

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers existing land use, zoning, and public land use policies in relation to the project site and the surrounding study area, as defined below. The proposed project would entail construction of an approximately 2,460-seat school facility on Block 2443, Lot 78, that would accommodate four separate school organizations, with several shared facilities and recreational spaces. Land use issues associated with the proposed project include potential changes in local land uses and neighborhood land use patterns. Zoning and public policy issues include the compatibility of the proposed project with public policies and zoning requirements.

As described below, this analysis concludes that construction of the proposed project would be compatible with and supportive of existing land uses and ongoing land use trends in the study area, and would not result in any significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, or public policy.

B. METHODOLOGY

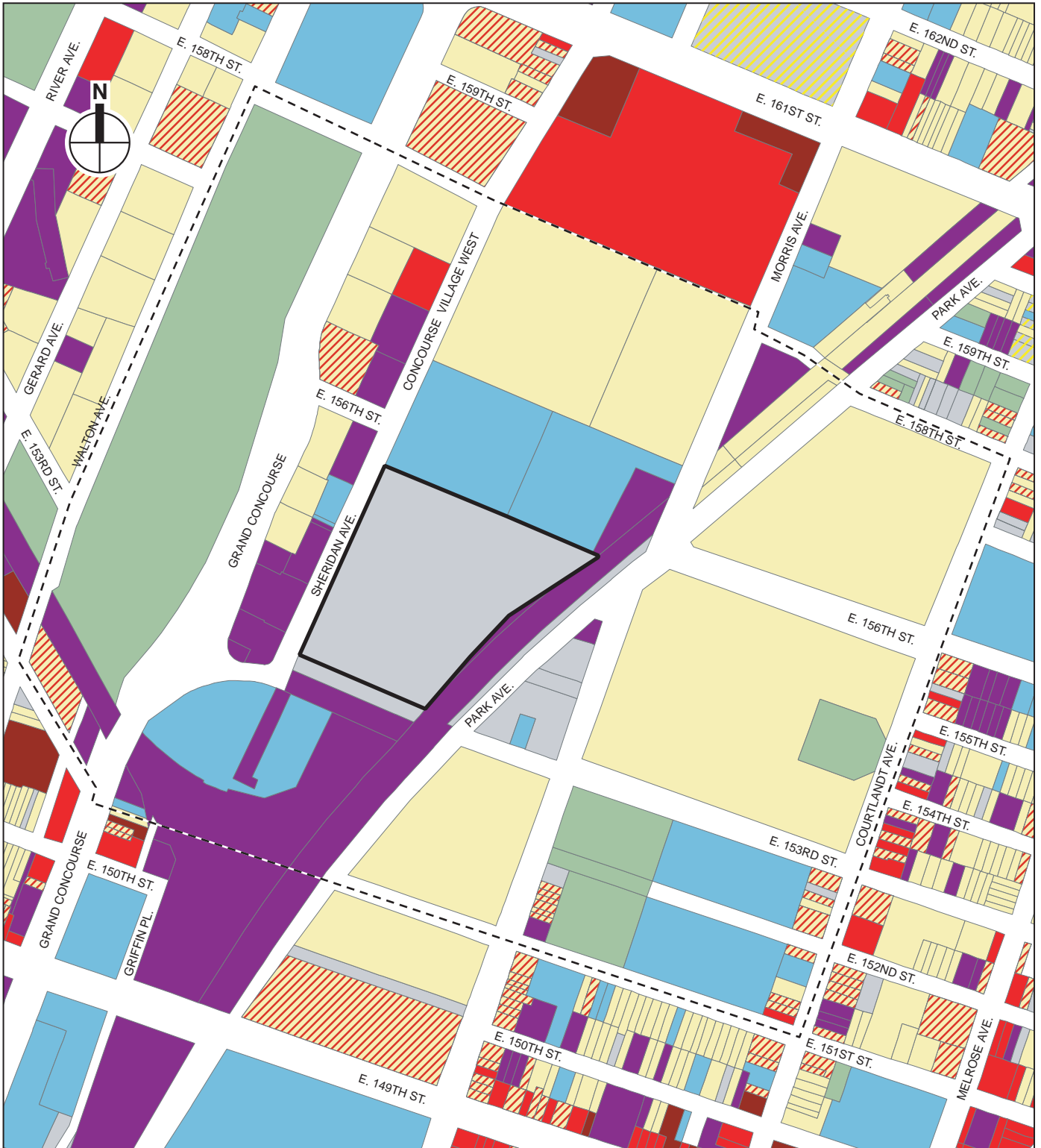
The 400-foot land use study area is roughly defined by East 158th Street to the north, East 151st Street to the south, Courtlandt Avenue to the east, and Walton Avenue to the west. This analysis identifies anticipated changes in land use, zoning, and public policy that are expected to occur independently of the proposed project by 2010, the project's build year, and assesses any potential adverse impacts to land use, zoning, and public policy that could occur as a result of the proposed project.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing land use patterns and trends are described below for the project site and the study area. This is followed by a discussion of zoning and public policy, community character, and community facilities for the same areas.

