eastbound direction with two travel lanes.

Both 28th Avenue and 31st Avenue carry a significant share of the local east-west traffic in the study area.

As mentioned above, the area north of the Whitestone Expressway and west of Linden Place is comprised of an irregular street grid. The street grid becomes more regular to the north of 26th Avenue. South of 26th Avenue, large transportation, commercial, manufacturing, light industrial and utility uses are sited on large, irregularly shaped blocks with on-site accessory parking lots. Most of the secondary streets in this area are narrow, one-way or two-way local streets.

Building Bulk, Use, Type and Arrangement

Sub-Area I: The area to the north of 28th Avenue and west of Ulmer Street

This sub-area, while not a distinct neighborhood, is located immediately to the north of the proposed Academy site. This sub-area is a transitional area that bridges the manufacturing areas to the south with the residential portion of the College Point neighborhood to the north. Land uses along the north side of 28th Avenue include the MTA's College Point Bus Depot, a nightclub, a gas station, and several commercial and light manufacturing businesses. The commercial and light manufacturing buildings are typically two-to-four stories tall with large footprints. At-grade accessory parking lots are located on-site around each of these buildings to accommodate staff and visitors.

To the west of College Point Boulevard, the area is comprised of residential uses. At 119th Street, several mid-rise assisted care facilities are located along the waterfront. This generally low-density residential sub-area primarily consists of one- and two-family detached and semidetached residential buildings in a variety of styles (see Figure 4-5, "Typical Views Within Sub-Area I"). The buildings are generally brick and wood-framed houses that are between one-to three-stories tall. They occupy narrow lots and are typically setback from the street, featuring shallow front yards and private driveways.

Uses along College Point Boulevard are varied and include local retail, institutional, and automotive services. However, residential uses are the primary land use along College Point Boulevard in this sub-area. The residential uses along College Point Boulevard are two to three story brick buildings. Many of the buildings are semidetached and some are attached. Generally, the buildings along College Point Boulevard are built to the street with no setback.

Floor area ratios (FARs) of 0.75 in this sub-area are based on residential zoning designations R4 and R4A, which result in predominantly low-density residential structures that are two-stories tall. The maximum lot coverage in an R4 district is 45 percent of the lot area. In an R4A district, lot coverage is governed through the yard requirements. Required front yards have to be at least 10 feet deep and at least as deep as an adjacent front yard up to a depth of 20 feet; rear yards of 30 feet are required; and two side yards are required that total at least 10 feet and a minimum width of two feet each.

The FAR in the R5-B portion of this sub-area is 1.35, which typically produces three-story row houses with a maximum street wall height of 30 feet, above which the building slopes or is set back to a maximum building height of 33 feet. The maximum lot coverage in an R5-B district is 55 percent of the lot area.

The FAR in the M1-1 portion of this sub-area is 1.0, which typically result in one and two-story warehouses studded with loading bays.

The eastern portion of Sub-Area I was included within the Special College Point District. The area was rezoned from and M1-1 to an M2-1 district. M2 districts occupy the middle ground between the light and heavy industrial areas of the City. The M2-1 district has lower performance standards than a M1 district. M2-1 districts have a maximum FAR of 2.0 and a maximum base height before setback of 60 feet. Parking requirements of Section 44-21 of the Zoning Resolution are applicable and vary



1. Mid-rise elder-care facility located at 120th Street and 26th Avenue.

2. A bird's eye view of the MTA bus facility, located immediately to the north of the proposed Academy site.



3. Typical housing in Sub-Area I.

according to use. Loading berth requirements also differ according to type of use and size of establishment.

Sub-Area II: The area north of 28th Avenue and east of Ulmer Street

Sub-Area II is largely un-built. This sub-area includes the approximately 25-acre College Point Sports Park, an at-grade satellite parking lot for the multiplex cinema, and offices for a construction company (see Figure 4-6, “Typical Views Within Sub-Area II”). Additionally, the area includes a portion of the mapped Linden Place roadbed (un-built, but expected to be re-constructed), the former Flushing Airport site, and a portion of the New York Times property. A drainage area, which serves to drain the flood-prone former Flushing Airport site, is located to the south and east of the construction company’s property.

As described in Chapter 3, “Open Space,” College Point Sports Park is an approximately 25-acre facility that provides a roller hockey rink, two little league ball fields with bleachers, and floodlights for nighttime use of the facilities, benches, drinking fountains, and a comfort station. Reconstruction of the park began in the late 1990s. Today, the park is in excellent condition and is enjoyed by area residents.

The satellite parking lot provides at-grade parking for the exclusive use of movie theatre patrons and is only used occasionally, during peak movie times (nights and weekends). The lot, with approximately 300 parking spaces, remains vacant during the typical workday as it is only used during nights and weekends as needed.

The office building is a contemporary two-story brick building. The building is set back slightly from the street, allowing for a landscaped area between the public right-of-way and the building. There is one curb cut on Ulmer Street providing access to the accessory parking lot.

As mentioned above, Linden Place is mapped but not constructed north of 28th Avenue. The City intends to reconstruct Linden Place from 28th Avenue to 20th Avenue. Linden Place is a planned No-Build development and is expected to be constructed and open to vehicular traffic by the project’s 2014 Build year.

The long-vacant former Flushing Airport site is currently not publicly accessible. No public views are available to the property from any public streets or sidewalks. While some buildings remain on the former airport property, they are in serious disrepair and are off limits to the public. Overall, the former Flushing Airport site is overgrown and is frequently flooded.

The portion of the New York Times property that is located within the study area consists of site access and a small accessory parking lot. There are no major structures located on the New York Times property within the quarter-mile radius.

This entire sub-area was included within the recent Special College Point District. A portion of this sub-area was rezoned from M1-1 to M2-1. As described above, the FAR in the M1-1 portion of this sub-area is 1.0. The FAR of the M2-1 portion of this sub-area is also 1.0. This results in mostly low-rise one-to four-story industrial, manufacturing, and commercial buildings.

Sub-Area III: The area to the southeast of the Whitestone Expressway

The area located immediately to the southeast of the Whitestone Expressway, within a quarter-mile radius of the proposed Academy site, is comprised of a number of mid-rise residential buildings, a 6-story commercial office building, a variety of one-story local retail uses, and a Pathmark grocery store

(see Figure 4-7, “Typical Views Within Sub-Area III”). Many of these uses have either shared or private parking lots immediately adjacent to the building. At the western limit of this sub-area, larger warehouses are located near the northbound Whitestone Expressway service road.

The mid-rise residential buildings, located at the eastern limits of this sub-area, along the west side of 137th Street, are mid-rise brick buildings. Three of these multi-family apartment buildings are located on the block bounded by 137th Street, 31st Road, Linden Place, and the northbound Whitestone Expressway service road. A surface parking lot occupies approximately half of the Linden Place frontage. P.S. 242 is located at the southeast corner of this block. This brick building is four stories tall with a setback after the third floor. The school building is not built to the street, allowing for the side yard to be used as a playground. Immediately to the west of the school, nine attached apartment buildings comprise the southwestern part of this block. These three-story residential buildings are constructed with brick and there are two single car garages on the ground-floor level of each building.

