

**A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the project's potential for impacts related to land use, zoning, and public policy. Regionally, transit access is often a powerful determinant of land use trends. The project could also affect land use locally by bringing more people to an area or changing the way certain train yards are used. Land use issues for this project include the potential for project alternatives to alter local land uses or influence neighborhood or regional land use patterns. Project alternatives may also support or contradict land use plans and policies. For study areas in Manhattan, Queens, Long Island and the Bronx, this chapter analyzes existing land use, zoning, and public policy; estimates future background conditions common to all alternatives in 2010 and 2020; and identifies and addresses potential impacts on land use, zoning, and public policy associated with the project alternatives.

The geographic scope of the project and the variety of activities it will engender require that the analysis consider several study areas and subareas, as follows:

- Long Island Transportation Corridor (LITC). This regional study area frames the basic Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) service area, which includes Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn, and Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Although residents of other parts of the New York region use the LIRR, their numbers are very small; the LITC contains the entire LIRR network of stations, routes and yards, and the vast majority of LIRR passengers.
- Manhattan Land Use Study Area. The vast majority of LIRR users heading to and from Manhattan start or finish their trips in the area south of approximately West 70th and East 79th Streets. In this area, the analysis addresses the compatibility of the proposed project's service changes and new terminal with established and potential future development and public policy initiatives. Local effects on land use near Grand Central Terminal (GCT) and Penn Station are also addressed. Because this area is large and varied, it is further divided into 11 neighborhood subareas (see Figure 3-1).
- Queens Land Use Study Area. The greatest influence on land use in Queens is the potential effect of the proposed new station in Sunnyside. Therefore, a land use study area was defined within a ½-mile radius of the station. The ½-mile distance represents a reasonable walk to the station and thus defines the location of greatest influence of a new rail station. The analysis focuses on the new station's compatibility with and effect on established and potential future development and public policy.
- Replacement Yard Land Use Study Areas. Because New York & Atlantic Railway's (NYAR) freight operations would be displaced from Yard A under the Preferred Alternative, three potential relocation sites were considered: Blissville Yard, Maspeth Yard, and Fresh Pond Yard, all in Queens. *As noted in Chapter 2, Maspeth Yard is no longer under consideration, but it is still analyzed in this document for comparative purposes.* In addition, the use of the lower level of GCT for LIRR trains will require relocation of

Metro-North Railroad's (MNR) midday train storage area to MNR's Highbridge Yard in the Bronx. The areas surrounding each of these yards have been examined for potential land use impacts. Each land use study area is defined by an approximately 400-foot radius from the edge of the yard. Within these areas, detailed field surveys were conducted, focusing in particular on identifying any land uses that might be sensitive to changes in freight activities at the yards—such as residential uses, for example.

- Long Island Storage Yards Land Use Study Areas. *As described in Chapter 2, the FEIS includes an illustrative assessment of seven different sites to present a range of different impacts that might occur with future development of new nighttime storage yards on Long Island. The seven sites analyzed in this FEIS include one on the Port Jefferson Branch (Cerro Wire, in Locust Grove), five on the Ronkonkoma Branch—including a site in an inactive portion of Pilgrim Hospital in Brentwood, property south of the existing Ronkonkoma Yard in Ronkonkoma, two separate sites in the vicinity of the Yaphank station in Yaphank, property approximately 1½ miles east of the Riverhead station in Riverhead—and one in West Islip, on property across the LIRR right-of-way from the existing Babylon Yard. Like the replacement yards, a land use study area for the Long Island storage yards is defined by an approximately 400-foot radius from the edge of each yard and detailed land use surveys of these areas were conducted.*

In addition to these areas, the project may affect land use and various neighborhood conditions in the vicinity of the tunnel alignment and other work areas during construction. Study areas have been defined along the proposed tunnel alignments and construction access and staging locations in Manhattan and Queens. Existing and future background conditions in these areas have also been assessed. These are presented and potential impacts are addressed in Chapter 17, "Construction and Construction Impacts."

In addressing potential land use impacts of the project, certain land use study areas were considered, but ultimately NOT included in the analysis. Because the project would shift patronage among LIRR terminal stations, consideration was given to establishing land use study areas for each terminal. The patronage analysis (see Chapter 9, "Transportation") found that the number of LIRR commuters entering Penn Station in the AM peak period would decrease by 42 percent by 2010. As noted above, the effect of this change is addressed within the assessment of the Manhattan study area. The patronage analysis also found major decreases in patronage at the Hunterspoint Avenue and Long Island City stations in Queens. However, this reduction would affect only transfers between the LIRR and New York City Transit's (NYCT) No. 7 train to Manhattan's East Side, since the vast majority of LIRR riders who use these stations do so to connect to the subway. Since this change is internal—virtually all of the affected passengers now move from one station to the other without venturing into the neighborhood—no effect on land use patterns, zoning, or public policy is anticipated. Finally, patronage at Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn is predicted to be only marginally affected by the project. Thus it is not necessary to consider a Brooklyn study area in this land use chapter.

- - - - Study Area Boundary  
 — Subarea Boundary  
 ..... Project Route

## **B. HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE PATTERNS**

### **THE LIRR AND LONG ISLAND**

Although the LIRR is now the largest commuter railroad in the country, it was originally built to shorten trips between New York and Boston. Passengers traveled from Brooklyn to Greenport and took a ferry to Connecticut, where they boarded another train to Boston. Given this purpose, it was sensible to construct the line through the sparsely populated center of the island—where land was either undeveloped or in agricultural use—rather than along the shoreline, where population was centered and where towns and villages had been established. The rail line's remote location was a benefit, as there were no centers of development or substantial populations to impede construction. Construction proceeded eastward in stages, beginning with the link from Brooklyn to Jamaica (completed in 1834) and culminating in the final phase to Greenport in 1844.

When it opened, the railroad offered the most direct and reliable means of travel to Boston. But just a few years later, in 1850, the LIRR, outdone by the opening of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford all-rail link to Boston along the southern New England coast, had to declare bankruptcy. However, this event coincided with the rise of rail transit as a regional service. Very quickly, it became clear that railroads offered high-speed transportation service between localities, greatly enhanced the delivery of raw materials and goods, and were key to opening up areas for new development. Throughout Long Island, the LIRR and other providers began to build rail lines in coordination with burgeoning development. For example, in the 1860's when Alexander Turney Stewart purchased 500 acres from the Town of Hempstead to build a model village (now Garden City) just west of the existing LIRR branch connecting Mineola and Hempstead, he saw rail service as essential to his development. When he could not make a satisfactory arrangement with the LIRR, he had the rival Central Railroad Company build a line from Flushing to Floral Park, and then through the center of the proposed new village to Bethpage, with a small spur to Farmingdale, and another spur to Hempstead, running about one block east and roughly parallel to the LIRR's Hempstead Branch from Mineola.

By the end of the Civil War, intense rivalries grew between the LIRR and other rail operators who had built lines in support of new and established development. Over time, however, all these lines were consolidated into the LIRR. The network of rail lines traversing Long Island continued to encourage new growth and expansion of existing villages along its length. In 1910 the LIRR was finally connected directly to Manhattan, when tunnels under the East River were completed. The link to Pennsylvania Station (see discussion below) on Manhattan's west side made travel faster and more convenient and supported the growth both of Long Island's residential communities and of Manhattan as the region's premier employment center.

The influence of the LIRR on Long Island development remained strong through the first half of the 20th century, but began to wane after World War II. The rise of automobile ownership and construction of the interstate and other highway systems throughout the country and on Long Island led to more widespread development. Town centers were still important, and LIRR was still a major attraction for the island's new residents, but the population and economy were no longer absolutely dependent on the railroad for transportation of people, goods, and materials. In this era, Nassau County saw enormous growth as prosperity allowed families to leave the cities and move to suburban homes. The growth trend continued to move eastward into Suffolk County as well.

World War II had also established Long Island as an employment center (major defense facilities were built in Lake Success, Bethpage, and Riverhead, for example), and although these employers have been greatly diminished in recent years, they have been replaced by other businesses, including the computer industry. Today, all but the most easterly portions of Long Island are suburbanized, with a mix of development that is well-served by commuter rail, but that also relies on a network of roads and highways for the majority of trips.