LAND USE*PROJECT SITE*

The project site is located on Block 2443, Lot 78 in the Concourse Village section of the Bronx. It is a currently undeveloped site bounded by Concourse Village West to the west, Public School (P.S.) 156 and Intermediate School (I.S.) 151 to the north (adjacent to East 156th Street), and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) Metro-North Railroad tracks (and Concourse Village East) to the east (see Figure 2-1). The East 153rd Street Bridge, to be constructed by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), will constitute the site's southern boundary. The project site's western property line varies between 15 and 30 feet above grade. The southern portion of the project lot (approximately 32,000 square feet [sf]) will be transferred to the MTA Metro-North for the purpose of the construction of the East 153rd Street Bridge.



- Project Site Boundary
- Study Area Boundary
- Residential
- Residential (with Ground Floor Retail)
- Commercial
- Office
- Institutional
- Open Space
- Industrial
- Vacant Parcel
- Under Construction



Land Use
Figure 2-1

Mott Haven School Facility, Bronx

Mott Haven School Facility

STUDY AREA

The land use study area, located in Bronx Community Districts 1 and 4, contains a variety of land uses. Overall, the neighborhood is primarily residential, with institutional, open space, and commercial and industrial uses also present.

Residential uses in the study area are predominantly concentrated in a few high-rise residential complexes, including Concourse Village to the north, which comprises several 25-story condominium buildings and three New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) complexes to the northeast and east—Morrisania Air Rights, Andrew Jackson Houses, and Melrose Houses. Additional residential uses in the study area include Maria Lopez Plaza to the south, a complex of 6- to 7-story apartment buildings, and several 6-story apartment buildings along Grand Concourse to the west.

Commercial uses in the study area include a supermarket located north of the project site on Concourse Village West, and numerous small neighborhood-oriented retail establishments that occupy the ground floors of residential buildings located primarily to the east of the project site along Courtlandt and Morris Avenues. Concourse Plaza, located just outside of the study area on East 161st Street, is the largest commercial complex in the vicinity of the proposed project and contains numerous retail establishments that serve the surrounding neighborhoods, such as a Multiplex Cinemas and several national retail franchises. The complex includes a large surface parking area to accommodate shoppers.

The study area also contains industrial and auto-related uses, including public parking facilities, garages, and a warehouse located across from the project site along Concourse Village West. The study area is situated just north of a fork in active railroad lines, and is transected by segments of the Amtrak Railroad and the MTA Metro-North Harlem line. The MTA Metro-North Harlem rail line runs northeast along the project site's eastern boundary. A service road is located to the west of the railroad tracks, and Concourse Village East is located to the east of the tracks.

A number of educational facilities and other institutional uses are located in the study area. The 456-seat Henry Lou Gehrig Intermediate School (I.S. 151) is located directly north and east of the project site, with its main entrance located on East 156th Street (Thurman Munson Way). The approximately 1,100-seat P.S. 156 is located to the north and west of the project site, with its main entrance on Concourse Village West. Both school facilities were constructed on a platform that serves to elevate the structures to street level. The Courtlandt School (P.S. 1) and Alfred E. Smith H.S. are located on a block bounded by Morris Avenue, East 151st Street, Courtlandt Avenue, and East 152nd Street. Cardinal Hayes Memorial High School, a private school, is located south of the project site at East 151st Street. Another public school, P.S. 29, is located just outside the study area to the east.