The block located immediately to the west contains two buildings. This block is bounded by Linden Place to the east, 31st Road to the south, Farrington Road to the west, and the northbound Whitestone Expressway service road to the north. The northern of the two buildings contains a bowling alley. It is a one-story brick building that physically resembles a warehouse. A large accessory parking lot is located between the bowling alley and the office building to the south. The six-story brick office building is set back from the street on all sides, with accessory parking lots surrounding the building.

Other uses in this area include a car wash, a Pathmark supermarket, warehouses and local retail uses in small strip-malls. The area is characterized by one-story buildings with accessory parking, which is either provided on-site or off-site on an adjacent lot. Most of the buildings are constructed of masonry with glass storefronts and are simple, boxy buildings. Generally the buildings are built to the lot lines, though some buildings are set back from the street to accommodate accessory parking.

The roadways in the area are generally narrow local streets. On-street parking is typically permitted along the streets in this sub-area.

This sub-area is primarily zoned for high performance industrial use, except for the northeast portion, which is zoned for medium-density residential development (R6). Floor areas along the Whitestone Expressway are based on the M1-1 high performance industrial district, which permits a maximum FAR of 1.0. This results in mostly low-rise one-to four-story industrial and commercial buildings. The FAR in the R6 area ranges from 0.78 (for a single-family building) to 2.43 at a typical height of 13 stories; the open space ratio (OSR) ranges from 27.5 to 37.5. A taller building can usually be constructed when more open space is provided. Off street parking in this area is required for 70 percent of a building’s dwelling units.

Sub-Area IV: The area to the southeast of the project site that is generally bounded by College Point Boulevard, the Whitestone Expressway, Linden Place, and 28th Avenue

The area located west of Linden Place, north of the Whitestone Expressway, east of College Point Boulevard, and south of the proposed Academy site comprises the fourth sub-area. This area includes the remainder of the block where the proposed Academy would be constructed, as well as one block to the east and one block to the south of the proposed Academy site. These three blocks consist of a variety of commercial, institutional, and light manufacturing uses, in addition to the portion of the College Point Tow Pound that is located to the south of the proposed Academy’s southern boundary (see Figure 4-8, “Typical Views Within Sub-Area IV”).

The block located to the east of Ulmer Street is comprised of a building that contains two big box retailers and a multiplex cinema. The building is surrounded on all sides by at-grade accessory



1. The 25.39-acre College Point Sports Park, located to the northeast of the proposed Academy site on Ulmer Street.

2. Street view of the office building located on the east side of Ulmer Street between 28th Avenue and 25th Avenue.



3. Aerial view of the College Point Sports Park, the southern portion of the former Flushing Airport site, and the New York Times facility. The north-south roadway in the center of the photo is Linden Place. The City intends to reconstruct Linden Place north of 28th Avenue.



1.
Looking west from Linden Place, near 31st Road. This office building is surrounded by an accessory parking lot.

2.
View of a strip mall on 31st Road. The building is set back from the street to provide accessory parking.



3.
Aerial view of the mid-rise residential buildings located east of Linden Place and north of 31st Road.

parking. As such, the building is set back from all four adjoining streets. The building rises to a height of approximately 30 feet.

The buildings on the project block are mixed in style and size. There are four distinct buildings on the property located to the southeast of the Tow Pound. The three eastern buildings consist primarily of commercial offices and local retail uses. These buildings range from two to four stories. All three buildings are built near the lot line along the Whitestone Expressway service road, with accessory parking lots located at the rear of each building.

A church complex is located immediately to the east of the Tow Pound. There are several different components of this facility, including a church, a conference center, and offices. The tallest building is a long and slender 9-story building. The facility also includes a lower church building. A small accessory parking lot is located between 31st Avenue and the building. Another larger parking lot is located behind the building to the north.

This sub-area was included within the Special College Point District rezoning. FARs in this sub-area are based on manufacturing zoning designations M1-1 and M2-1, which result in predominantly low-density manufacturing structures. The FAR in the M1-1 portion of this sub-area is 1.0 and the M2-1 zoning district has an FAR of 1.0 and a maximum base height before setback of 60 feet.

Sub-Area V: The area to the west of College Point Boulevard between 28th Avenue and the Whitestone Expressway

This sub-area comprises the southwestern portion of the study area and is also the southwestern limit of the College Point neighborhood (see Figure 4-9, “Typical Views Within Sub-Area V”). A variety of commercial, manufacturing, and light industrial uses are located in this area. Additionally, the northwestern corner of this sub-area contains low-density residential uses. This area contains a wide range of buildings that vary in use, type, bulk, and style.

There are several uses in the area that are noteworthy, including a Home Depot, an oil storage facility, and a cement plant, all of which are located south of 31st Avenue. These facilities occupy a majority of the land west of College Point Boulevard and south of 31st Avenue. The character of this area is predominantly industrial, with a few commercial buildings located between the Home Depot and the cement plant to the west. Most of the buildings are brick and masonry structures, and many are setback from the street with accessory parking.

Between 28th Avenue and 31st Avenue, uses of note include a Department of Sanitation facility, a ConEdison yard and offices, a hotel, a small marina, and an asphalt plant. A variety of other commercial and manufacturing uses are also located in this sub-area. The built character is varied, though the predominant character is the low warehouse-type building. The ConEdison property consists of an office building, which is surrounded on all sides by parking, vehicle storage, and parts storage.

This sub-area was included within the Special College Point District rezoning. FARs in this sub-area are based on manufacturing zoning designations M1-1 and M2-1, which result in predominantly low-density manufacturing structures. As described above, the FAR in the M1-1 portion of this sub-area is 1.0 and the M2-1 zoning district has an FAR of 1.0 and a maximum base height before setback of 60 feet.

Streetscape

Sub-Area I: The area to the north of 28th Avenue and west of Ulmer Street

The residential portions of this sub-area are generally well maintained, characterized by relatively uniform development with few retail uses. It is a transitional area that generally supports single- and two-family houses that face the street with shallow landscaped or grassy front yards and off-street parking (see Figure 4-5, “Typical Views Within Sub-Area I”). Additionally, many of the commercial, light manufacturing and transportation uses feature landscaping along the street frontage. There are numerous mature trees, both located along the street and within property lines, especially within the residential sections of this sub-area. Narrow public sidewalks, which are generally in good condition, flank the streets. Other street furniture includes traffic lights, stop signs and other standard metal street signs, and fire hydrants. Wood utility poles carry overhead lines through the area. On-street parallel parking is provided along the curbline on one or both sides of most streets, especially within the residential areas.