## **PENN STATION, GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL, AND MANHATTAN**

### *THE GREAT TERMINALS*

The first Penn Station and the GCT that exists today were built in the same era, in response to a nationwide trend in railroad travel. The industrial revolution after the Civil War, the growth of the country's cities as major population and economic centers, and the rise of a prosperous middle class combined to make rail service key to a strong national economy. In the pre-car-and-truck era, the railroad was the most efficient form of transportation for nearly everything: long distance travel; travel to and from work; local, regional, and national movement of goods and raw materials; and vacation travel. In addition, the technical innovations in tunnel construction and in the use of electrical power permitted the introduction of large terminals into center cities without the disruption that rail facilities had previously caused. Most of the unsightly, dangerous, and land-consuming facilities could be concealed underground.

Reflecting the importance of rail travel, both terminals were conceived as extraordinary "gateways" to New York City. The quality of architecture and convenience to passengers distinguished the design. There was also an expectation that both terminals would spur development and the orderly progress of the city. From this point of view, construction of GCT was more successful than that of Penn Station, as discussed below.

#### *Penn Station*

The idea for Penn Station began in 1900, when the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) bought a majority interest in the LIRR. PRR was now in a position to offer train service from the tip of Long Island to Philadelphia and beyond. Beginning in 1903 the railroad dug tunnels under the Hudson and East Rivers, developed the Sunnyside Yard in Queens, electrified the service through and near Manhattan, and built Penn Station. The work was completed in 1910. Penn Station, designed by McKim, Mead & White and covering the area from 31st to 33rd Street, Seventh to Eighth Avenue, was an architectural triumph. A companion building, using the same architects, was built for the General Post Office in 1913 just west of the station, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. The railroad also developed a large hotel facing the station across Seventh Avenue. Together, these buildings were expected to foster a new civic center in West Midtown (Stern, et al., 1983).

However, aside from these three buildings, the railroad did not control the surrounding neighborhoods. Penn Station and the General Post Office were located at the southeasterly end of Hell's Kitchen and the northwesterly end of the Tenderloin District. Considered a slum, the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood provided low-cost housing for the immigrants who worked in the nearby slaughterhouses, warehouses, lumberyards, and factories. The Tenderloin contained the city's theater, entertainment, and shopping district, intermixed with row houses, tenements, and a reputation for substantial criminal activity. Each neighborhood operated with a successful economy, and neither was likely to change without major public or private investment.

Over time, the area surrounding Penn Station did change. The entertainment and shopping districts moved northward—theater to Times Square, shopping to Herald Square and Fifth Avenue—and the garment industry began to dominate the area that had been the Tenderloin. Construction of the Lincoln Tunnel and its approach ramps in the 1920's and 1930's removed many of the tenements and factories in the southern end of Hell's Kitchen. By the beginning of the post-World War II era, Penn Station's presence in the southwestern corner of Midtown had done little to change its surroundings. In 1962, primarily for financial reasons, the railroad sold Penn Station for a joint development project. The station was torn down and replaced by a new Madison Square Garden and Two Penn Plaza, a large (1.5 million-square-foot) office building. At about the same time, the Greyhound bus terminal just north of the station was razed to make way for One Penn Plaza, a 2 million-square-foot office building. This effort established a node of office space surrounding the station, but it took another 20 years—until the boom of the 1980's—to establish the Penn Station area as an office district. Today, many of the loft and garment industry showroom buildings have been converted to office use, from approximately 28th Street to 40th Street along Seventh Avenue and Broadway.

#### *Grand Central Terminal*

The roots of GCT's relationship with surrounding development go back to the 1860's, when Cornelius Vanderbilt took control of the New York and Harlem Railroad, the New York and New Haven Railroad, and the Hudson River Railroad. All of these lines crossed from the mainland into Manhattan with terminals on the east and west sides. Vanderbilt decided to build a coordinated terminal at 42nd Street, the most southerly point in which steam locomotives were permitted in Manhattan, on a site at Fourth Avenue that already contained a number of railroad buildings. As part of his plan, he brought all the tracks together at a new yard in Mott Haven (in the Bronx) and acquired more land for storage and marshaling yards between Madison and Lexington Avenues from 42nd to 48th Street. The terminal, known as Grand Central Depot, was completed in 1871 and was immediately followed by the Fourth Avenue Improvement Scheme, which lowered the tracks on Fourth Avenue below street level to 56th Street, placed them in a tunnel from 56th to 96th Streets, and constructed the viaduct north of 96th Street. Above the tunnel, the project developed a landscaped median strip (really intended to mask the smoke emanating through vents from below), thus creating Park Avenue.

In the three decades following construction of Vanderbilt's depot, the New York Central grew rapidly, so that by the early years of the 20th century, the railroad was planning a new terminal. This time, however, the scheme was truly comprehensive. It involved (1) electrifying the railroad to Mott Haven, (2) covering all of the tracks and creating a new Park Avenue south of 56th Street, (3) routing Park Avenue around the terminal, using a built-in viaduct and ramps, and (4) using air rights to create revenue-producing development above the railroad's property between Madison and Lexington Avenues, 42nd and 50th Streets. This last item was the first application of an approach that has now been used the world over to finance infrastructure projects with revenues from related development. And it is the main reason for the difference between development at GCT and that at Penn Station.

Within 15 years, the area closest to GCT contained substantial office development (for example, the Chrysler building, the Graybar building, the New York Central building astride Park Avenue), several hotels, and institutional uses, such as the Yale Club. Moving northward, Park Avenue had emerged as one of the city's most prestigious residential districts. All available air rights had been taken by luxury apartments and hotels. This spurred similar development farther north along the avenue to 96th Street. After World War II, most of the apartments south of 59th

Street began to be redeveloped for first-class office use, and this portion of Park Avenue became the spine for the most desirable business district in the nation.

### *MANHATTAN*

Development of Manhattan proceeded from south to north, essentially from the first day of the first settlement. The core of commerce would expand, driving residential uses before it, which, in turn, would subsume suburban communities that had themselves been developed on farmland. This process went on unabated until the early 20th century. At that point, most of the city's banking, finance, insurance, and other service businesses were located in lower Manhattan. During the first three decades of the century, with new subways (and the Hudson River tubes from New Jersey) enhancing access and new technology permitting construction of skyscrapers, this district expanded greatly. In the 1920's and early 1930's "modern" office development began to expand in Midtown, as well. In addition to the buildings around GCT, Rockefeller Center and the Empire State Building were constructed at this time. The expansion of the city's commercial district did not continue the usual pattern of advancing northward, because by this time the transportation infrastructure was in place and construction technology and city development policy encouraged development of larger buildings in or near already established central business district areas.

During the boom economy of the 1950's and 1960's, most of the new development took place in Midtown. The earliest buildings were on Park Avenue (including Lever House, the first steel and glass skyscraper, built in 1952), with some on Madison, Lexington and Fifth Avenues. Development followed outward from this core to Sixth Avenue and Third Avenue. With the notable exception of the Penn Plaza development discussed above, this trend was generally north of 42nd Street, between Sixth and Third Avenues (see Figure 3-2 for current land uses).