Other institutional uses within the study area include the Philip H. Michaels Child Development Center located on Courtlandt Avenue; two churches, located in close proximity to the project site on Concourse Village West and on East 153rd Street; and the Melrose Community Center and the Andrew Jackson Senior Center, both located within the NYCHA housing complex on East 156th Street. Some prominent institutional uses exist just outside the study area, such as the Bronx County Courthouse and the Bronx Criminal/Family Court to the north, as well as De Hostos Community College, the Bronx General Post Office, and Lincoln Medical Center to the south.

The principal open space within the study area is Franz Sigel Park, a 16-acre city-owned park with both active and passive recreational uses. The park, which stretches along the Grand Concourse, from East 151st Street to East 158th Street, provides a number of amenities,

including handball courts, basketball courts, softball fields and play equipment, as well as a comfort station and expansive open spaces and pathways for passive recreational activities. Additional open spaces and recreational facilities in the study area include playgrounds located within Melrose Houses and Jackson Houses, and recreational facilities associated with P.S. 1, Alfred E. Smith H.S., and Cardinal Hayes Memorial High School.

There are several vacant sites currently located within the study area, including three contiguous parcels controlled by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) located adjacent to the project site and across Park Avenue. The Nueva Era project, a new commercial and residential development discussed below, is planned for this area. In addition, several smaller vacant lots are located along Courtlandt Avenue.

ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

PROJECT SITE

The project site is located in a R8 general residential district, which permits residences to be built to a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.02 and community facilities to be built to a maximum FAR of 6.5. School facilities are a permitted use within R8 districts. The R8 district is the highest density district in the Bronx, allowing tall buildings with relatively low lot coverage to be set back from the street.