The non-residential uses in this sub-area typically have some landscaping adjacent to the public sidewalk, as mentioned above. However, the large accessory parking lots are typically not landscaped and little screening is generally provided around parking areas.

Sub-Area II: The area north of 28th Avenue and east of Ulmer Street

Similar to Sub-Area I, street trees are located along the streets throughout Sub-Area II. As described above, there are few buildings in this sub-area. The 25-acre College Point Sports Park and the natural area surrounding the off-site drainage area both provide a sense of openness. Additionally, the landscaping in front of the construction company’s building helps to screen the building and the on-site accessory parking lot. A chain-link fence separates the multiplex cinema parking lot from the adjacent sidewalk. As mentioned above, the portion of the New York Times property that is within this sub-area consists predominantly of driveway and parking areas. Street furniture in the study area includes traffic lights and stop signs, fire hydrants, trash receptacles, and wood utility poles. Street parking in this sub-area is typically restricted by “No Standing Anytime” signage.

Sub-Area III: The area to the southeast of the Whitestone Expressway

The residential portion of this sub-area is generally well maintained, characterized by relatively uniform development with no retail uses. It generally supports multi-family apartment buildings with shallow grassy front yards and off-street parking located behind the building. There are numerous mature trees located within property lines. Narrow public sidewalks, which are in good condition, flank the street. Street trees are typically planted in tree pits at regular intervals along the public sidewalk. Other street furniture includes traffic lights, stop signs and other standard metal street signs, and fire hydrants. On-street parallel parking is typically provided along the curbline on one or both sides of most streets.

The non-residential uses in this sub-area typically have some landscaping adjacent to the public sidewalk. However, the large accessory parking lots are not landscaped and little screening is typically provided around parking areas.

Sub-Area IV: The area to the southeast of the project site that is generally bounded by College Point Boulevard, the Whitestone Expressway, Linden Place, and 28th Avenue

Street trees are typically located along the streets throughout Sub-Area IV. As described above, this sub-area consists of large commercial, light manufacturing, and institutional uses. Most of these uses



1. An aerial view from the west. Ulmer Street is in the foreground, 28th Avenue borders the property to the left in this photograph. This building accommodates a multiplex cinema and two big box retail chains.

2. A bird's eye view of the church facility that is located on 31st Avenue, directly east of the NYPD's primary entrance to the College Point Tow Pound. The drainage ditch is seen along the left side of the photograph.



3. A bird's eye view of the block located to the south of the proposed Academy site. The Crystal Windows manufacturing facility is located south of 31st Avenue. A self-storage facility is located in the white building shown at the bottom of the photograph. The College Point Town Pound's main building is located to the west of the drainage ditch, along 31st Avenue.



1. An aerial view showing the Queens Community District 7 DOS facility and a ConEdison facility. College Point Boulevard runs diagonally at the upper right corner of the photograph.

2. A street-level view of the DOS facility. The photograph is taken from 122nd Street looking southwest.



3. A bird's eye view of the Home Depot and accessory parking lot from the west. This is the southern portion of Sub-Area V.

have expansive on-site accessory parking lots. Street trees are typically planted in tree pits at regular intervals along the public sidewalk. The church property is set back from 28th Avenue to accommodate on-site parking. However, a landscaped buffer with mature trees provides screening. Similarly, the properties with frontage along the Whitestone Expressway service road feature landscaped buffers. As shown in Photo #1 of Figure 4-8, the big box retail/multiplex cinema is surrounded by an expansive parking lot, which contains limited internal landscaping features. However, the property is planted along the public sidewalk. Street furniture in the study area includes traffic lights and stop signs, fire hydrants, trash receptacles, and wood utility poles. On street parking in this sub-area is typically restricted by “No Standing Anytime” signage.

Sub-Area V: The area to the west of College Point Boulevard between 28th Avenue and the Whitestone Expressway

This sub-area is largely comprised of non-residential uses. However, the northwestern corner of this area, the section south of 28th Avenue, and along 29th Avenue, west of 120th Street contains several detached residential buildings. This section of the sub-area contains mature street trees. The non-residential uses in this sub-area typically have limited landscaping adjacent to the public sidewalk, as mentioned above. This area is characterized by larger manufacturing, light industrial, and commercial uses. Many of the streets in this sub-area do not have street trees. However, some of the properties area landscaped at the street line. Street furniture in the study area includes stop signs, fire hydrants, trash receptacles, and wood utility poles. On street parking in this sub-area is typically restricted by “No Standing Anytime” signage as off-street parking spaces are generally provided.

Visual Resources

An area's visual resources are its unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. For the purposes of a CEQR analysis, this includes only views from public and publicly accessible locations and does not include private residences or places of business. Visual resources could include views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, or natural resources. Natural resources may be vegetation, topography, and geologic formations; and wetlands, rivers, or other water resources.

Based on the criteria outlined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, three resources have been identified as having visual significance in the approximately quarter-mile study area. These resources include a New York City public park and the natural area that surrounds the drainage structure at 28th Avenue and Ulmer Street. Additionally, at the western limit of 29th Avenue, the street dead-ends near the Williamsburgh Yacht Club and Flushing Bay is visible. There are no other historic or architecturally significant landmark structures or districts, natural resources, or views of the waterfront within an approximate quarter-mile radius of the proposed Academy site. It should be noted that the drainage ditch that is located within the proposed Academy site is considered a natural resource; however, as it is located on the Tow Pound site, behind fences, it is not located within public view.

Table 4-1 lists the three visual resources (excluding the on-site drainage ditch), and Figure 4-10a and Figure 4-10b provide photographs of these resources. All of these visual resources are located outside of the Project Site. The on-site drainage ditch is not currently visible from any publicly accessible locations as a fence surrounds the entire site, and as such it is not considered a visual resource in the study area. The College Point Sports Park and the off-site drainage area and upland natural area are located to the northeast of the proposed Academy site, and the view of Flushing Bay at the 29th Avenue dead end is located at the western limit of the study area.

Key #	Visual Resource	Location	Resource Description	Description of Views
1	College Point Sports Park	East side of Ulmer Street from 26 th Avenue to a point north of 25 th Avenue	Baseball fields, roller hockey rink, seating areas, and a comfort station	Visible from immediate surroundings
2	Off-site Drainage Area and Natural Area	Runs east parallel to 28 th Avenue to Linden Place	Drainage area supports a natural environment	Visible from immediate surroundings
3	View of Flushing Bay	Western limit of 29 th Avenue	Flushing Bay can be viewed from the 29 th Ave dead end	Visible from immediate surroundings

D. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION (NO-BUILD CONDITION)

For conservative analysis purposes, it was assumed that the Project Site itself would remain largely unchanged in the future without the Proposed Action. The proposed Academy site would be vacant as the Police Department is expected to relocate its tow pound operations to other facilities throughout the City as the Department consolidates its citywide operations. The southern five acres of the tow pound property is not part of the proposed project. The auto service station (Corona Auto) could potentially continue its lease on a month-to-month basis.