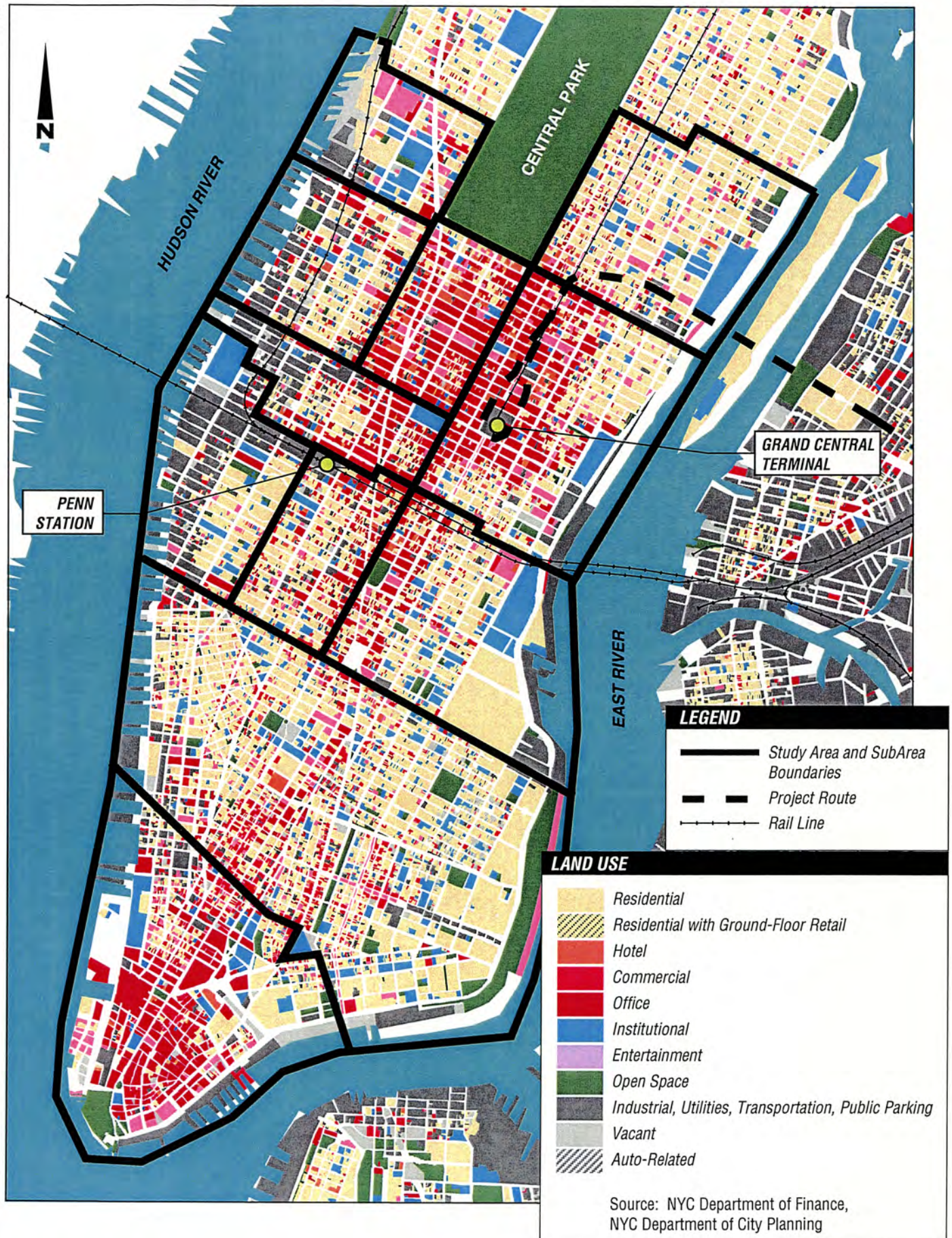
After the recession of the 1970's, the next wave of Midtown development contained more westward movement, primarily as a result of city policy in the form of the Special Midtown District. Adopted in 1982, this district covered all of what is now defined as "Midtown" and gave the greatest floor areas and design flexibility to the West Side, particularly the Times Square area, which was considered to be underutilized. By the late 1980's a number of buildings were completed; although many of these were not fully occupied until after the recession of the 1990's. The Times Square area, further bolstered by the success of the 42nd Street Development Project, is now a solid, first-class commercial district. It is also the Theater District.

In the post-World War II period, the Lower Manhattan Central Business District (CBD)\* expanded as well. Early 20th century skyscrapers (e.g., the Singer and City Investing Buildings) were razed to make way for even larger buildings; and the areas eastward to Water and South Streets, southward on Battery Park Plaza, and westward in Battery Park City (a publicly sponsored project) were developed. This growth was less robust than that of Midtown, however, and by the 1980's it was clear that Midtown had become the more desirable and prosperous of the two Manhattan CBD's. Current trends, supported by public policy, are to convert Lower

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\* While Manhattan's Central Business District (CBD) is generally the area south of 60th Street, for practical purposes, there are in effect two CBDs, representing the locations in that area where business is most concentrated—Midtown and Lower Manhattan. The city's third CBD is Downtown Brooklyn.







Manhattan's older office buildings to residential use (e.g., 71 Broadway, 25 Broad Street, 40 Wall Street) and create a 24-hour community of residents, workers, and visitors.

The 1980's and 1990's have also seen the re-emergence of Lower Fifth Avenue (now called the Flatiron District) and Park Avenue South as strong office districts, housing architecture/engineering, advertising, publishing, and new technology firms, among others.

#### **LONG ISLAND CITY/SUNNYSIDE**

Construction of the LIRR link to Manhattan had major land use effects in Long Island City and Sunnyside, in addition to the center city. At the turn of the 20th century, Long Island City had been recently consolidated into New York City. It was a large area, including much of what is considered to be Astoria and Sunnyside today, but unevenly settled. There were pockets of development in the Astoria and Steinway areas, industries along the waterfront in Hunters Point and frame houses between Hunters Point and 35th Street, the County courthouse at Thomson and Jackson Avenues, and a small village in Sunnyside, but in the center lay a large expanse of farmland and the swampy headwaters of Dutch Kills.

Railroad activities began in the area in 1900, when plans were laid for the New York Connecting Railroad to link the LIRR and New Haven railroads. As part of this project, Hell Gate Bridge was constructed as a grade-separated right-of-way, entirely on private property. The PRR's plan to dig tunnels under the Hudson and East Rivers and to construct a major terminal in Manhattan required a power plant and a very large rail yard. The power plant and Sunnyside Yard were created on land in Long Island City. In 1905 and 1906 the railroad bought properties as necessary and undertook a major land reformulation effort. A 200-foot hill and other higher lands were leveled to fill in swampy areas and create a flat area for the yard. Soil from the excavation of the rail tunnels and the nearby subway tunnels (also under construction at the time) was also used to fill the area. When it was completed, the topography of Long Island City was dramatically different. Properties and streets had been removed and the yard cut Long Island City in two for its entire width, although six viaducts preserved the flow of traffic between the two areas.

The change in landscape and the new rail service, particularly the potential for freight service, opened up new development opportunities. From 1905 to 1908, the Degnon Company acquired the low-lying meadow land on both sides of Dutch Kills, filled it using excavation from the two tunnels, widened the Dutch Kills channel to 150 feet by building bulkheads on both sides and dredging it to a depth of 23 feet, obtained a franchise to build rail connections to the LIRR, and set up a major industrial park that survives to this day. South and east of the railroad yards, and west of Van Dam Street, the Degnon Company induced companies to locate in the new "Degnon Terminal" industrial park by offering cheap land and cheap shipping through the Dutch Kills channel and its connection to Newtown Creek, and through the railroad track connections directly into any of the industrial plants. The project's success was accelerated by construction of subway service and the Queensboro Bridge at approximately the same time and by the rapid growth of American industry in that era. The presence of jobs in and around the industrial park contributed to the development of a residential neighborhood in the former open areas of Sunnyside.

On the other side of the yard, construction of the Queensboro Bridge in 1909 entailed creation of a grand, very wide boulevard (Queens Boulevard) with grassy malls and other appurtenances. It lasted only 5 years, until the elevated lines for the No. 7 and N trains were constructed, effectively chopping up the large space into traffic islands. Nonetheless, the introduction of rapid transit service and the subsequent rise of the automobile created a node of "downtown" (e.g.,

banking and commerce) uses on the north side of Queens Plaza and supported a variety of street level retail uses on Queens Plaza South.

## **C. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **REGIONAL OVERVIEW**

The LITC encompasses a broad range of land uses in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens, and Nassau and Suffolk Counties, from the low-density and largely residential communities of Long Island to the densely developed urban commercial core of New York City. Within this region, the LIRR links Penn Station to Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island with 10 rail lines: the Port Washington, Oyster Bay, Port Jefferson, Hempstead, Ronkonkoma, West Hempstead, Far Rockaway, Long Beach, Babylon, and Montauk Branches. Based on fall 1998 ridership statistics, almost 90,000 people take the LIRR into Penn Station (the primary terminal of the LIRR and its only one located in Manhattan) each morning. This pattern of movement supports, and in fact makes possible, the density of the built environment in the city, particularly in Midtown Manhattan.