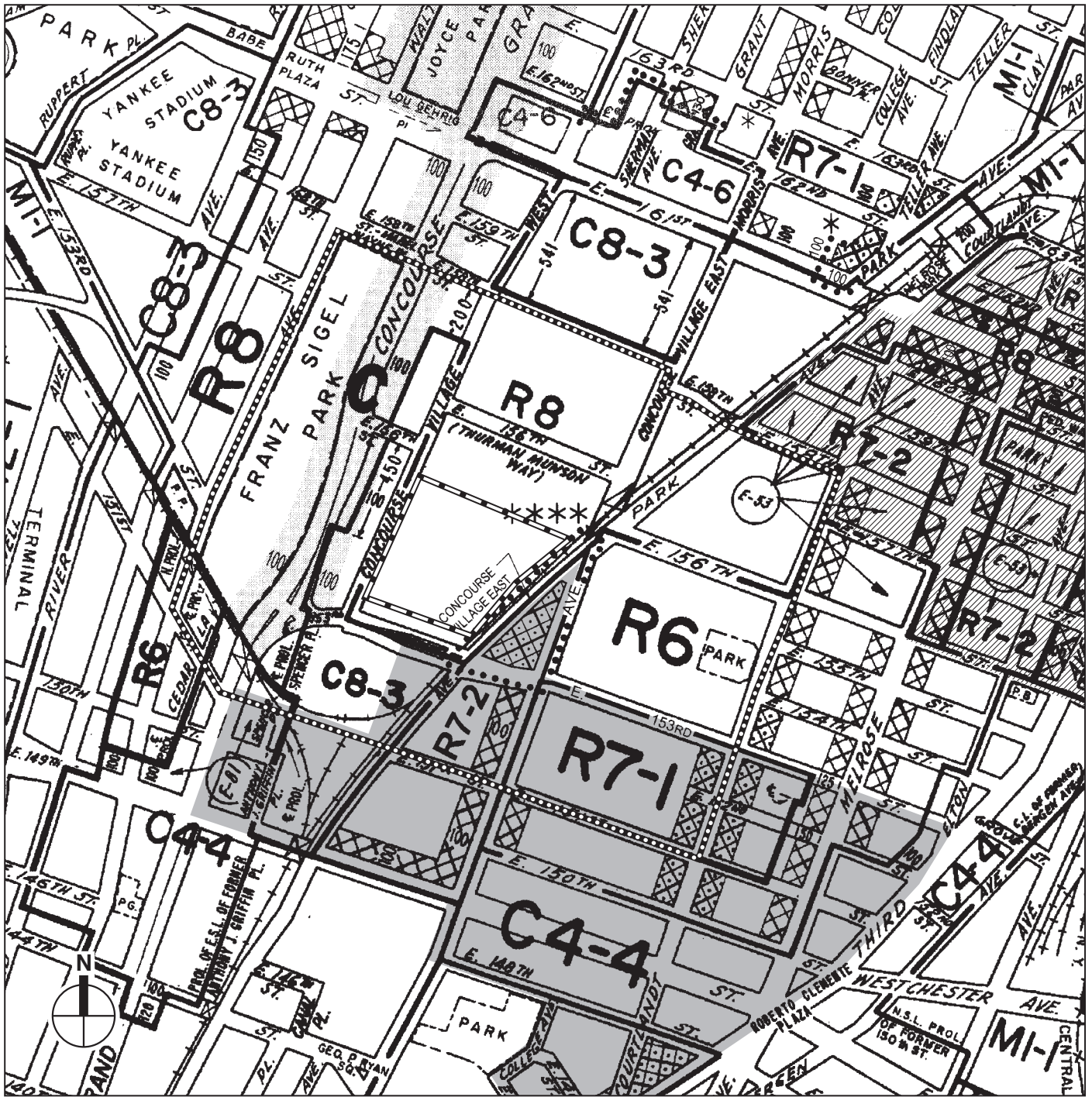
STUDY AREA





Zoning in the study area includes residential and commercial zoning districts (see Figure 2-2). R8 is the predominant zoning district within the study area, encompassing the project site, as well as the north and northeast portions of the study area. Residential buildings, located here include the high-rise Concourse Village complex and the Andrew Jackson Houses.





The eastern portion of the study area is zoned R6, allowing for medium density housing with a maximum FAR of 2.43 for residential uses and an FAR of 4.8 for community facility uses. Buildings within R6 districts are typically between 3 and 12 stories, although the Quality Housing Program—which is optional in the R6 district—allows taller buildings, such as Melrose Houses, a NYCHA complex located within an R6 district in the study area containing multiple 14-story apartment buildings. The southeastern portion of the study area is zoned R7-1 and R7-2, which allow for medium density housing with a maximum FAR of 3.44 for residential uses. For community facility uses, R7-1 allows a maximum FAR of 4.8 and R7-2 allows a maximum FAR of 6.5.

Blocks zoned commercially are located to the south and west of the project site. A C8-3 commercial district stretches along Concourse Village West and portions of the project site to the south. C8-3 districts permit heavy commercial uses, such as the existing auto-related uses, and are typically mapped along major traffic arteries. Performance standards apply to some uses permitted in C8-3 districts. The maximum allowable FAR for commercial uses in C8-3 districts is 2.0 and the maximum FAR for community facility uses is 6.5.

Portions of blocks along the Concourse Village East and Courtlandt Avenue have either a C1-4 or C2-4 commercial overlay. C1 districts are typically mapped along major avenues in residential districts, and generally accommodate retail and personal service shops that cater to the daily needs of the immediate residential neighborhood. C2 districts are generally intended to serve a wider neighborhood, and permit a wider range of local retail and service establishments



-  Project Site Boundary
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area
-  Melrose Urban Renewal Area

-  Zoning District Boundary
-  Special Purpose District
-  C1-4 Overlay
-  C2-4 Overlay



Zoning
Figure 2-2

Mott Haven School Facility, Bronx

Mott Haven School Facility

than C1 districts. The maximum commercial FAR for the C1-4 and C2-4 districts within the study area is 2.0.

Located within the study area along the Grand Concourse is the Grand Concourse Preservation District, a special district that was established to encourage new development while protecting the residential character and existing scale and form of development of the Grand Concourse. The special district regulates the location of certain retail and commercial uses, as well as signage, bulk, and tree plantings, in order to preserve and enhance the residential character of the Grand Concourse. The district contains design guidelines affecting the renovation or alteration of certain buildings, as well as regulations to ensure that street wall and bulk are consistent with existing development.