As described in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” twelve notable No-Build development sites have been identified within an approximate quarter-mile radius of the project site (refer to Figure 2-4 in Chapter 2). These include projects currently under construction, as well as planned developments that are expected to be completed by the 2014 build year. One of these No-Build developments is the Department of Sanitation’s proposed expansion of its marine transfer station (Map No. 7 in Figure 2-4). Additionally, the City intends to extend Linden Place north from 28th Avenue, as described in Chapter 2. The other projects, defined in greater detail in Chapter 2, consist of new commercial, manufacturing, or light industrial uses. For analysis purposes, only those sites that would accommodate new aboveground construction will be discussed.

Urban Design

Overview

In the future without the Proposed Action, planned developments are not expected to significantly change the urban design character of the study area, and anticipated No-Build development sites are expected to either not yield significant changes or contribute site-specific improvements to the visual quality of the study area. Given the modest number and distribution of these developments within the study area, it is anticipated that overall conditions would remain essentially unchanged without the Proposed Action.

Project Site

There are not expected to be any new structures on the Project Site in the future without the Proposed Action, and therefore, no changes to height or bulk would be anticipated. The proposed development would remain largely unimproved and would be largely vacant, as the Tow Pound operations would be relocated to other City-owned sites. As mentioned above, the auto repair facility could potentially continue to extend its lease on a month-to-month basis.

Study Area

As noted above, the twelve notable construction projects within the study area include three proposed commercial or manufacturing uses on the five-acres located to the south of the Police Academy site,



1. A birdseye view from the east of the off-site waterway that is located to the northeast of the proposed Academy site. The waterway is connected to the on-site drainage ditch via culverts that flow diagonally beneath Ulmer Street and 28th Avenue to the proposed Academy site.



2. An aerial view of the off-site waterway that is located to the northeast of the proposed Academy site. Linden Place will be reconstructed to the east of the waterway. A portion of the flooded former Flushing Airport site is visible along the right side of the photo.



3. An aerial view of the College Point Sports Park.



4. A street view of Flushing Bay from the western end of 29th Avenue.

Ares Printing and Packaging, GGC Printing, the Linden Place extension, two new construction company headquarters and yards, a new approximately 120,000 sq. ft. commercial or industrial use, and the North Shore Marine Transfer Station.

To south of the proposed development site, abutting the southern property line of the proposed Academy site, three new uses are proposed, including an iron fabricator, an auto parts distributor, and a plumbing supply distributor. These three new businesses, consisting of approximately 87,000 sq. ft. of new buildings and nearly 70,000 sq. ft. of enclosed storage, would be constructed on the southern five acres of the College Point Tow Pound's existing site. It is expected that the new construction would resemble the existing commercial and manufacturing facilities in the area. The three new buildings would be typical manufacturing structures composed of steel, glass, and masonry materials that would complement the existing commercial and manufacturing buildings in the area.

Similarly, two construction companies are expected to construct new buildings to the west of the site at 28th Avenue and 122nd Street. Combined, the new construction would total approximately 12,500 sq. ft. and nearly 15,000 sq. ft. of storage areas. It is expected that the new construction would resemble the existing commercial and manufacturing facilities in the area.

Ares Printing and Packaging and the GCC Printing facility are both proposed for the property that is located at the southwest corner of the 31st Avenue and College Point Boulevard intersection, north of the Home Depot. Ares Printing and Packaging would consist of approximately 107,000 square feet of new printing and packaging space and would include approximately 57 accessory parking spaces. Similarly, GCC Printing would consist of a 97,000 square-foot printing facility with 120 accessory parking spaces. The buildings would be typical manufacturing structures composed of steel, glass, and masonry materials that would complement the existing manufacturing character of the area.

A new commercial or industrial development is possible on the overflow parking lot for the multiplex cinema, located a short distance to the northeast of the proposed Academy site. While no specific proposal has been issued, it is possible that the site could be built to its full development potential (approximately 120,000 sq. ft.) by the 2014 build year with a commercial, manufacturing or light industrial use. As with the other anticipated developments in the area, new construction on this site would likely reflect the existing architecture of the area.

The Linden Place extension would not result in any new structures.

The North Shore Marine Transfer Station would be constructed at the western end of 31st Avenue on the water. Located at the western limits of the study area, isolated on the water, the marine transfer station would not be easily accessible or visible from many areas in the study area. As such, its new design would not have a substantial impact on the urban design characteristics of the study area. However, it is expected that the new construction would echo the built character of the existing commercial, manufacturing and light industrial buildings within the study area.

Visual Resources

In the future without the Proposed Action, existing views of visual resources are not expected to undergo substantial change. No changes are anticipated to existing view corridors within the study area and visual resources within the study area would not be affected in the future without the Proposed Action.

Project Site

No new development is anticipated on the Project Site in the 2014 future without the Proposed Action. As such, there would be no change to visual resources on-site.

Study Area

None of the No-Build developments discussed above would result in major changes to existing structures, or alter views of any visual resources. Most of the No-Build developments involve site-specific additions to existing large-scale commercial and manufacturing developments in the form of new buildings added to areas that are already manufacturing in nature. None of the planned developments would be visible from areas that have been identified as visual resources.

E. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION (BUILD CONDITION)

Project Site

The Proposed Action would dramatically alter the urban design and general appearance of the proposed development site by replacing a largely un-built, approximately 35-acre site with a new public facility (the proposed Police Academy). The proposed Academy would consist of approximately 2.4 million gross square feet of academic, physical and tactical training facilities for police recruits and in-service training. A total of approximately 2,000 accessory parking spaces are proposed on-site, including an approximately 1,800-space accessory parking garage structure that would be constructed at the western edge of the Academy campus, and 200 additional parking spaces would be provided throughout the site in smaller lots, and along the interior roadways.

The proposed Police Academy would be a modern, architecturally distinctive campus with unique and traditional components. It is envisioned to have a variety of distinct building areas that vary in shape and height (refer to Figure 4-11 and Figure 4-12 for model views from the east and southeast). The Academy campus would be comprised of several different components, including: academic, student support, administration, library, central plant, service and screening, circulation, dining, tactical village, field house, tactical gyms, and parking. The master plan for the proposed Academy was developed around the idea of an enclosed courtyard on the eastern half of the Project Site surrounded by the academic, administration, paid student lodging, auditorium and dining functions. The proposed academic/administrative building is a long, mid-rise structure, which is proposed parallel to 28th Avenue overlooking the courtyard, lower Auditorium and dining functions on the south side of the site. The proposed field house would be a freestanding oval structure west of the ditch, creating a powerful focal point at the end of the courtyard. Tactical gyms are proposed under the field house. The tactical village would be located to the south of the field house, and the firearms and tactics building, a linear structure proposed along the northern property line, would be located to the west of the field house. The proposed EVOC course, to be located along the College Point Boulevard frontage above two levels of parking, would be west of the tactical village and field house.