### **MANHATTAN STUDY AREA**

The Manhattan land use study area (see Figures 3-1 and 3-2), which contains the vast majority of final destinations of the LIRR riders traveling to Manhattan (about 95 percent of destinations fall within the study area), is large and varied. Thus, in the following discussion, Manhattan is broken down into the smaller study areas, or subareas, which are contiguous with those analyzed in Chapter 4, "Social Conditions" and Chapter 5, "Economic Conditions":

- Lower Manhattan, extending as far north as Canal Street and the Manhattan Bridge. This zone includes Wall Street and the financial district, Battery Park City and the World Trade Center, the Civic Center, and Tribeca.
- Village, between 14th Street and Canal Street. This area contains the neighborhoods of Greenwich Village, SoHo, the East Village, the northern part of Chinatown, and the Lower East Side.
- Chelsea, west of Eighth Avenue between 14th and 33rd Streets. Along its western edge this subarea also extends north to 39th Street to include the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.
- Lower Fifth Avenue, between Fifth and Eighth Avenues and 14th and 34th Streets. This subarea includes Penn Station, Madison Square Garden and Penn Plaza, the Flower District, and the Ladies' Mile retail district.
- Midtown South, east of Fifth Avenue between 14th and 34th Streets. This subarea includes the neighborhoods of Gramercy Park, the Flatiron District, Union Square, Midtown South, and Stuyvesant Town/Peter Cooper Village.
- Garment Center, west of Fifth Avenue between 33rd and 42nd Streets (exclusive of the Javits Center). Aside from the Garment Center itself, which is the heart of New York's fashion industry, this subarea includes Bryant Park and the New York Public Library, Herald Square, and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

- Clinton, west of Eighth Avenue between 42nd and 59th Streets. This subarea comprises the mixed-use, largely residential neighborhood of Clinton.
- Midtown, between Fifth and Eighth Avenues and 42nd and 59th Streets. This subarea includes Times Square, Rockefeller Center, the Diamond District, and the residential and hotel uses along Central Park South.
- East Midtown, east of Fifth Avenue between 34th and 59th Streets. This subarea includes GCT and the heart of the Midtown office district, the United Nations, and the neighborhoods of Murray Hill and Tudor City.
- Lincoln Square, west of Central Park West, roughly between 59th and 72nd Streets. This subarea includes the cultural and institutional uses surrounding Lincoln Center and the southern part of the Upper West Side neighborhood.
- Upper East Side, east of Fifth Avenue, between 59th and 79th Streets. This subarea includes the residential, retail, and health care related uses (centered along York Avenue) of the southern portion of the Upper East Side.

#### *LAND USE*

##### *Lower Manhattan Subarea*

Below Canal Street and the Manhattan Bridge approach, predominant land uses (see Figure 3-2) are defined by the Wall Street financial district, the World Trade Center and Battery Park City, governmental uses of the civic center, the Tribeca mixed-use neighborhood, and portions of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. The Wall Street area, home to the New York Stock Exchange, is the heart of the downtown business district. Dense office development characterizes the area, with numerous historic skyscrapers and more modern towers. Recently, in response to public policies aimed at increasing the residential character of the financial district, there have been a number of conversions of commercial buildings to residential use.

The World Trade Center, a complex of commercial buildings bounded by West, Church, Vesey, and Liberty Streets, centers on the “twin towers” that each have more than 4.5 million square feet of space. Below the complex is a concourse featuring retail stores and connections to the subway and Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH) trains. On the waterfront in this area is Battery Park City, a 92-acre mixed-use development begun in the 1970’s on land created from fill. It lies west of West Street and extends from Battery Place to north of Chambers Street. Forming the commercial core of Battery Park City is the World Financial Center, a complex of office towers with retail uses centered around a ground-floor atrium. Flanking the World Financial Center to the north and south are residential communities with shopping and restaurants, public open spaces, a waterfront esplanade and marina, the Jewish Heritage Museum and Stuyvesant High School. Development of Battery Park City is ongoing, and future buildings will continue to be constructed on currently vacant sites until the planned development is completed.

The city’s civic center contains a concentration of municipal and government functions centered around the area north of City Hall, including Foley Square and extending as far north as White Street. Government buildings in this area include City Hall, the Municipal Building, several courthouses, the headquarters of the New York City Police Department, and others. Between Canal Street and the Civic Center is the lower part of Chinatown, which is described below under the discussion of the Village subarea. Further east, the area between the Manhattan and

## MTA/LIRR East Side Access FEIS

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Brooklyn Bridges is primarily residential, with a mix of public housing, tenements, and institutional uses.

North of the financial district and west of Broadway is Tribeca, a neighborhood characterized by a mixed and varied land use pattern containing residences, light industrial/warehouse space, commercial space, and ground-floor retail. Many of the mid-rise industrial and warehouse buildings in the area have been converted to residential lofts, commercial uses, or a combination of living-work spaces for artists. In general, the western portion of Tribeca is more residential than the eastern portion, and residential conversions continue to be a strong trend.

### *Village Subarea*

Stretching from Canal to 14th Street, this subarea contains the neighborhoods of SoHo and NoHo, Chinatown, the Lower East Side, Greenwich Village, and the East Village. It is predominantly residential, with lower density than the areas to its north and south. SoHo occupies the southwestern part of the subarea. Although originally a bustling industrial district, over the past 30 years, artists and others have converted buildings into studios, galleries, offices, and apartments. The area has now become a fashionable residential and retail neighborhood that also includes numerous restaurants, galleries, nightclubs, and boutiques. West of Sixth Avenue, the neighborhood is predominantly a mix of warehousing operations, offices, and industrial buildings, and has traditionally been a center for printing businesses. The larger buildings have been recently converted to standard office space. Like SoHo to its south, NoHo, a small neighborhood between Broadway and the Bowery/Third Avenue, is generally characterized by industrial loft buildings, many of which have been converted to residential use and some to office use, with a mix of commercial and ground-floor retail space.

East of SoHo are Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Generally, these are densely populated residential neighborhoods of walk-up tenement buildings dating from the high-immigration years of the 19th century. On the Lower East Side there are also numerous public housing complexes. The Lower East Side is famous for its ethnic neighborhoods (Chinatown and Little Italy) and its discount shopping centered on Orchard Street.

Greenwich Village, including the West Village, is primarily a low-rise, historic residential neighborhood, between Houston and 14th Streets west of approximately Broadway. Major institutions within this area include St. Vincent's Hospital and New York University (NYU), which is centered around Washington Square Park. Commercial uses are generally limited to retail shops along the major streets and avenues; office uses are not common in this area.

The East Village, which extends east from Third Avenue, is a primarily residential neighborhood with land use patterns similar to those on the Lower East Side. The western portion of the neighborhood is occupied largely by low-rise, walk-up residential buildings, while the eastern portion contains large-scale public housing projects. In recent years, a trend of rehabilitation of existing residential buildings and construction of new mid-rise residential buildings in this area has begun to revitalize the neighborhood.

### *Chelsea Subarea*

The Chelsea subarea contains a wide variety of land uses. The area west of Tenth Avenue is industrial. There is a mix of freight handling and transportation-related activities that rely on the area's excellent access to points west of the Hudson, and other industrial uses. A large rail yard, the LIRR West Side Yards, is bounded by Tenth and Twelfth Avenues and 30th and 34th Streets. Eleventh Avenue passes above the yard on a viaduct. Recently, the area around Tenth



Avenue and 23rd Street and the Gansevoort Meat Market at 14th Street have seen an influx of galleries—both new and relocated from other, more expensive areas.

Between Eighth and Tenth Avenues up to approximately 30th Street is the residential area of Chelsea. Housing types range from low-rise townhouses and walk-up apartments to high-rise apartments. A large complex of publicly sponsored housing dominates the area north of 23rd Street. Commercial uses in the area are generally local retail shops that provide goods and services to the nearby residential community. Major institutional uses in the subarea include the Jacob Javits Convention Center, the General Post Office, and the General Theological Seminary, the oldest Episcopal seminary in the country.

#### *Lower Fifth Avenue Subarea*

This subarea, which runs from 14th to 34th Street between Fifth and Eighth Avenues, contains a mix of uses and neighborhoods, generally moving towards denser development going north. South of 23rd Street the area is largely residential, with a strongly emerging spine of commercial uses in loft buildings from Fifth to Sixth Avenue. Recently, a vibrant shopping district has materialized in the old Ladies' Mile department stores on Sixth Avenue between 17th and 23rd Streets. North of 23rd Street, uses are more consistently commercial, including the toy center at Fifth Avenue and 23rd Street, the import-export businesses that line Broadway and its side streets, the flower district at 28th Street and Sixth Avenue, and the Penn Station/Madison Square Garden complex, which occupies the large block bounded by 31st and 33rd Streets and Seventh and Eighth Avenues. There are three primary uses within the complex: below grade are subway and rail operations (and supporting retail uses); above grade on the west side of the block is Madison Square Garden; and on the east end of the block is a large office building (2 Penn Plaza). The area surrounding Penn Station includes several large office buildings (collectively referred to as Penn Plaza), a hotel, the Farley General Post Office building, retail stores, and some residential buildings. Retail uses are concentrated near Herald Square, at the intersection of 34th Street, Broadway, and Sixth Avenue.