The project site is located in close proximity to two Urban Renewal Areas (URAs)—the Melrose URA to the south and east and the Melrose Commons URA to the north and east. A small portion of the Melrose URA is located within the study area. Originally conceived in 1969 by the City of New York and local community groups, the Melrose URA set forth several goals, including eliminating blight, removing substandard structures, and providing low- and moderate-income housing within a mixture of commercial uses and open spaces. The Melrose URA comprises nine sites in approximately ten acres, most of which have already been redeveloped as residential buildings. The proposed project's study area contains one Melrose URA site (identified as Site C of the URA), which is located adjacent to the project site across Concourse Village East and is mostly vacant with a church and an auto-service garage located on two small parcels. This site is one of the last remaining undeveloped Melrose URA sites, and is the site of the planned Nueva Era development, described below.

The Melrose Commons URA, which is located to the north and east of the study area, was created out of an effort to reverse the decades-long trend of housing abandonment and disinvestment in the area. The Melrose Commons URA comprises 33 contiguous blocks and is generally bounded by Park Avenue to the west, East 163rd Street to the north, St. Ann's Avenue and Brook Avenue to the east, and East 156th through East 158th Streets to the south. The Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan calls for the development of approximately 1,500 low- and moderate-income housing units, 250,000 sf of new commercial space, 250,000 sf of new community facility space, and approximately 4 acres of open space. Since the plan was adopted in 1994, a number of new residential developments have been completed, with several additional projects proceeding at varying stages of the planning and construction process.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community character is defined as an amalgam of a number of traits, including land use, urban design and visual resources, traffic, and noise. These elements are considered together to create a sense of the neighborhood in which a project is proposed, so that the compatibility of the project with its community setting can be presented and assessed.

The community character of the Concourse Village section of the Bronx is generally that of a conglomerate of uses and activities, located just south of the borough's primary civic center. Consistent with the land use patterns of the surrounding community, the study area contains a number of institutional facilities, and mostly medium to high density housing. While some commercial uses exist within the study area, including heavy commercial uses along Concourse Village West and neighborhood-oriented ground-floor commercial and retail establishments along Morris and Courtlandt Avenues, the majority of the neighborhood's retail and commercial needs are likely met outside of the study area.

The project site, the MTA Metro-North rail line, and the large residential complexes located on superblocks surrounding the project site, together create a physical barrier separating the neighborhood from east to west. Direct east-west access between major thoroughfares such as Courtlandt Avenue and Grand Concourse does not exist between East 161st and East 149th Streets. The rail lines hinder traffic circulation in the area, and vehicular traffic levels are relatively low near the project site. In addition, the area is subject to intermittent noise generated by the active rail lines.

A major thoroughfare in the study area is the Grand Concourse, an eminent north-south arterial along which many of the neighborhood's principal institutions are located. North of East 153rd Street, Grand Concourse widens into stately boulevard, lined with several Art Moderne-inspired apartment buildings to the east, and the expansive Franz Sigel Park to the west.

Other highly-trafficked avenues within the study area include Park Avenue, which runs along the Metro-North rail line; Walton Avenue, which runs parallel to Grand Concourse adjacent to Franz Sigel Park; and Morris and Courtlandt Avenues, which contain ground-floor retail establishments catering to the local neighborhood, such as bodegas, candy stores, and restaurants. The east-west streets within the study area, including East 151st, East 153rd, and East 156th Streets, are bisected by Park Avenue and contain less traffic.

Franz Sigel Park is one of the most important open space resources in the neighborhood and is a prominent feature within the study area.

The Grand Concourse Historic District, listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR), extends along the Grand Concourse and contains one building of historic significance within the study area. The apartment houses located at 730-760 Grand Concourse are notable examples of the Art Deco style found within this historic district.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A new school would provide an additional community resource for area residents and is not expected to place additional demands on hospital and other health care facilities, libraries, or public day care facilities. This analysis focuses, therefore, on police and fire protection services.

The project site is located within the 44nd Police Precinct of the New York Police Department (NYPD). The precinct house is located at 1 East 169th Street on the corner of Gerard Avenue. The project site is served by Fire Department of New York (FDNY) Ladder Company 71 and Engine Company 55 located at 718 Melrose Avenue.