The tallest proposed building would contain the academic uses and would consist of approximately eight stories above grade with an elevation of approximately 145 feet. However, a portion of the field house would reach an elevation of 165 feet (155 feet in height).

The campus would have one main pedestrian entrance on 28th Avenue near Ulmer Street. Additionally, the Academy would have a ceremonial pedestrian entrance on 28th Avenue that would be located mid-block in front of the field house. This access would be primarily used for commencement and other ceremonial occasions.

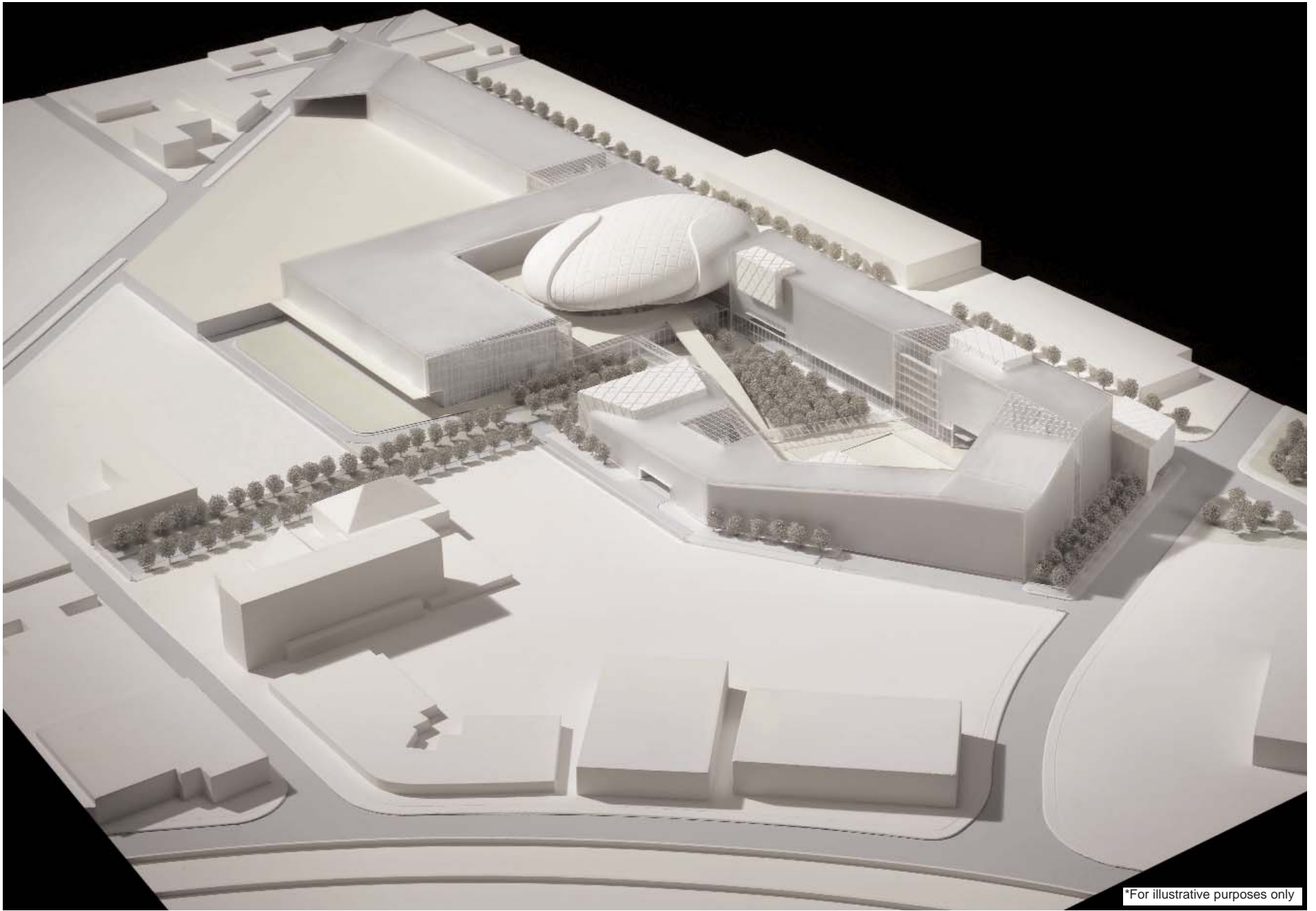
The accessory parking structure would be constructed at the western edge of the proposed Academy site. The proposed garage would accommodate approximately 1,800 of the site's 2,000 parking spaces. The accessory garage would reach an elevation of approximately 47 feet (35 feet above average curb height) in two levels of parking. A small security control office would be located on the ground floor of the new garage structure at each access point to house screening operations for incoming vehicles.



Police Academy - College Point, Queens

Figure 4-11

Preliminary Model View of the Proposed Academy from the East



Police Academy - College Point, Queens

Figure 4-12

Preliminary Model View of the Proposed Academy from the Southeast

The façade of the garage would be set back slightly from the street, with pockets of landscaping between the sidewalk and the garage façade.

The parking garage would be accessible from College Point Boulevard through two gated security entrances. The primary garage access is proposed at the intersection of College Point Boulevard and 30th Avenue. This intersection would be signalized to accommodate the new volumes of traffic at the garage. A secondary garage entry is proposed on College Point Boulevard to the north of the primary garage entrance, approximately 400 feet to the south of 28th Avenue. This secondary access would accommodate right turns into and out of the garage. A third driveway, limited to service vehicles only, is proposed at the southern limit of the proposed Academy site on College Point Boulevard. All deliveries would use this entry and then circulate through the campus on internal service roads as required and permitted by NYPD. The fourth and final vehicle access is proposed on Ulmer Street. This access, which leads to an at-grade parking lot, would be restricted to high-ranking officers.

Buildings would be setback from the 28th Avenue and Ulmer Street property lines. As shown in the site plan, a landscaped buffer would be planted between the public sidewalk and the adjacent buildings. On College Point Boulevard, the parking garage would also be set back from the property line by a landscaped buffer. As a parking garage would occupy nearly the entire College Point Boulevard frontage on the project site, special consideration has been made to activate this frontage with architectural treatments. College Point Boulevard is seen as a gateway to the residential areas located to the north; as such, the exterior of the parking garage is being designed in a manner that breaks up the long façade. A variety of landscaping and architectural treatments are currently being considered, though the design has not been finalized.

