

**A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter assesses the potential for the proposed project to impact neighborhood character. As defined in the 2014 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, Neighborhood character is an amalgam of various elements that give a neighborhood its distinct “personality.” The elements to consider in determining whether a neighborhood character assessment is appropriate include a neighborhood’s land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; shadows; transportation; and/or noise. However, not all of these elements contribute to neighborhood character in every case; a neighborhood usually draws its distinctive character from a few defining elements. This chapter describes the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the proposed project on these defining features, based on the technical analyses presented in other chapters of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the proposed project would redevelop the northern portion of the Bronx Psychiatric Center (BPC) campus with a mix of commercial and medical office, bio-tech/research, hotel, accessory, college/trade school, community facility, and retail uses along with open space and parking facilities. For the purposes of this EIS, it is assumed that in the future without the proposed project (the “No Action” condition), the three primary, existing buildings (Bronx Children’s Psychiatric, Thompson, and Parker Buildings) would remain vacant. The powerhouse, two metal shelters, and small storage building on the project site would also be vacated and decommissioned, and the ballfields would remain as in the existing condition. The proposed project would be completed in two phases, with 2023 as the analysis year for Phase I completion, and 2028 as the year for Phase II full build-out, or “With-Action” condition.

Based on the analyses presented in the other chapters of this EIS, the proposed project would result in significant adverse impacts in one technical area that is considered to contribute to neighborhood character—transportation.

**PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS**

The proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character. As described elsewhere in this EIS, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts in the areas of land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; and noise. The proposed project would result in potential significant adverse traffic and bus-line haul impacts in the 2023 Phase I and 2028 Phase II analysis years. Potential mitigation measures to address the significant adverse impacts are discussed in Chapter 22, “Mitigation,” and these impacts would not result in a substantial change to the defining elements of neighborhood character. The proposed project would activate and enliven an underutilized portion of the Bronx Psychiatric Center campus and better connect the project site to the surrounding area. The proposed project would be consistent with the study area’s institutional neighborhood character and would result in a new mix of commercial and

medical office, bio-tech/research, hotel, accessory, college/trade school, community facility, and retail uses along with open space and parking facilities, which would complement existing study area uses and improve the streetscape. Therefore, the proposed project would not have the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical areas. The proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

### **B. METHODOLOGY**

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

The study area for the preliminary assessment of neighborhood character is the area within a ¼-mile from the project site. The study area is generally bounded by the Edison Avenue to the east, Eastchester Road and Stillwell Avenue to the West; Blondell Avenue to the south and Rhineland Avenue to the north (see **Figure 19-1**).

A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in other technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The preliminary assessment first identifies the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and then evaluates whether the proposed project has the potential to affect those defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the relevant technical areas. 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 impacts.

If there is no potential for the proposed project to affect the defining features of neighborhood character, a detailed assessment is not warranted.

### **C. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT**

#### **DEFINING FEATURES**

##### *PROJECT SITE*

The approximately 34-acre project site is generally bounded by Hutchinson Metro Center to the north, the Hutchinson River Parkway (HRP) to the east, the remaining portion of the Bronx Psychiatric Campus and Waters Place to the south, and Marconi Street to the west. Independent of the proposed project, three primary existing BPC buildings on the project site—(1) the Bronx Children’s Psychiatric, (2) the John W. Thompson, and (3) the Betty Parker Buildings—have been vacated and uses were relocated to new BPC facilities located at the southern portion of the campus. In addition to the three existing, primary buildings, the project site contains a steam-







generating powerhouse, two metal shelters, and a small storage building. The project site also contains four baseball fields (“ballfields”), a grassy area with trees and walking paths, and two surface parking lots.

The existing buildings on the project site are placed in a campus-like setting among landscaped areas. Tall trees surround the site and provide a visual buffer between the site and the surrounding area, including the HRP located to the east of the project site.

The three main buildings on the project site are set back a distance from the surrounding streets, and to the south and west they are separated from the street by existing ballfields on site.