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

LAND USE

PROJECT SITE

Absent the proposed project, one change to the project site is expected to occur by 2010. The southern portion of the lot (approximately 32,000 sf) will be transferred to the MTA Metro-North for the purpose of the construction of the East 153rd Street Bridge. The new cable-stayed bridge will replace a two-lane bridge that was demolished in 1992, and will create a vital connection between Grand Concourse and Morris Avenue, accommodating four lanes of traffic as well as a bicycle lane and pedestrian walkway. Construction of this project is scheduled for

Mott Haven School Facility

completion by the proposed project's build year. The bridge will serve to improve east-west access and alleviate traffic congestion along East 161st and East 149th Streets.

STUDY AREA

It is anticipated that the Nueva Era project—a new residential and commercial development adjacent to the project site across Concourse Village East on the Melrose URA Site C—will be completed by 2009. The Nueva Era project includes approximately 200 residential units in two buildings with ground floor retail uses along Morris Avenue, including an 18,000 sf grocery store, 6,000 sf of neighborhood retail, and a 117-space accessory parking garage. The Greater Universal Baptist Church and an auto-service garage that currently exist on the development site will remain alongside the new development.

In addition, several large development projects are planned for the surrounding area, although they are located outside the 400-foot study area. The largest development project is the proposed development of a new Yankee stadium, to be located on portions of John Mullaly and Macomb's Dam Park one block north of the existing Yankee Stadium located at East 161st Street and River Avenue. The project is expected to be substantially completed by 2009, and would include the construction of four new parking garages containing approximately 5,254 spaces, the development of new and replacement recreational park facilities for a net increase in 4.63 acres of parkland, and approximately 12,000 sf of street-level retail use. The Gateway Center at Bronx Terminal Market is planned just south of the proposed stadium, on a site bordered by the Metro North Railroad tracks to the north, River Avenue to the east, 149th Street to the south, and Exterior Street (the street under the Major Deegan Expressway) to the west. This project, to be completed in 2009, consists of 1.1 million square feet of retail space, a 250-room hotel, waterfront esplanade, and more than 3,000 parking spaces.

Several large mixed use developments are planned to the east of the project site, outside the 400-foot study area, including two projects in the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area. Courtlandt Corners, planned for two sites east of Courtlandt Avenue between East 160th and East 162nd Streets, is expected to contain 474 residential units and 28,000 sf of retail use. Boricua Village would consist of a 120,000 square foot building to house Boricua College's Bronx campus, as well as approximately 754 residential units, 46,000 sf of retail space, and 150 accessory parking spaces. The Boricua Village site is bounded by East 163rd Street, Third Avenue, East 161st Street, and St. Ann's Avenue. These two projects are expected to be completed by 2009.

A large mixed use project, Plaza at the Hub, is planned for a two-block area bounded by Grove Street, and Bergen, Brook, and Westchester Avenues. This project, to be completed in 2010, is expected to contain approximately 250 housing units, 376,800 sf of retail space, 291,700 sf of office space, a multiplex theater, and a supermarket. The New Housing New York project, planned for a site just north of the Plaza at the Hub project, would contain approximately 150 units of housing and ground floor commercial use, and is expected to be completed by 2009.

Another major development project, the Bronx Criminal Court Complex, is located on a three-block site just outside of the study area at East 161st Street and Morris Avenue. The complex will contain 47 courtrooms for the Supreme and Criminal Court and offices for several government agencies, including the Department of Corrections and the New York City Police Department. The first phase of this project, consisting of a 10-story complex containing approximately 1.11 million square feet, was recently completed.

Additional projects planned for the surrounding area include a new 60,000-sf New York City Department of Homeless Services Emergency Assistance Unit at East 151st Street and Walton Avenue to replace the existing facility at this location, and the renovation of a 125,000-sf academic building located on Grand Concourse and East 149th Street at the Hostos Community College.

A number of street improvements are being planned that would affect access to the study area. Streetscape and sidewalk improvements are planned in connection with the new Bronx Criminal Court Complex, along East 161st Street between Grand Concourse and Park Avenue, and north along the Grand Concourse to 164th Street. East 149th Street between Griffin Place and Exterior Street will undergo reconstruction prior to 2010 to improve vehicular and pedestrian access, including improvements traffic lighting, sidewalks, and curbs.