Landscape improvements are also proposed on the upland portions of the on-site drainage ditch, which would be visible to the public along the 28th Avenue frontage. Improvements to the banks are proposed for structural and aesthetic purposes. The banks would be re-graded and re-stabilized and non-invasive trees and shrubs would be planted along the banks for both aesthetic purposes and to provide additional soil stabilization. Additionally, as described above, a landscaped interior courtyard is planned, which would not be visible from the street. The courtyard would be used as a muster area for the recruits at the beginning of the day; otherwise this area would not have a programmed use.

The materials envisioned for the exterior of the proposed Academy are expected to vary yet provide a unified facade and surface treatment. At present, it is expected that the main buildings would be clad in a pre-cast concrete system to accommodate the blast and ballistic requirements for this sensitive complex. An area of glass would punctuate the facades and a curtain wall system would be employed at the various atria, which form the lobbies to each component. The façade system would incorporate sun-shading devices as integral parts of the exterior wall system. The character of the complex would reflect the dignity of the proposed Academy, as well as the durability required of a major public building complex. Special consideration is being paid to the College Point Boulevard façade as this area is seen as the gateway to the College Point neighborhood. A variety of design concepts are being considered to ensure that the street wall in this area is attractive to both pedestrians and people who pass the site in a vehicle. As such, it is expected that Academy would complement the existing character of the area.

The proposed site is located in an easily accessible area. Given the size of the proposed Academy site and the layout of the property, the proposed Academy would lend itself to an enclosed campus. As a police use, the proposed Academy would require exterior security measures, including a buffer (“stand-off”) zone adjacent to the sensitive academic, administrative, support services, and physical training facilities. The current site plan indicates sufficient space on all sides of the building, except for the street wall of the proposed parking garage, which would undulate, creating areas of narrow and approximately 15-foot wide landscaping buffers along the public right-of-way. The proposed

development would utilize the proposed buildings, in conjunction with the security setbacks, to provide a secure campus interior.

Due to the proposed site's relative isolation from adjacent development, and the nature of the immediately surrounding land uses and adjacent arterials, the introduction of the proposed development at this location is not expected to adversely affect land uses in the area. The area surrounding the proposed Academy site consists of a variety of land uses that generally occupy large properties. Each of the adjacent blocks contains one or more large buildings surrounded by at-grade accessory parking and/or landscaped areas. This area does not have cohesive neighborhood identity or defined urban design elements. It supports a wide range of commercial, light industrial, manufacturing, transportation, and institutional buildings, which vary in type, bulk, height and style. The proposed Police Academy is expected to add to this varied context.

The proposed Police Academy would consist of a campus with many interconnected buildings. Building elevations range up to approximately 165 feet (approximately 155 feet tall at its peak) at the main academic building, with the field house rising to an elevation of approximately 165 feet (refer to Figure 4-13, "Site Plan")¹. Along College Point Boulevard, the parking garage would rise to an elevation of approximately 47 feet (approximately 35 feet above average curb height). Along 28th Avenue, the Firearms and Tactics structure would consist of four levels and rise to an elevation of approximately 115 feet (a height of approximately 105 feet). The field house, to be located on a 46-foot tall base (the 2-level tactical gym), would rise to an elevation of approximately 165 feet (155 feet tall). To the east of the drainage ditch, the academic and administrative buildings, with frontage on 28th Avenue and Ulmer Street, would consist of 8 stories and an elevation of approximately 145 feet (a height of 135 feet). The proposed police museum would consist of 4 levels at the intersection of 28th Avenue and Ulmer Street with an elevation of approximately 70 feet (a height of 60 feet). Buildings along the southern property line to the east of the drainage ditch would range from approximately 75 feet (dining halls, assembly hall, and central services) to approximately 113 feet in elevation (paid student/guest lecturer facility).²

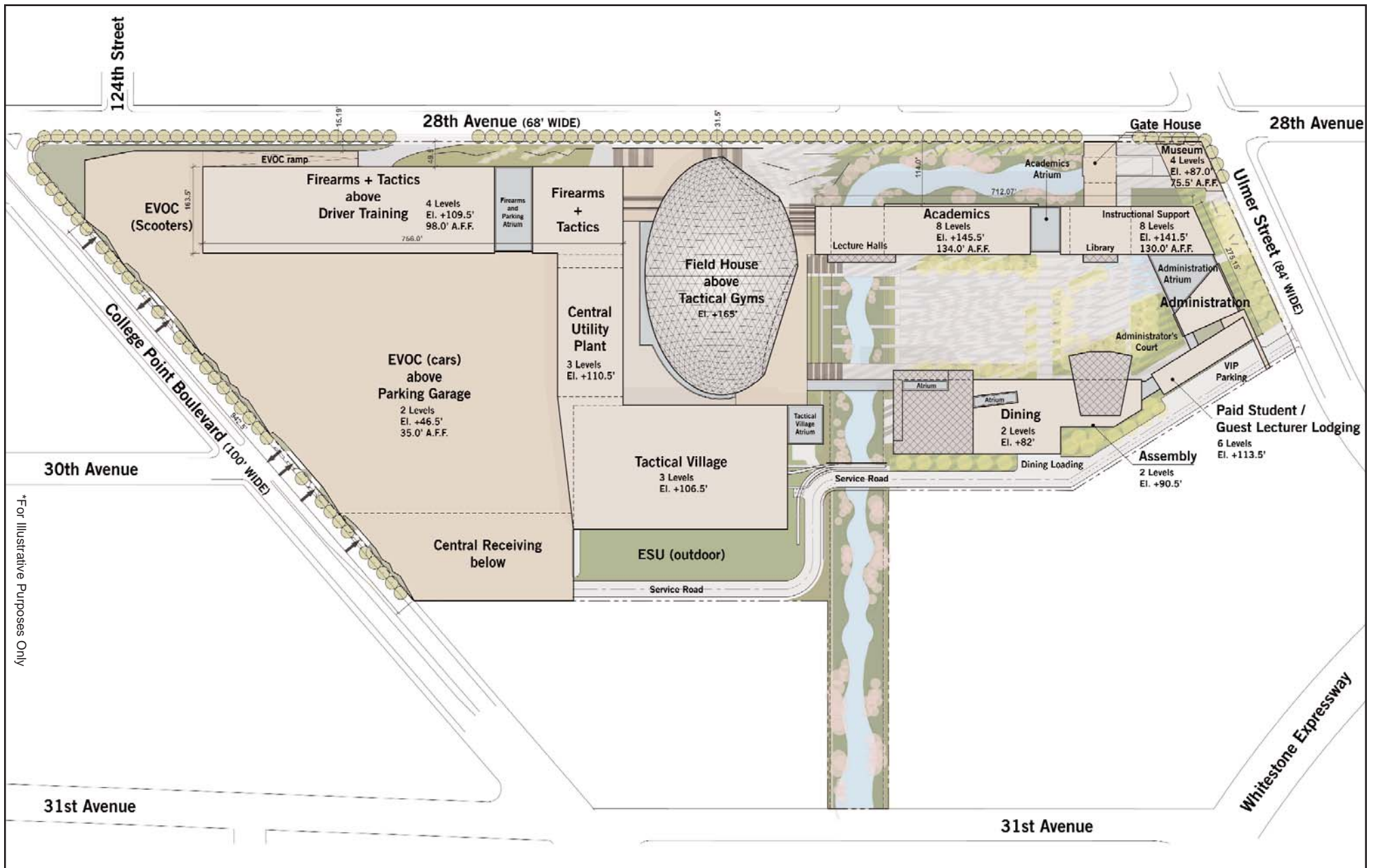
With the tallest of the proposed buildings expected to rise to an elevation of approximately 165 feet (a height of approximately 155 feet), the proposed Academy would introduce buildings that would be taller than existing buildings within the study area. The Academy would have a strong presence near the Whitestone Expressway, which is located a short distance to the southeast. Existing buildings that are located between the Whitestone Expressway and the project site would serve as a transition to the Academy's taller buildings. Additionally, the Academy would be setback from Ulmer Street to the east and 28th Avenue to the north, with abundant greenery and landscaping proposed between the proposed Academy and the adjacent roadways. Along College Point Boulevard, the proposed accessory parking garage would be set back ten feet from the lot line.