### ***STUDY AREA***

As described in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy” the predominant land uses within the neighborhood include residential, commercial, community facilities, manufacturing, and transportation uses. The western portion of the study area is comprised of large-scale institutional, commercial, and light manufacturing uses while the eastern portion is defined by residential development. The HRP roughly divides the study area into two sections. Smaller-scale retail establishments, community facilities, and open spaces are scattered throughout the study area.

The majority of the study area consists of the southern portion of the BPC Campus and the adjacent ballfields to the west. The area immediately south of the project site contains the recently built Bronx Behavioral Health Center. This complex contains a large, recently built building that houses an updated Adult and Children’s psychiatric hospital and support functions adjacent to the project site, and other facilities along Waters Place. The Central Services portion of the building, located between the adult and children’s hospital sections, is two stories. The children’s hospital portion, southeast of the adult hospital, is also two stories. The MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) Westchester Yard is located just to the south of the BPC campus.

The Public Safety Action Center II (PSACII) and Hutchinson Metro Center, respectively, occupy an 8.75-acre and 42-acre site directly north of the project site. The PSACII building, located at 350 Marconi Street, operates as an emergency 911-call response center. Hutchinson Metro Center, which formerly housed the Bronx Developmental Center, is comprised of three office buildings: 1200 Waters Place; Tower One, and Tower Two. Marconi Street, which runs along the western edge of the project site, provides gated access to Hutchinson Metro Center. The 10-story Tower One includes office space and an underground parking garage. 1200 Waters Place currently houses medical offices, offices for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), a branch of the Internal Revenue Service, and the Bronx campus of Mercy College. Hutchinson Metro Center also has a large parking lot and includes the Metro Center Atrium, a large mixed-use complex containing office, medical office and commercial uses, located to the west of the project site.

A distribution center is located along the western boundary of the project site and Hutchinson Metro Center. Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)’s Metro-North Railroad (MNR) tracks separate the uses along Bassett Avenue from the distribution center. Many of the buildings along Bassett and Stillwell Avenues contain auto repair, auto detailing, or auto customization shops, as well as tow truck operations. The Logan Bus Company operates a large school bus facility on the eastern portion of Stillwell Avenue between McDonald Street and Rhinelander Avenue.

The NYCT Westchester Yard is the largest transportation use in the study area. Bordering Waters Place and the project site, the yard provides operations support to the Pelham Line (No. 6 train),

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which traverses the study area on an elevated track above Westchester Avenue. Westchester Yard stretches from Eastchester Road to Westchester Avenue between Waters Place and Blondell Avenue, and its six-story master tower is located on Waters Place at Fink Avenue. Manufacturing and industrial uses, which include automotive repair shops, salvage yards, and used car shops, are prevalent along Blondell Avenue just south of Westchester Yard.

The Amtrak right-of-way, which is also used by MTA/MNR, is an approximately 80-foot-wide railroad cut with three tracks that extends north and south through the study area west of Marconi Street and acts as a physical and visual barrier separating the buildings to the east from those west of the rail cut. The buildings immediately adjacent to the west of the tracks are industrial in nature, and are one- to two-stories tall.

There are a number of large institutions within the neighborhood. The Resnick Campus of Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM) is located in the western portion of the study area. The AECOM campus consists of medical buildings, student residences, research and teaching facilities, office space, health education centers, an athletic facility, and dining facilities. Within the study area, uses on the JMC campus include AECOM's 28-story Eastchester residences, an athletic facility, and the staff housing parking garage.

Other institutional uses in the study area include Montefiore Medical Center (Montefiore) and Calvary Hospital. Montefiore's nine-story 356-bed Jack D. Weiler Hospital (Weiler Hospital) is located adjacent to AECOM in Montefiore's East Campus. The six-story Calvary Hospital is located directly west of the project site. Calvary Hospital, a voluntary not-for-profit hospital operated in connection with the Archdiocese of New York, provides palliative care for advanced-stage cancer patients.