While most of this new development is occurring outside of the study area, the scale of new development and proximity to the study area will likely result in increased pedestrian and commercial activity throughout the study area.

ZONING

One change in zoning within the study area is likely to occur in the future without the proposed project by 2010. As part of the Nueva Era project described above, the entire block bounded by Morris Avenue, Concourse Village East, East 153rd Street, and East 155th Street (Block 2442) was recently rezoned from C8-3 and R6 with a C2-4 overlay to R7-2 with a C2-4 overlay. This zoning change extends the existing R7-2 district by one block to the north, to enable the construction of a residential development with ground-floor retail uses and an accessory parking garage. The proposed zoning change would have a positive effect on adjacent land uses, as it would result in new residential and retail development on properties that have been vacant for several years.

There are no additional land use public policy initiatives expected to have an effect on the project site or the surrounding area in the future without the project.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

In the future without the project, it is not anticipated that any new development would occur within the study area that would be inconsistent with the existing character of the area. While some new traffic may be generated by the Nueva Era development project, it also anticipated that the new construction and infrastructure improvements planned for the area will enhance vehicular and pedestrian access through the area. In particular, the construction of the East 153rd Street Bridge will serve to alleviate local traffic congestion along East 161st and East 149th Streets and improve east-west access in the area. The East 153rd Street Bridge is expected to result in moderate increases in noise levels adjacent to the bridge; however, this change is not expected to have a significant adverse effect on the area. The bridge construction project will include modifications to traffic signal phasing and timing to alleviate any congestion associated with traffic reassignment. Therefore, the construction of the East 153rd Street Bridge is expected to benefit the community, without resulting in any significant negative impacts. No additional changes to community character are expected.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Police Department has no plans for any changes that will affect law enforcement services in this portion of the 44th Precinct. Similarly, there are no other projects or changes in fire protection services or equipment expected by the 2010 Build Year.

E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

LAND USE

PROJECT SITE

The proposed project would not displace any existing land uses, but instead would develop an underutilized and vacant site with an approximately 275,000 gsf school facility. The proposed project would accommodate four school organizations and approximately 2,460 students, including District 75 facilities. In addition, the proposed school facility would contain shared facilities, including an auditorium, gymnasium, and playing fields that would be accessible to the community.

STUDY AREA

The new school would be located directly south of two existing public schools, P.S. 156 and I.S. 151, and northeast of the Cardinal Hayes Memorial High School. The new institutional use would be compatible with the other predominantly residential and institutional uses in the study area, and would increase activity on the site by replacing vacant undeveloped land with a public institutional use. It is not anticipated that the proposed project would affect the residential uses to the east or south, as it would be separated by the Metro-North rail line and Concourse Village East/Park Avenue, nor residential uses to the north, as it would be buffered by P.S. 156 and I.S. 151. The heavy commercial uses to the west of the project site along Concourse Village West would not be affected as the project would be enclosed with fences and would comply with setback regulations as required by the zoning code.

ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

PROJECT SITE

The new school facility would conform to the use requirements of the R8 general residence district, in which school uses are permitted as-of-right, as well as the district's bulk regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would have no significant adverse impacts to local zoning or public policy.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

In the future with the proposed project, a new public institutional use would be created on a currently underutilized site. The proposed project would be compatible with surrounding land uses, which are primarily residential, with a mix of institutional and commercial development. Because the site is depressed between 15 to 30 feet below street level, the proposed project would have the appearance of rising up to four stories above street level and would thus be compatible with heights of the surrounding buildings. In addition, the project would establish greater connectivity of development within the area, by replacing a large vacant lot that is

depressed below street level with four school buildings adjacent to Concourse Village West and recreational playing fields on the eastern portion of the site.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Police and Fire Departments continually monitor conditions to determine how personnel are deployed. Decisions to alter existing deployment patterns would be made only in response to a demonstrated change in demand. Police and fire services would be adjusted as deemed necessary by both agencies, and no significant adverse impacts to police or fire services are expected to result from the proposed project. *