Although the area north of 23rd Street is still predominantly commercial, there is a substantial number of residential uses in converted loft buildings, row houses, tenements, and newly constructed high-rise buildings. The recent rezoning of Sixth Avenue from 23rd to 31st Streets to permit residential use in addition to commercial use has resulted in high-rise residential construction.

#### *Midtown South Subarea*

This subarea, from 14th to 34th Street on the East Side, includes Union Square, the Flatiron District, Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, Gramercy Park, Kips Bay, and Park Avenue South. Although mixed-use overall, the areas west of Lexington Avenue are predominantly commercial, the area east of Third Avenue and the area south of 23rd Street are residential, and the easternmost portion of the study area (between 23rd and 34th Streets and east of First Avenue) is dominated by medical uses.

Union Square Park lies in the southwest portion of the study area. The neighborhood surrounding it contains a mix of commercial and residential uses, with larger retail stores concentrated on the square and along 14th Street. The largest residential developments in the area are Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, which together contain more than 11,000 rental apartments. The sprawling complexes, built by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, extend from First Avenue to Avenue C and from 14th to 23rd Streets.

## MTA/LIRR East Side Access FEIS

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The area surrounding Madison Square Park, located between Fifth and Madison Avenues and 23rd and 26th Streets, is characterized by large-scale commercial development. South of Madison Square is the Flatiron District, which contains a range of commercial and residential uses. The neighborhood's predominant building type, the loft, has resulted in an amalgam of uses including office, photography, home furnishings, and residential conversions. Extending north from the park, along Madison and Park Avenues land use generally consists of offices and ground floor retail. Except for the Waterside residential complex at 25th Street and the East River, land uses east of First Avenue are health care-related. The area includes Bellevue Hospital, NYU Medical Center, the Veterans' Administration Medical Center, and the Hunter College Brookdale Health Center.

### *Garment Center Subarea*

Overall, land use in the Garment Center subarea is characterized by the garment industry, retail, office, and transportation-related uses. The heart of the Garment Center, between Seventh and Ninth Avenues, has many large loft buildings used as manufacturing and office space by the fashion industry. In this area, Broadway is lined with large office buildings, most of which are related to the fashion industry, although the current tight office market has led to the influx of general office tenants as well.

The area west of Ninth Avenue is largely transportation-related uses, with much of the area taken up by the network of entrances and exits for the Lincoln Tunnel. The Port Authority Bus Terminal, on Eighth Avenue between 40th and 42nd Streets, is another major transportation site. Businesses located in this area include shipping and warehousing operations, auto-related uses, and other industries.

Land uses in the northeast portion of this subarea are largely defined by Bryant Park and the main branch of the New York Public Library, and the office buildings and institutional uses clustered around their perimeter. Restored in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the 9.6-acre Bryant Park is a key open space in midtown, attracting large numbers of workers from the adjacent area and users of the New York Public Library (which falls within the park's boundaries). Surrounding the park and library are a mix of older and newer office buildings. Aside from the library, other institutional uses include the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center on 42nd Street and a library branch at 40th Street and Fifth Avenue. Farther west on 42nd Street, land uses change to reflect their location at the southern end of Times Square, and include theaters and entertainment retail (such as a Disney superstore). Several major sites are also under office construction as part of the 42nd Street Development Project.

South of Bryant Park, the west side of Fifth Avenue is lined with large office buildings, including Republic Bank Tower and 420 Fifth Avenue. Also on this part of Fifth Avenue is Lord & Taylor, a major department store located between 38th Street and 39th Street, and a number of ground-floor retail uses with offices above.

### *Clinton Subarea*

Land use in Clinton, formerly known as Hell's Kitchen, is characterized by residential apartment buildings in its eastern half, with mostly warehouses and auto-related uses in its western half. In the eastern portion of the subarea, between Eighth and Tenth Avenues, the area's historical role as a working-class neighborhood remains visible in the tenements that line its streets. In support of the surrounding residential community, there are several public and private schools, and local retail shops are generally found along the avenues. St. Claire's Hospital and

St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital are also located in this area. Rising above the rest of the neighborhood is the 49-story Worldwide Plaza office development, on the block bounded by Eighth and Ninth Avenues and 49th and 50th Streets.

The western part of the subarea (west of Tenth Avenue) is largely warehouses and loft buildings. Many of the businesses in this area involve transportation, shipping, and storage. Auto-related uses are concentrated along Eleventh Avenue, including garages, service stations, and car showrooms. Along with a scattering of houses and apartments, there are several high-rise residential apartments in the area north of 50th Street, primarily in the Clinton Urban Renewal Area.

#### *Midtown Subarea*

Within this subarea are Times Square, Rockefeller Center, the Diamond District, the west side of Fifth Avenue, and Central Park South. The range of land uses includes theaters and entertainment, offices, retail, hotels, and some residential development. Times Square is centered at the crossroads of Broadway and Seventh Avenue a few blocks north of 42nd Street, and lies at the southern edge of the subarea. The many theaters and lively signage of Times Square reflect its history as a center of entertainment, and it remains a popular tourist destination. Planning efforts undertaken since the 1980's have resulted in new and ongoing development, a revitalized entertainment industry, and reinvestment in the area. Ongoing and planned projects in Times Square area are discussed below in "Future Conditions Common to All Alternatives."

Rockefeller Center is a complex of 19 commercial buildings extending from 49th to 52nd Street and Fifth Avenue to west of Sixth Avenue. Begun in 1929 and developed over time, Rockefeller Center primarily contains commercial office buildings with shops, entertainment (Radio City Music Hall), and open public spaces at street level. At the heart of Rockefeller Center is the sunken plaza used as an ice skating rink in winter and for outdoor dining during warmer months. South of Rockefeller Center is the Diamond District, a dense concentration of businesses dealing in jewels and gold. The Diamond District is basically one block long, located on 47th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

Rockefeller Center anchors the southern end of the Fifth Avenue shopping district (which also falls into the East Midtown subarea). Extending from 49th Street to 59th Street is a high-end retail district marked by stores such as Tiffany Jewelers and Saks Fifth Avenue. The retail strip along 57th Street from approximately Seventh Avenue to Park Avenue commands higher rents per retail square foot than anywhere else in the world.

#### *East Midtown Subarea*

The southern portion (34th to 40th Street) of the East Midtown subarea is generally known as Murray Hill, a residential area centered on Park Avenue. Along Fifth, Madison, and Third Avenues, however, are substantial commercial uses. The area east of Third Avenue contains the entrances to the Queens-Midtown Tunnel and fairly recent residential development along First Avenue. Major institutions in the area are the Pierpont Morgan Library and the Business and Industry Library (in the old B. Altman's building). Another major use includes Con Edison's Waterside generating station along the east side of First Avenue—currently scheduled for closure.

North of 42nd Street, this subarea contains the heart of the East Midtown office district between Fifth and Third Avenues and north to 60th Street. East of Third Avenue, uses are generally residential, except for the area around the United Nations. The area along 42nd Street is densely

developed with large office buildings in the area near GCT. Directly south of the terminal along East 42nd Street are several large office buildings, including the Chanin Building, Lincoln Building, former Mobil Building, the Daily News Building, and the Pfizer Building. The old Daily News Building is just east of Third Avenue and the Ford Foundation Building is just east of Second Avenue. Together, these buildings create a concentration of intensely developed land uses along the busy East 42nd Street corridor. Land uses closer to the East River are influenced by their proximity to the United Nations, which is sited along the waterfront between 42nd and 48th Streets. North of 42nd Street between First Avenue (United Nations Plaza) and Second Avenue, buildings and offices are characterized by humanitarian groups, international political and governmental organizations, and a hotel.