Residential land uses are concentrated in the eastern portion of the study area and separated from the project site by the HRP. Additional residential buildings are interspersed with manufacturing and transportation uses in the northwest corner of the study area along McDonald and Seminole Streets. Most of the residential buildings are single-family, two- to three-story, attached and detached buildings. Larger residential developments over 10 stories are also present in the study area include the 13-story 158-unit Hutchinson Parkway Apartments at the southwest corner of Wilkinson and Mulford Avenues; the 18-story, 258-unit Hazel Tower development that occupies the entire block bounded by Buhre, Mayflower, Westchester, and Mulford Avenues; and the 12-story, 120-unit Mayflower Terrace building one block east of the Hazel Tower along Westchester Avenue.

With the exception of Hutchinson Metro Center, commercial uses are typically retail stores generally located along the major streets in the study area, including Williamsbridge Road, Eastchester Road, and Westchester Avenue. Local retail uses include delis, grocery stores, hair and tanning salons, carpet stores, bars, flower stores, clothing stores, and restaurants. The Castle Center shopping mall, which includes a Stop n Shop, Liquor Store, Subway, and a Starbucks coffee shop among other establishments, is located just west of the project site at Waters Place and Marconi Street.

As described in Chapter 8, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," the study area is primarily flat with the HRP running at a lower elevation through the study area than the areas to the east. The Parkway acts as a physical barrier dividing the project site from the area east of the HRP. There is a heavy tree buffer east and west of the HRP that serves as a visual buffer between the Parkway and areas adjacent to it. In addition, landscaped and grassy areas in the study area include the area west of the HRP that has a paved path and grassy areas on the southern portion of the BPC Campus,

and ballfields and landscaped areas at Colucci Playground at the north end of the study area east of the HRP.

The study area mostly has an irregular street pattern, including curving streets, dead-end streets, and streets that run at angles, creating irregularly shaped blocks. The major thoroughfare in the study area is the HRP, which carries six lanes of traffic north-south through the Bronx. Waters Place, located partially within the study area, is a major thoroughfare in the area. Westchester Avenue, with the raised No. 6 subway train tracks above, runs at an angle through the southern portion of the study area east of the HRP. Marconi Street, located west of the project Site, runs north-south and carries one lane of traffic in each direction. It provides an entrance into the Hutchinson Metro Center.

East of the HRP the streets are laid-out in a more regular grid pattern with long, north-south streets and short, east-west streets. This grid typically forms long blocks that are oriented north-south. The buildings in this portion of the study area are residential, two- and three-stories tall, semi-detached homes with brick façades. Most have off-street parking in either driveways or first-floor garages.

Visual resources within the study area consist of the three-story Saint Theresa of the Infant Jesus Roman Catholic Church is located on the northwest corner of St. Theresa and Pilgrim Avenues. The tall steeple, which rises above the smaller structures in the primarily residential neighborhood, can be seen from along the entire length of St. Theresa Avenue and from Pilgrim Avenue north of the building. East of the HRP, the Colucci Playground's mature trees and open greenspaces provide a visual amenity in the study area. Likewise, the greenway and paved recreational path located to the west of the HRP provides a visual buffer from the highway and is a visual amenity to users of the greenway in the western portion of the study area.

As described above, the area west of the HRP is mainly industrial and institutional in character. East of the HRP, the area is residential with smaller scale buildings. Views west from this portion of the study area are truncated by the large trees that border the Parkway. However, views north and south on the HRP are long and contain views of the landscaped medians, landscaped areas (including tall trees and grassy areas) on either side of the roadway, and the surrounding landscape and development that borders the Parkway.

As described in Chapter 5, "Open Space," there are four baseball fields in good condition on the project site. Usage of these baseball fields is seasonal and primarily used on weekdays after school hours and on weekends during the spring and summer months by little leagues. Additionally, the existing campus has limited access and is not open to the public. Overall, the existing open spaces have low utilization due to their seasonal use and user restrictions.