Study Area

The proposed Police Academy would be prominent and on a very visible site in College Point, Queens. As described above, the Proposed Action would facilitate the construction of a substantial public facility that would be a considerably taller and more conspicuous development than many of the area's existing and planned developments, and would develop a largely unimproved site. The proposed building would be a significant change to the area and a prominent addition to the cityscape, both within its immediate environment and from some distance away.

¹ Elevations describe level above mean sea level. For comparison purposes, adjacent sidewalk levels are also noted on the site plan.

² As noted on the site plan, all elevations refer to the Queens highway datum, which is 2.725 feet above sea level at Sandy Hook, NJ, as established by the US Coast and Geodetic Survey.



Police Academy - College Point, Queens

Figure 4-13
Illustrative Site Plan

Topography and Natural Features

The proposed Police Academy would be built on a site that contains an exposed waterway. On-site natural resources are discussed at length in Chapter 5, "Natural Resources." No important topographic features are located on-site. Although the proposed development may necessitate the removal of some small trees within the upland areas of the on-site waterway to facilitate upgrades to the drainage structure, their removal would not constitute a significant adverse impact. The proposed project would be modified as described in Chapter 5 to improve drainage flow within the onsite portion of the drainage system, upgrade the tide gates, and improve aesthetics. The proposed landscape plan would introduce sustainable vegetation along the drainage ditch and along each street frontage. Abundant greenery and landscaping would also be planted within the interior courtyard. No significant changes would be made to the topography of the project site or the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts on topography or natural features in the study area.

Block Form and Street Pattern, and Street Hierarchy

The Proposed Action would not have significant adverse impacts on the block forms, street pattern, and street hierarchy. Primary vehicular access to the proposed Academy site, including all loading activities, would be via College Point Boulevard. Access to a restricted-access at-grade parking lot is proposed on Ulmer Street. No new streets would be mapped as part of the Proposed Action. As such, the Proposed Action would not substantially alter the block shapes found in the study area or create new block forms, and would therefore maintain these existing urban design features.

Building Arrangements

Building arrangement refers to the way that buildings are placed on zoning lots and blocks. Similar to the immediately surrounding area, the proposed Police Academy would occupy a relatively large site. Similar to other developments in the area, the proposed buildings would be built to the lot line in the area of the museum and would otherwise be set back from the street. The proposed Academy would not result in new or different building arrangements than currently exist in the study area. There is no prevailing streetwall character; buildings in the vicinity of the proposed Academy site are arranged on large lots and generally set back from public streets with footprints of various shapes and sizes. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not have significant adverse impacts on building arrangements in the study area.

Building Use, Bulk, Height, Setbacks, and Density

The proposed Academy would introduce a NYPD museum and a paid student/guest lecturer lodging facility (dormitory) to the project site. These two uses would require mayoral overrides as they are not allowed on an as-of-right basis within the M2-1 district. However, these uses are small, but critical components of the proposed Academy, and not the primary on-site uses. The NYPD museum and paid student/guest lecturer lodging facility would be peripheral uses that would be incorporated to bolster the NYPD's main objectives at the proposed Academy. The NYPD Museum has traditionally been co-located with the Academy as the Department's heritage is considered a crucial component of police officer training. While the NYPD museum would be a new use, it is considered as an educational tool and it would be consistent with the prevailing land uses in the surrounding area, including commercial and institutional uses. The proposed paid student/guest lecturer lodging facility would not be a new use to the local area. A hotel is located at the northwest corner of 30th Avenue and College Point Boulevard, directly west of the proposed Academy site. As such, the proposed development is not expected to adversely affect surrounding building uses.

Although the proposed Academy would introduce buildings that would be generally similar in bulk to some of the larger commercial, institutional, transportation, manufacturing, and light industrial buildings in the quarter-mile study area (such as the adjacent church complex, the Crystal Windows manufacturing facility, the MTA bus facilities, and the big box retail/multiplex cinema building located to the east), its design would be unique. Certain elements of the proposed Academy would reflect the existing height, form, size and scale in the area; however, the proposed Academy would also have building components that are slightly different as compared to existing and planned buildings within the surrounding area.

As indicated above, the proposed building would be a modern police training facility that would have areas that are taller than the majority of the buildings within the study area. Due to its extensive program requirements and the existing and anticipated size of the police force (including recruits and in-service), the proposed Police Academy would contain buildings that are approximately 155 feet tall (a height limit that is imposed upon the site due to its proximity to LaGuardia Airport) in order to adequately accommodate the anticipated population. It must be noted that subsurface conditions make underground construction cost-prohibitive. As such, the entire building program, including all mechanical uses, would have to be accommodated above-grade.

As described above, there is no cohesive urban design character for the study area, which has been divided into five distinct sub-areas for analytical purposes. As a whole, urban design characteristics within the study area are quite varied, and include a variety of uses, building types and scales, including large manufacturing, transportation, and light industrial sites, low-density residential areas of one-to three-story detached homes and mid-rise apartment buildings (Sub-Area III), and low- and mid-rise commercial areas. The proposed development program would introduce a campus with several tall buildings to an area characterized by primarily low-rise office, warehouse, light industrial and factory buildings, as well as detached and semidetached residential homes and multi-unit apartment buildings. The proposed Academy would change the skyline by introducing a campus to a site that is predominantly un-built.