North of GCT from Third Avenue westward is a continuation of dense commercial development. Park Avenue from GCT to 59th Street is marked by tall office buildings containing corporate headquarters for companies such as Chase Manhattan Bank, Westvaco, and Bankers Trust. Side streets west and east of Park Avenue contain offices of slightly smaller scale. This area is also home to St. Bartholomew's Church on Park Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets and the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel one block south.

Recently, MNR's Grand Central North project created five points of entry and exit from the north end of GCT tracks. These underground passageway's emerge at the following locations: one at the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and 47th Street (383 Madison) and one at the northeast corner, one in each of the "Helmsley Walks" which run north-south in the Helmsley Building between 45th and 46th Streets, and one in the Westvaco Building at Park Avenue and 48th Street.

The Fifth Avenue shopping district lies at the western edge of this section and influences land uses on Madison Avenue, as well. Throughout the area are a number of luxury hotels, restaurants, and shops.

East of Second Avenue are several of the city's most prestigious residential neighborhoods, including Tudor City, Beekman Place, and Sutton Place. Generally located between First Avenue and the East River, these communities, developed in the 1920's and 1930's, are characterized by luxury apartment buildings and townhouses. Their presence has influenced development along First and Second Avenues as well, where many of the traditional tenements have been replaced by modern residential towers.

#### *Lincoln Square Subarea*

This subarea comprises the southern part of the Upper West Side neighborhood. Many of the defining characteristics of this neighborhood resulted from urban renewal projects of the 1950's and 1960's. Overall, the area's land use is characterized by a mix of cultural and other institutions, apartment complexes, brownstones, and ground-floor retail and commercial uses.

Cultural and institutional land uses dominate the southern part of the subarea, which includes Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and Fordham University's Lincoln Center Campus. The New York Coliseum building, once the city's primary venue for conventions, is *currently being redeveloped*.

Housing in this area includes a wide range of building types, ranging from modest walk-up apartments to luxury high-rise co-ops and condominiums. Brownstones are concentrated north of West 68th Street, and older apartments are generally located in the eastern part of the subarea,



including many luxury buildings along Central Park West. The most significant new residential addition to the area is Riverside South, between 59th and 72nd Streets and West End Avenue and the West Side Highway. Upon completion, the entire project should bring thousands of new residential units to the area.

#### *Upper East Side Subarea*

This subarea contains the southern portion of the Upper East Side neighborhood. Land uses are primarily residential, health care-related, and retail. The area is a center of employment for the health care industry, a land use which predominates on the blocks along York Avenue. In this area are New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, the Hospital for Special Surgery, and Rockefeller University, a research institute specializing in medical and physical science. Also in the study area is the Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital, at 64th Street and Third Avenue.

Residential development includes townhouses and brownstones, high-rise apartments, and walk-up apartments. In support of the area's residential population, there are a number of religious institutions, and public and private schools in the area. Local retail uses, mostly in the form of ground-floor retail, are generally concentrated along the avenues east of Lexington Avenue. Madison Avenue is home to a number of designer shops and boutiques. This subarea is also home to the Bloomingdale's department store.

#### *ZONING*

The last comprehensive New York City Zoning Resolution was enacted in 1961. In the past 35 or so years, new development of land has been shaped by the 1961 zoning maps and a number of amendments to those maps. Not surprisingly, Midtown and Lower Manhattan are zoned predominantly for commercial uses, with Midtown covered by the Special Midtown District, written to strengthen Midtown's standing as a business core, to provide incentive for further growth in specified areas on the West Side, and to support and preserve the Theater District and Times Square. Of particular interest is the Grand Central Subdistrict, which provides for the transfer of unused development floor area (air rights) from the terminal to a specified surrounding area. A 5 percent portion of the proceeds from the sale of the development rights provides support for the ongoing maintenance of GCT.

Clinton, a historically lower-income residential area, borders Midtown, and a Clinton Special District was created to preserve the lower-scale residential character of the neighborhood. The recent Theater District rezoning, which includes the east side of Eighth Avenue and part of its west side near 42nd Street, will allow larger scale office development to come to Clinton's doorstep, but not enter the heart of the neighborhood.

On the East Side north of 59th Street, the Upper East Side subarea is zoned predominantly for residential uses, with selected areas zoned for commercial uses. On the West Side, the Lincoln Square subarea is also zoned residential, except for the Special Lincoln Square District, which protects the area as a center of the cultural and performing arts.

Zoning around Penn Station—in the Garment Center, Northern Chelsea and the north part of Lower Fifth—is predominantly for manufacturing uses. Manufacturing zones that allow large-scale light industrial uses dot the Penn Station area outside of its immediate surroundings (which are zoned for commercial uses). While these manufacturing zones are designed as buffers to adjacent districts that permit residential use, they do not allow residential use within their boundaries and they allow lower commercial densities than the midtown core. More important,

manufacturing space in the Garment Center is specifically protected by the Special Garment Center District, which limits the otherwise as-of-right conversion of manufacturing space to office use in certain areas.

The western half of Midtown South is zoned predominantly for commercial uses, reflecting the CBD's reach southward along Fifth, Madison, and Park Avenues. Midtown South's eastern half is fairly uniformly zoned for residential uses. While Chelsea contains a mix of manufacturing and residential zones, the Lower Fifth Avenue subarea is mostly zoned for manufacturing. South of 14th Street, zoning in the Village subarea is overwhelmingly residential, with manufacturing allowed in its southwestern portion and commercial allowed on the Lower East Side.

As its predominant land use indicates, Lower Manhattan is zoned for high-density commercial uses. Public policy, in the form of a number of tax incentives, promotes a 24-hour commercial/residential community in Lower Manhattan, supporting continued use of feasible office buildings and conversion of others. Development in the area of Lower Manhattan known as Tribeca (in the northwest) is regulated by the Lower Manhattan Mixed Use District, which protects the mix of uses and existing scale of this historic area.

### **LONG ISLAND CITY/SUNNYSIDE STUDY AREA**

The Long Island City/Sunnyside study area, extending generally ½ mile from the site of the proposed Sunnyside station, includes Yard A/Arch Street Yard, Sunnyside Yard, related rail tracks, and parts of the Sunnyside and Long Island City neighborhoods. North of the rail yards, the study area includes the area south of 37th Avenue and east of 21st Street; south of the rail yards, it includes the area north of the Long Island Expressway and west of 39th Place.

#### ***LAND USE***

As shown in Figure 3-3, the study area is dominated by industrial uses, containing both heavy and light industry, auto-related industry, and more recently, institutional, commercial and residential space. Sunnyside Yard and Yard A/Arch Street Yard, in the center of the study area, form the largest block of industrial uses. South of the yards, heavy industries are generally located along Dutch Kills and along parts of Hunters Point Avenue, with less intense uses generally located north of 48th Avenue. Two areas of non-industrial use can be found south of Sunnyside Yard. The first is a narrow portion of the western edge of the Sunnyside residential neighborhood east of 39th Street, at the study area's eastern border. The second lies between Queens Boulevard and 47th Avenue, where commercial uses (anchored by the International Design Center, or IDCNY, at 30th Street) and institutional uses (such as La Guardia Community College at Van Dam Street) have taken over former factory sites.

The study area north of Sunnyside Yard is characterized by a wider range of land uses and building types. Downtown Long Island City contains a number of commercial and retail uses along Queens Plaza, and the courthouse and the relatively new Citibank tower at Thomson Avenue and Court Square. Silvercup Film Studios, a center for film and television production, occupies a converted industrial complex at 21st Street and Queens Plaza. Moving northward from Queens Plaza, commercial and industrial uses dominate, but there are a few residential buildings until the Dutch Kills mixed-use neighborhood, which lies in the northeastern portion of the study area.