The character of the study area, like that of many neighborhoods in New York City, is in part defined by the levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity that exist. The study area contains major roadways that carry high volumes of traffic, including the HRP, East Tremont Avenue, Morris Park Avenue, Pelham Parkway, Westchester Avenue, Eastchester Avenue, Williamsbridge Road, and Waters Place. Local bus routes serve both the project site (Bx24 and B21), as well as the Westchester Square–East Tremont Avenue Station (Bx4, Bx4A, Bx8, Bx12, Bx21, Bx24, Bx31, Bx40, Bx42). These routes provide bus service throughout much of the Bronx as well as Upper Manhattan. Additionally, Hutchinson Metro Center operates two shuttle bus routes serving its property. Pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of the project site is relatively low and would not be considered a defining feature of neighborhood character. In the No-Action condition, two notable transportation projects would be developed within the study area. As discussed in Chapter 2,

“Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” the MTA has committed to initiating MNR service to a proposed new MNR station near the intersection of Morris Park Avenue and Basset Avenue across from the project site. This new station would serve the study area via the New Haven line along the existing Amtrak right-of-way. MNR is expected to result in a modal shift away from automobiles to other modes of transportation, would improve overall accessibility, and present an opportunity to improve connections between modes of transit for the project site and the study area. The MNR station would complement the existing land uses in the study area and would potentially provide pedestrian improvements, thus adding to the level of pedestrian activity in the study area.

Also in the 2028 analysis year, it is assumed for analysis purposes that access improvements to the HRP in the study area would be completed, although the timing and funding of such improvements is not known. The potential HRP improvements would include reconfiguring the HRP on- and off-ramps and introducing a new service road along the southbound HRP between Exit 2 (Westchester Avenue) and Exit 3 (Pelham Parkway). This service road would run along the HRP adjacent to the project site. These potential connections would change vehicle-trip patterns near the project site. Study area land use conditions would remain substantially the same with or without the HRP improvements and would continue to be a mix of residential, commercial, community facility, institutional, manufacturing, and transportation uses. The HRP improvements would improve access to the project site and study area and would complement the existing land uses in the study area.

### **ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT THE DEFINING FEATURES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD—2023**

The sections below discuss potential changes resulting from Phase I of the proposed project for the 2023 analysis year 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; shadows; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the 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 affected either through the potential of any significant adverse impact or in combination with any other moderate effects in the relevant technical areas for the 2023 analysis year.

#### ***LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY***

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on land use, zoning, and public policy, either individually, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. By 2023, the proposed project would result in the redevelopment of the Thompson and Parker Buildings and the development of two new buildings and a new retail building, as well as open space and parking. The proposed project would remove the four existing baseball fields currently located on the project site, but would replace them with two new baseball diamonds. The proposed project would also provide publicly accessible walking/biking paths with benches, and would result in an increase in the amount of publicly accessible open space on the project site. New roads would be constructed to provide access within the project site and connect to the existing street network.

The proposed project would activate and enliven an underutilized portion of the BPC campus and better connect the proposed uses to surrounding development at Hutchinson Metro Center. It would also be consistent with and complement existing land uses in the study area by providing new, available, Class A office space to meet the future demand for such space in New York City, in addition to supporting hotel, college/educational space, and retail amenities. The new commercial, retail, educational, hotel, accessory, and community facility uses would be compatible with the existing commercial, medical, and large institutional uses found in the study area and therefore consistent with the neighborhood character of the study area. The increase in public open space on the project site and activation of an underutilized portion of the BPC campus would have a beneficial effect on neighborhood character. Therefore, the proposed project would not adversely affect the land use character of the study area and would not result in significant adverse impacts on land use in the 2023 analysis year.

#### *SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS*

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on socioeconomic conditions, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. As discussed in Chapter 3, “Socioeconomic Conditions,” the proposed project would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts related to direct residential displacement, direct business displacement, indirect residential displacement, indirect business displacement, or effects on specific industries in the study area.

Hutchinson Metro Center’s success demonstrates the importance of public health issues to community, business, and healthcare leaders both in the Morris Park neighborhood of the Bronx and in New York City as a whole, and has highlighted the need for commercial space capable of supporting and addressing these concerns. The proposed project’s adjacency to Hutchinson Metro Center would fulfill the need by providing proximate, high-quality, available development space capable of supporting a range of healthcare needs, from training to treatment to research to administration.