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, in terms of building use, bulk, type, and setbacks, a significant impact would result if an action would alter that aspect of land use that defines urban design character, or if the size and mass of the proposed action would be substantially different from that prevailing in the area. The proposed Academy would be located in a non-homogenous setting, one that is already quite varied, mixing a variety of uses, building types and heights within the quarter-mile study area. The proposed public facility is expected to be compatible with existing and anticipated manufacturing, light industrial, transportation, commercial, institutional, and residential uses in the study area. However, the introduction of a modern Police Academy that has building components that are taller than the surrounding buildings would modify the urban design of the study area, which is currently defined primarily by low-to-mid-rise buildings. Several larger buildings are scattered throughout the study area, as described above. However, the Police Academy would be visually distinctive because it would contrast with the lower buildings in the area. This change, though significant, would not be considered adverse to urban design. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in significant adverse impacts to the study area.

Streetscape

Streetscape elements are distinctive physical features, including street trees, street walls, street furniture, building entrances, fences, steps, and parked cars along a street.

The Proposed Action would introduce new streetscape elements that are expected to enhance the urban design of the study area. The Proposed Action would improve the appearance of the area's streetscape by upgrading adjacent sidewalks. Landscaping improvements are proposed along all three street

frontages, including planted buffers between the public sidewalk and the proposed Academy buildings. Additionally, as compared to existing conditions, the Proposed Action would result in new public views to the on-site waterway, where new landscaping treatments are proposed along the upland areas. The new landscaping treatments and views are expected to encourage pedestrian activity and activate the streetscape. While the final design of the fence has not been determined at this time, special consideration has been made to select a fence that would be aesthetically pleasing while also meeting the NYPD's security requirements for the site. Design elements such as the fence are subject to review by the City's Public Design Commission. As such, it is expected that the final design of the fence and similar streetscape elements will be appropriately suited for the location. In addition, the Proposed Action would replace a vacant site with a vibrant campus.

Visual Resources (Quarter-Mile Study Area)

As described above under Existing Conditions, there are no historically significant landmark structures or districts within an approximate quarter-mile radius of the proposed Academy site. Additionally, waterfront views within the quarter-mile radius are limited to one location at the western limit of the study area. Local natural resources consist of the on-site drainage ditch and the immediately adjacent upland areas, as well as the off-site waterway (also part of the area's drainage system), which is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of 28th Avenue and Ulmer Street. Under existing and No-Build conditions, the fence that surrounds the Tow Pound site would obstruct views to the on-site drainage ditch. Views to the off-site waterway would not be affected by the proposed Academy, as views are primarily available from the adjacent roadways. The introduction of the proposed Academy would not reduce the visibility of the off-site waterway and natural area. Therefore, the proposed Police Academy would not obstruct views to visual resources.

Additionally, the proposed development would be located within the vicinity of the College Point Sports Park, an approximately 25-acre New York City public park located near the northern limit of the quarter-mile study area. The proposed project would not obstruct views to the park, nor would it obstruct views from the park to nearby visual resources.

The proposed Academy campus, with buildings ranging in elevation from approximately 46 feet to approximately 165 feet, would be a prominent addition to the quarter-mile study area that would enhance the visual environment of the generally low-to mid-rise character of the surrounding area. The upper floors of the on-site buildings are expected to be visible from adjacent streets due to the expansive accessory parking lots that surround many of the local buildings. Some of the proposed Academy would be screened by adjacent buildings, including the 9-story (approximately 90-foot tall) church building and the commercial and manufacturing uses located to the southeast along the Whitestone Expressway. The lower buildings in the area and the lower elements of the proposed Academy would provide a transition to the taller elements of the proposed campus. Additionally, the bulk of the individual components of the Academy would be comparable to some of the surrounding institutional, commercial, manufacturing, and light industrial buildings, including the Crystal Windows building, the MTA bus facility, and the adjacent church.

Due to the height and scale of the proposed Police Academy, some of the low-rise, residential street corridors to the north (123rd Street through 127th Street) as well as the local east-west corridors, would include views of the taller portions of the proposed Academy from some vantage points. Typically, the density of the detached and semidetached houses and other local buildings and mature street trees along these streets, which create relatively uniform streetwalls on narrow streets, would obscure street-level views to the proposed development. Furthermore, the irregular street pattern of the study area, which contains a number of expansive superblocks that interrupt cross streets, creating short streets, which only extend for one, or just a few blocks would further obscure views of the proposed development. The upper stories of the proposed Police Academy would be visible from some areas

located farther from the proposed development site, including passing traffic on portions of the Whitestone Expressway. However, the blocks and buildings that intervene between the proposed campus and the low-and mid-rise buildings along these view corridors would create a buffer that would limit the visibility and presence of the proposed Police Academy on these view corridors.

The proposed Police Academy would be located within a quarter-mile of the College Point Sports Park, which is located to the northeast of the proposed Academy site, along the east side of Ulmer Street. As seen from the College Point Sports Park, the proposed Academy would be prominent in the generally low-to mid-rise character of the immediately surrounding area, with only the MTA bus facility located between the park and the proposed Academy site. It is not expected to detract from the visual appreciation of the park or the landscaping, trees, seating areas, and ball fields that make the park a visual resource. The proposed Police Academy would not be located immediately adjacent to the College Point Sports Park, nor would it have any adverse shadow impacts on the play areas.

It is expected that the Proposed Action would make positive contributions to the visual resources in the study area with landscaping improvements to the 28th Avenue and Ulmer Street frontages. New views would be created to the on-site drainage system, which would be landscaped as part of the proposed project.

Although the proposed Police Academy would be a prominent addition to study area, which would be visible from a distance, it would not result in a significant adverse impact to the visual environment of the identified visual resources in the study area, and would not block any existing view corridors. As such, the proposed development is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts on visual resources.

F. CONCLUSION

In the 2014 future with the Proposed Action, significant changes would be made to the urban design conditions in the study area, but these changes would not be considered adverse. As the proposed Academy site is expected to remain predominantly un-built under No-Build conditions, the Proposed Action would dramatically alter the urban design and general appearance of the proposed development site by replacing a largely unimproved, approximately 35-acre site with a world-class police training facility. The proposed Academy would be constructed on a large parcel and on a visible site in College Point, Queens, and is expected to result in a considerable visual change to the surrounding area and a prominent addition to the cityscape, both in its immediate environment and from some distance away. The proposed Police Academy would be a mid-rise, modern, and visually distinctive campus, as it would differ from the generally lower-rise buildings in the immediately surrounding area.

Similar to many buildings within the immediately surrounding area, the proposed Police Academy would occupy a relatively large site and would be set back slightly from the street by various landscaping treatments and streetscape elements. The Proposed Action would not result in new or different building arrangements than currently existing in the study area. Buildings in the vicinity of the proposed Academy site are arranged on expansive properties and generally setback from public streets with variously shaped footprints; therefore, there is not a continuous street wall.

The Proposed Action would not have significant adverse impacts on the block forms, street pattern, or street hierarchy. The Proposed Action would not substantially alter the block shapes found in the study area or create new block forms, and would therefore maintain these existing urban design features.

No adverse impacts upon visual resources are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would change views within the study area, but would not block significant public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features.