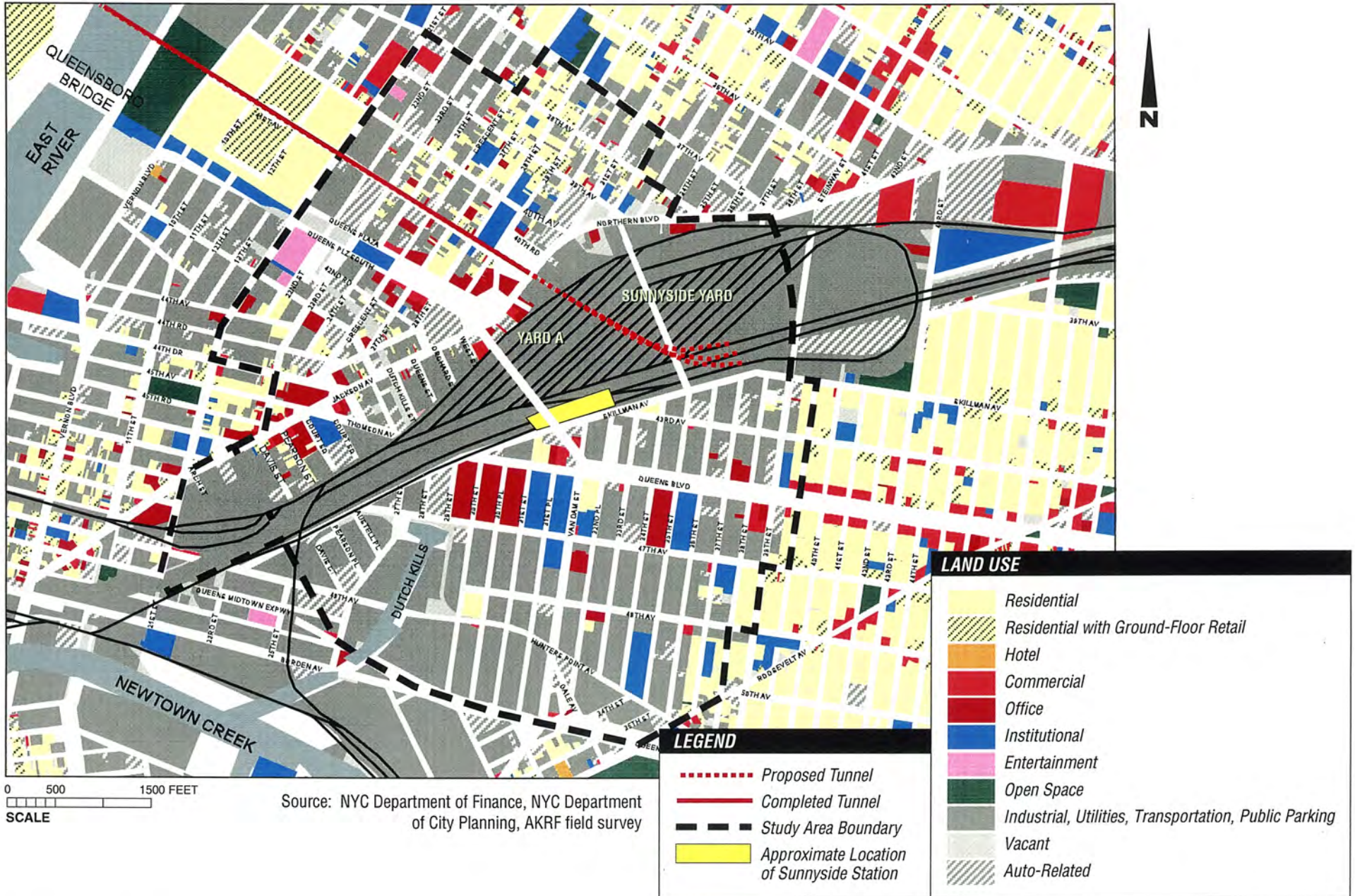


Figure 3-3

**Land Use: Long Island City/Sunnyside**



*ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY*

Zoning in this area includes manufacturing, commercial and residential districts, as shown in Figure 3-4. The vast majority of the area is zoned for manufacturing uses, with a small strip of residential uses permitted along the eastern edge of the study area. Additionally, a portion of the Hunters Point Mixed Use District, which permits commercial uses, lies at the western corner of the study area. Zoning designations in the study area are shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1

**Zoning Designations in the Long Island City/Sunnyside Study Area**

Zoning District	Permitted Uses/Bulk
<b>Residential Districts:</b> Commercial and manufacturing use prohibited; community facility permitted.	
R5	Detached, single- or two-family homes, maximum FAR 1.25
<b>Commercial Districts:</b> Residential and community facility use permitted). Commercial districts can be mapped as zoning districts or as overlays in residential districts. Commercial overlays permit low-density development of commercial uses.	
C1-1	Low-density neighborhood shopping. Low- to medium-density residential and community facility.
C5-3	High-density commercial district, maximum FAR 15.0.
<b>Manufacturing Districts:</b> Residential use generally prohibited.	
M1-1, M1-4	Low-density light industrial uses (high performance) and certain community facilities.
M1-3, M1-3D	Medium-density light industrial uses (high performance) and certain community facilities. Similar to M1-5, but intended for use outside Manhattan.
M1-5	Medium-density light industrial uses (high performance) and certain community facilities. (Conversion of nonresidential to residential permitted in M1-5M.)
M3-1, M3-2	Low density heavy industrial (low performance).
<b>Special Purpose Districts:</b>	
HP	Special Hunters Point Mixed Use District
<b>Source:</b> Zoning Handbook, New York City Department of City Planning, 1990.	

The size of the area's manufacturing buildings, its superior accessibility, and the loss of manufacturing space elsewhere in the city have made Long Island City particularly important as an industrial center. To maintain the strength of the district, the 900-acre area defined by Van Dam Street, Newtown Creek and the East River, and Queens Plaza/Queens Boulevard has been designated as the Long Island City In-Place Industrial Park. This designation allows the city to take an active role in maintaining and expanding industry there. However, within the district, public policy has identified particular areas for different uses: the Special Hunters Point Mixed Use District was recently amended to permit expansion and new construction of residential use there. Perhaps more important, when the city mapped the C5-3 district in the New York City Court Square Subdistrict of the Hunters Point District, it signaled a policy to promote the fourth CBD in Long Island City. The approval by the city and state of the Queens West Development project just outside the study area also reflected a policy for appropriate mixed-use (commercial and residential) development of portions of the industrial waterfront in Long Island City.



## LONG ISLAND

Long Island consists of four counties: Kings (or Brooklyn) and Queens in New York City, and Nassau and Suffolk. It is known in the region as “The Island,” stretching 120 miles from the western shores of Sunset Park and Bay Ridge in Brooklyn to Montauk Point at its eastern tip. Land uses vary from the high-density CBD of downtown Brooklyn to the rural farms and wineries of the North Fork in Suffolk County. The majority of the Island is suburban and residential, with small to moderate sized villages and towns. The discussion below focuses on Nassau and Suffolk Counties, since most often the term “Long Island” is used to refer to those two counties together, and not to Brooklyn or Queens.

### NASSAU COUNTY

Nassau County consists of three towns: Hempstead, Oyster Bay, and North Hempstead; two cities: Glen Cove and Long Beach; and 64 incorporated villages. Except for the boroughs of New York City, Nassau County is the most densely settled county in the state, with almost 1.3 million residents living on 287 square miles (more than 4,500 people per square mile). However, this density is deceptive: Nassau County is overwhelmingly suburban, with its most intensely developed centers constructed at a low scale of approximately 0.4 FAR.