While the proposed project would add a substantial amount of commercial development to the project site, this would not be a new use in the study area. The study area already has a well-established commercial market, and the proposed project would not be introducing new economic activities to the project site or to the study area that would alter existing economic patterns. This area of the Bronx is already characterized by substantial office development for business, professional, and medical facilities. The retail uses introduced by the proposed project would not be at a scale that would accelerate commercial market trends within the study area. The retail added to the project site would serve the study area’s existing workforce, visitors and patients, as well as the worker and visitor population added by the proposed project. Moreover, the proposed hotel would not be considered substantial new development that is markedly different from existing uses, development, and activities within the neighborhood. Furthermore, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the proposed project would provide multiple socioeconomic benefits including elimination of blight, job creation, creation of office and other supporting space, and enhancement of tax bases. Therefore, based on *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines, the proposed redevelopment of the project site would not result in any significant adverse impacts due to indirect business displacement.

The proposed project would also introduce “accessory uses” to the project site. These uses would be accessory housing reserved for those working or studying within the Hutchison Metro Center or the proposed project (and their families), as described above, and would not directly influence



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the housing rental market. With respect to indirect influences of changing demographics, the average household income of the proposed project's tenants is expected to be similar to the current average household income within the study area. Therefore, based on *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts due to indirect residential displacement.

### ***OPEN SPACE***

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on publicly accessible open space, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

The proposed project would remove the four baseball fields on the project site and replace them with one regulation-size baseball field and one little league-size field by the completion of Phase I in 2023. The proposed baseball fields would use state-of-the-art technology for drainage and turf, making them available the majority of the year, unlike the existing fields. In addition, Phase I of the proposed project would provide publicly accessible walking/biking paths with benches and landscaped areas.

As described in Chapter 6, "Open Space," Phase I would increase the amount of open space available on the project site and would increase open space ratios compared with the No-Action condition in 2023.

While the proposed project would result in an increase in demand for open space resources, they would also enhance existing open space resources and provide additional open space that contributes as a defining feature of neighborhood character in the study area, and that also benefits the larger region as a whole. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in changes to open space that would cause significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.

### ***SHADOWS***

As described in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse shadow impact on the Hutchinson River Greenway or any other sunlight-sensitive resource. A portion of the Hutchinson River Greenway affected by incremental shadows from the proposed project includes a bike/walking trail and vegetation on either side of the parkway. The incremental shadow identified in the detailed analysis would not adversely affect the usability of the resource or its ability to support vegetation. The shadow extent on the Hutchinson River Greenway would be small during the initial hours of the afternoon, and users of the biking/walking trail would be in motion and pass through the shaded areas quickly. Other park users seeking sunlight could elect to move to a sunlit section of the Hutchinson River Greenway or to other nearby open spaces such as Colucci Playground. The areas of the Greenway affected by new shadow would continue to receive sufficient durations of direct sunlight to support vegetation. Therefore, the incremental shadow would not result in significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.

### ***HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES***

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) determined that the project site has no archaeological or architectural significance and that there are no archaeological or architectural resources in the study area that would be affected by the proposed project. The proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources. Therefore, defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of

the proposed project on historic and cultural resources, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

#### *URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES*

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on urban design and visual resources, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

As described in Chapter 8, “Urban Design and Visual Resources,” by the 2023 analysis year, the proposed renovation of the existing buildings and the new buildings that would be constructed would be in keeping with the uses, height, massing, and material of buildings in the study area. The proposed new buildings on the project site would be similar in scale, massing, and design to the buildings located in the Hutchinson Metro Center, particularly the 13-story Tower One. The project site would continue to have an urban design character defined by free-standing as well as interconnected buildings, set within landscaped areas with surface parking, and containing recreational ballfields. The renovation of existing Buildings 1 and 2 (Thompson and Parker Buildings) and construction of new buildings with designs and façade treatments similar to the existing Hutchinson Metro Center would create a cohesive and unified design.

The proposed project would not be anticipated to adversely affect any urban design features of the study area, and would not adversely affect the experience of the pedestrian. Rather, the proposed project would improve the pedestrian experience of the project site and surrounding area. The proposed project would provide active uses, including a retail building and amenities building, at the intersection of the proposed East-West Road and Marconi Street, and other active ground-floor uses at certain locations throughout the project site. The proposed ground-floor retail uses would be directly accessible from the exterior of each building. The proposed project would provide new sidewalks and landscaping to improve pedestrian access and the streetscape, and would connect with the new pedestrian improvements that would be developed as part of the proposed MNR Morris Park Station in the future.

There are no visual resources located on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no significant adverse impacts on visual resources on the project site. The proposed project would not block any publicly accessible view corridors or views to any visual resources. Visual resources, including the Saint Theresa of the Infant Jesus Roman Catholic Church and the mature trees at Colucci Playground are located at a distance from the project site and across the HRP. The greenway and paved recreational path located along the west side of the HRP are located adjacent to the project site, but the large trees and other plants that border the greenway provide a buffer between the project site and the pathway. The church, and trees and vegetation at Colucci Playground would remain prominently visible from the surrounding streets and viewers of these resources would not be negatively impacted. The proposed project would not adversely affect the views of pedestrians and other users of the greenway. Viewers would continue to be buffered by the vegetation along the west side of the greenway; the proposed new buildings would not be expected to have a greater visibility than existing tall buildings located at the project site and in the study area west of the HRP.

Phase I of the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual resources, or the pedestrian’s experience of these characteristics of the built and natural environment. Additionally, Phase I of the proposed project would not adversely impact the vitality, the walkability, or visual character of the area, and does not merit further analysis of urban design and visual resources. The changes to urban design and visual resources associated with the

proposed projects would not result in significant adverse neighborhood character impacts. Overall, the proposed projects would provide potential benefits to neighborhood character by enhancing the streetscape with new pedestrian activity.

### ***TRANSPORTATION***

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on transportation, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

As described in Chapter 14, “Transportation,” based on a detailed assessment of future condition vehicle trips, 29 intersections were identified as warranting detailed analysis for the weekday AM, midday, and PM peak hours. In the 2023 With-Action without HRP Improvements condition, there would be the potential for significant adverse traffic impacts at 17 intersections during the weekday AM peak hour, 9 intersections during the weekday midday peak hour, and 16 intersections during the weekday PM peak hour (see Table 14-2 in Chapter 14, “Transportation,” for a summary of potential significant adverse traffic impacts for both the 2023 With-Action without HRP Improvements and 2028 With-Action with HRP Improvement conditions). Freeway facility traffic conditions were evaluated for the northbound and southbound HRP for the weekday AM, midday, and PM peak periods. In the 2023 With-Action without HRP Improvements condition, the proposed project would result in significant adverse impacts to segments of the northbound and southbound HRP mainline and off-ramps.

Weekday AM and PM peak period bus line-haul analysis were evaluated for the Bx21 and Bx24 local bus routes. In the 2023 With-Action condition, there would be the potential for significant adverse bus line-haul impacts for the westbound Bx24 during the weekday AM peak hour and the eastbound and westbound Bx24 during the weekday PM peak hour. However, bus-line haul conditions are not a defining feature of the neighborhood.

Weekday peak period pedestrian conditions were evaluated at key area sidewalk, corner reservoir, and crosswalk locations. In the 2023 With-Action without HRP Improvements condition, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse pedestrian impacts.

Potential mitigation measures to address the significant adverse impacts are discussed in Chapter 22, “Mitigation.” As previously discussed, the neighborhood character of the study area is partly defined by existing relatively high traffic volumes, particularly along major roadways including the HRP, East Tremont Avenue, Morris Park Avenue, Pelham Parkway, Westchester Avenue, Eastchester Avenue, Williamsbridge Road, and Waters Place. The increased traffic and pedestrian volumes resulting from the proposed projects would not result in an overall impact to neighborhood character. As the neighborhood already experiences relatively high traffic volumes and would continue to in the With-Action condition, the impacts to traffic and bus-line haul would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### ***NOISE***

The defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the proposed project, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas. The proposed project would not result in significant noise impacts related to project-generated traffic. It is assumed that the building’s mechanical systems (i.e., HVAC systems) would be designed to meet all applicable noise regulations (i.e., Subchapter 5, §24-227 of the New York City Noise Control Code, the New York City Department of Buildings Code) and to avoid producing levels that would result in any significant increase in ambient noise levels.

Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse noise impacts related to building mechanical equipment. Overall, there would be no noise-related impacts on neighborhood character from the proposed project.

### **CONCLUSION**

As shown above, this assessment reveals that Phase I of the proposed project does not have the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical areas. Therefore, Phase I of the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

### **ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT THE DEFINING FEATURES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD—2028**

The sections below discuss potential changes resulting from the completion of Phase II of the proposed project for the 2028 analysis year 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; shadows; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; transportation; and noise. The assessment uses the findings from the respective chapters of this EIS to identify whether the 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 affected either through the potential of any significant adverse impact or in combination with any other moderate effects in the relevant technical areas for the 2028 analysis year.

#### **LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY**

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of Phase II of the proposed project on land use, zoning, and public policy, either individually, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section. By 2028, Phase II of the proposed project would result in the construction of three new buildings for commercial office, medical office, retail, and accessory uses as well as parking and open space. These uses would be consistent with the existing commercial, medical, and large institutional uses found in the study area and therefore consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

At completion, the proposed project would complement the existing land uses in the study area, including the existing Hutchinson Metro Center to the north and the Atrium. The proposed project would not alter existing land use conditions in the study area. The new commercial, retail, institutional, and accessory uses would be consistent with the character of the study area. Therefore, the proposed project would not adversely affect the land use character of the study area and would not result in any significant adverse impacts on land use.

The project site is located within the City's designated Coastal Zone Boundary. The proposed project has incorporated resiliency measures into the planning and design of all buildings on the project site to ensure long term resiliency to climate change and sea level rise in the City's Coastal Zone. The proposed project was reviewed for consistency with the policies of the State Coastal Zone Management program and the City's Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP). The analyses concluded that the proposed project would support the adopted resiliency policies of New York City and would be consistent with the relevant policies.

### *SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS*

Similar to the assessment of the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood for the 2023 analysis year, the defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on socioeconomic conditions, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section for the 2028 analysis year. As discussed in Chapter 3, “Socioeconomic Conditions,” the proposed project would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts related to direct residential displacement, direct business displacement, indirect residential displacement, indirect business displacement, or effects on specific industries in the study area.

### *OPEN SPACE*

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on publicly accessible open space, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

With the completion of Phase II, the amount of open space would increase on the project site as compared to the No-Action condition in 2028. The new proposed passive open space to be completed in Phase II of the proposed project would benefit the community and workers in the study area. Similar to the 2023 analysis year, this additional open space would contribute to the neighborhood character of the study area. As in existing and No-Action conditions, the proposed project would provide open space and baseball fields on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in changes to open space that would cause significant adverse neighborhood character impacts.

### *SHADOWS*

Similar to the assessment of the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood for the 2023 analysis year, for the 2028 analysis year, the incremental shadow generated by the proposed project would not significantly impact the character of the greenway and would not result in significant neighborhood character impacts.

### *HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES*

Similar to the assessment of the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood for the 2023 analysis year, for the 2028 analysis year, the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources. Therefore, defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on historic and cultural resources, either singularly or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

### *URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES*

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on urban design and visual resources, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

As described in Chapter 8, “Urban Design and Visual Resources,” by the 2028 analysis year, Phase II of the proposed project would introduce three new buildings (Buildings 5, 6, and 7), two adjoining four-level parking garages (Parking Garage 2 and Building 5/7 Garage), and additional open space. The designs of the buildings and parking garages would be similar to the two existing buildings located in the Hutchinson Metro Center and similar to the recladding of Buildings 1 and 2 (Thompson and Parker Buildings).



The study area would continue to have a mix of residential, commercial, community facility, institutional, manufacturing, and transportation uses in the 2028 analysis year. The proposed new buildings on the project site would be similar in scale, massing, and design to the buildings located in the Hutchinson Metro Center and the newly constructed and reclad buildings built in Phase I on the project site. No other changes are expected to impact the urban design of the study area.

As with Phase I of the proposed project, Phase II would continue to improve the pedestrian experience of the project site and surrounding area. Phase II would complete the build out of the project site and would provide new sidewalks, crosswalks, and landscaping throughout the site. The new buildings in Phase II would also provide some active ground floor uses and would activate the project site.

As described above, there are no visual resources located on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no significant adverse impacts on visual resources on the project site.

Phase II of the proposed project would not block any publicly accessible view corridors or views to any visual resources. Visual resources, including the Saint Theresa of the Infant Jesus Roman Catholic Church and the mature trees at Colucci Playground would continue to be located at a distance from the project site and across the HRP. The church, and trees and vegetation at Colucci Playground would remain prominently visible from the surrounding streets and viewers of these resources would not be negatively impacted. The proposed project would not adversely affect the views of pedestrians and other users of the greenway. The proposed new buildings would not be expected to have a greater visibility than existing tall buildings located at the project site and in the study area west of the HRP.

Phase II of the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual resources, or the pedestrian's experience of these characteristics of the built and natural environment. Additionally, Phase I of the proposed project would not adversely impact the vitality, the walkability, or visual character of the area, and does not merit further analysis of urban design and visual resources. The changes to urban design and visual resources associated with the proposed project would not result in significant adverse neighborhood character impacts. Overall, the proposed project would provide potential benefits to neighborhood character by enhancing the streetscape with new pedestrian activity.

#### *TRANSPORTATION*

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the proposed project on transportation, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

As described in Chapter 14, "Transportation," based on a detailed assessment of future condition vehicle trips, 29 intersections were identified as warranting detailed analysis for the weekday AM, midday, and PM peak hours. In the 2028 With-Action with HRP Improvements condition, there would be the potential for significant adverse traffic impacts at 18 intersections during the weekday AM peak hour, 10 intersections during the weekday midday peak hour, and 17 intersections during the weekday PM peak hour (see Table 14-2 in Chapter 14, "Transportation," for a summary of potential significant adverse traffic impacts for both the 2023 With-Action without HRP Improvements and 2028 With-Action with HRP Improvement conditions). Freeway facility traffic conditions were evaluated for the northbound and southbound HRP for the weekday AM, midday, and PM peak periods. In the 2028 With-Action with HRP Improvements conditions, the proposed project would result in potential significant adverse impacts on a segment of the northbound HRP mainline and off-ramps.

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Weekday AM and PM peak period bus line-haul analysis were evaluated for the Bx21 and Bx24 local bus routes. In the 2028 With-Action condition, there would be the potential for significant adverse bus line-haul impacts for the northbound Bx21, and eastbound and westbound Bx24 during the weekday AM peak hour, and the eastbound and westbound Bx24 during the weekday PM peak hour. However, bus line haul conditions are not a defining feature of the neighborhood.

Weekday peak period pedestrian conditions were evaluated at key area sidewalk, corner reservoir, and crosswalk locations. In the 2028 With-Action with HRP Improvements condition, the proposed project would not result in the potential for significant adverse pedestrian impacts.

Potential mitigation measures to address the significant adverse impacts are discussed in Chapter 22, "Mitigation." As previously discussed, the neighborhood character of the study area is partly defined by existing relatively high traffic volumes, particularly along major roadways including the HRP, East Tremont Avenue, Morris Park Avenue, Pelham Parkway, Westchester Avenue, Eastchester Avenue, Williamsbridge Road, and Waters Place. The increased traffic and pedestrian volumes resulting from the proposed projects would not result in an overall impact to neighborhood character. As the neighborhood already experiences relatively high traffic volumes and would continue to in the With-Action condition, the impacts to traffic and bus-line haul would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

### ***NOISE***

Similar to the assessment of the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood for the 2023 analysis year, for the 2028 analysis year, the defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential noise effects of the proposed project, either singularly, or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas. As described in Chapter 17, "Noise," the analysis finds that the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse noise impacts. Overall, there would be no noise-related impacts on neighborhood character from the proposed project.

### ***CONCLUSION***

As shown above, this assessment reveals that the proposed project does not have the potential to affect the defining features of the neighborhood, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in relevant technical areas. Therefore, a detailed neighborhood character analysis is not necessary, and the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character. \*