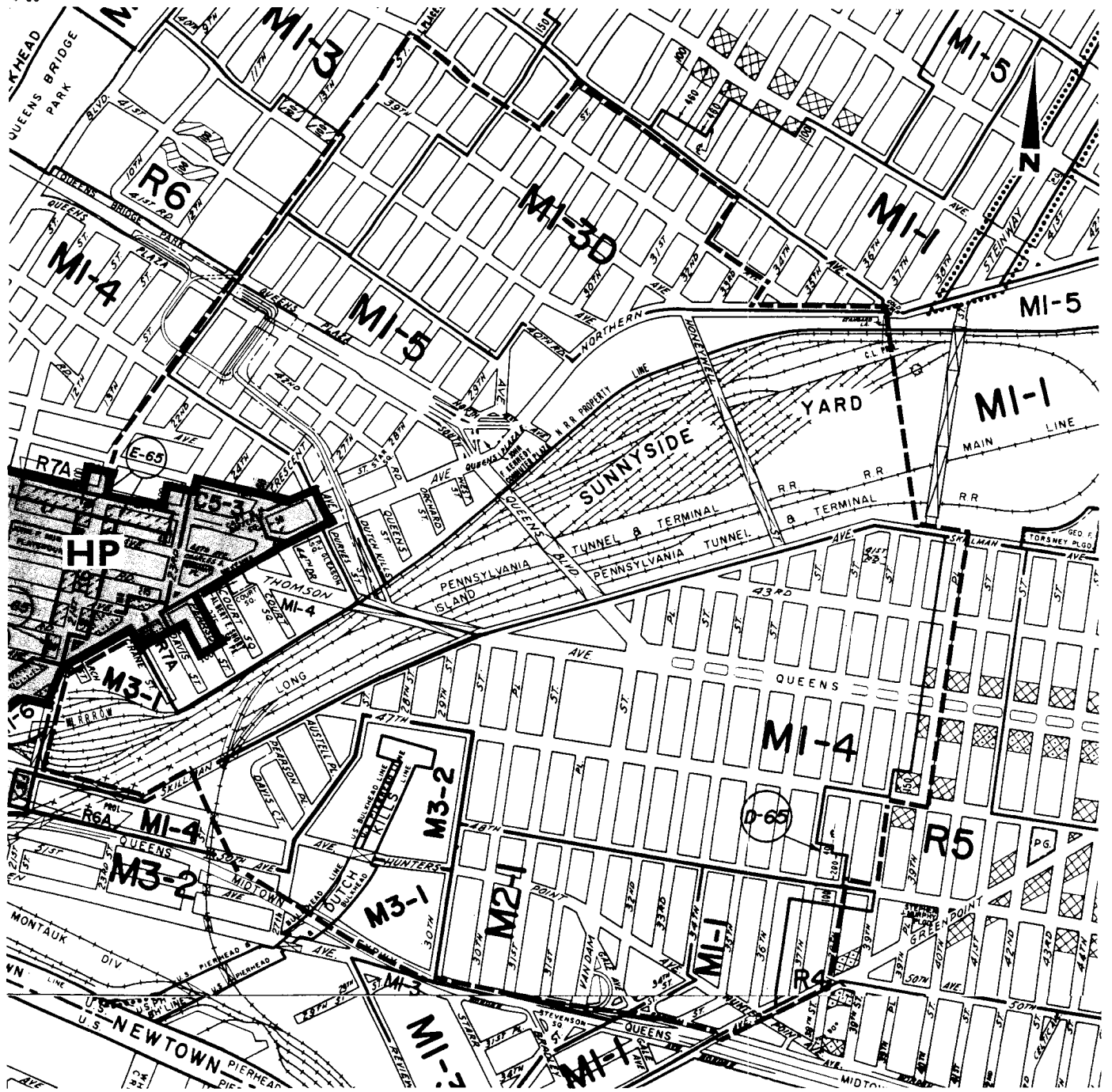
#### *Residential Land Use*

Land uses in Nassau are predominantly residential throughout (87 percent of tax parcels and 55 percent of acreage in 1997) (see Table 3-2). Residential densities range from extremely low (less than one dwelling unit per five acres) to high (11+ dwelling units per acre). Low densities predominate in Oyster Bay east of Glen Cove Road and north of Jericho Turnpike, and in the North Hempstead villages of Kings Point and Sands Point. High-density residential uses are extremely few in Nassau County and almost all are located adjacent to the Long Island Expressway—in North Hills and at the border of Old Westbury and Oyster Bay. The majority of residential properties are medium-density, single-family homes located south of Jericho Turnpike or west of Glen Cove Road.

**Table 3-2**  
**Land Area by Land Use Category**  
**in Nassau County, 1998**

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total
<i>Total Residential</i>	100,100	55%
Estates and Low Density (1 D.U./acre or less)	21,100	11
Medium Density (2-10 D.U./acre)	73,100	40
High Density (11 or more D.U./acre)	5,900	3
Commercial	9,900	5
Industrial	2,200	1
Institutional	19,300	11
Undeveloped Land	15,000	8
Open Space/Parks	37,200	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183,700</b>	<b>100%</b>

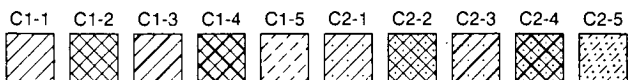
**Source:** Nassau County Comprehensive Plan, December 1998.



----- Long Island City / Sunnyside  
Land Use Study Area Boundary

————— Hunterspoint Mixed Use  
District Boundary

0 1000 FEET  
SCALE



### *Commercial Land Use: Retail and Offices*

Commercial uses center around the village of Mineola, which is the county seat and one of the larger commercial centers in the county. Other larger commercial centers include Hicksville, Garden City, and Hempstead. The widespread use of automobiles since World War II has contributed to the spread of retail establishments along major roads in the county. Currently, strip mall and shopping center retail dominate the landscape adjacent to all major roads.

In 1991, Nassau County had more than 27 million square feet of office space. Most of this space was located in a few clusters: Mitchel Field/Roosevelt Field; Town of Oyster Bay/LIE; Lake Success/New Hyde Park; Mineola/Garden City; Great Neck Peninsula; and the Village of Hempstead.

### *Open Spaces, Institutional and Other Land Uses*

The county is dotted by public parks and open spaces, along with institutional uses such as Adelphi University, Hofstra University, and C.W. Post College (Long Island University).

### *Zoning and Public Policy*

Zoning in Nassau County is determined on a local level, with each locality determining, among other things, permissible land uses, densities, heights and bulks. As such, zoning can vary greatly from municipality to municipality or be quite consistent from one place to the next. The practical result of local zoning is a limitation on the power of the county to determine land uses on a regional level.

The county has, however, developed a land use map showing planned generalized development intensities to 2020 in its 1998 Nassau County Comprehensive Plan. Its land use goal is to:

Promote a balanced pattern of land use that encourages the concentration of future development in established areas with adequate infrastructure and facilities, so as to make efficient utilization of the transportation network, preserve the County's environmental and scenic resources, and revitalize existing downtowns and Centers.

The County's policy recommendations regarding land use stress the importance of transit-oriented development (i.e., development near transit nodes), the adaptive re-use of existing properties, and, as stated in the goals statement, the revitalization of the county's existing downtowns and town centers. Proposed development intensities closely follow existing LIRR routes. They are highest in towns that are directly served by the LIRR—Mineola, Hicksville, Hempstead, Valley Stream, Lynbrook, Rockville Center, and Freeport.

### *SUFFOLK COUNTY*

Suffolk County consists of 10 towns and 31 incorporated villages. It is an extremely large county by southern New York standards, covering 911 square miles and encompassing a population of more than 1.3 million in 1990. Suffolk County is more than three times larger than Nassau but only one-third as dense (1,451 people per square mile in 1990). It is 86 miles long and spans 20 miles at its widest point. Its three largest towns are Brookhaven (408,000), in the north-central portion of the county; and Islip (300,000) and Babylon (203,000), both in the southwestern portion of the county. Other towns include Huntington and Smithtown in the northwest portion of the county; Riverhead and Southold in the northeast; Southampton and East Hampton in the southeast; and Shelter Island between the North and South Forks. The county seat of Riverhead is relatively sparsely populated, with only 23,000 people living in 67 square miles.

### *Land Use*

Land use patterns are very varied. In some of the county's larger towns, like Huntington, land uses are indistinguishable from towns in Nassau County. Other towns, like Southold on the North Fork, are still dominated by agricultural uses. One characteristic that most Suffolk County towns and villages have in common is the development pressure they continue to face. While some towns have responded to this pressure by welcoming strip-mall and big-box type retail development, other towns have fought aggressively to retain their "small-town" feel and to preserve open spaces.

In much the same pattern as Nassau County, commercial uses in Suffolk County follow the local road and highway system. The Long Island Expressway, Sunrise Highway, and Montauk Highway are all paralleled by commercial strips along much of their lengths, as are a number of smaller main roads in the county. In addition, the county seat of Riverhead includes one of the larger town commercial centers in Suffolk.

Land uses in the western portion of Suffolk County are similar to those in eastern Nassau County: predominantly residential uses of moderate density (2 to 10 dwelling units/acre) in the southwestern towns of Babylon and Islip, and predominantly residential uses of low to moderate density (<1 to 4 dwelling units/acre) in the northwestern towns of Huntington and Smithtown. In Brookhaven, land uses begin to transition from predominantly residential at its western border, to a mix of residential and vacant/open space as one moves east, to predominantly vacant/open space at its eastern border with Riverhead (in the north) and Southampton (in the south). Throughout western and central Suffolk County, vacant land and open spaces have steadily been claimed for residential and retail uses. Brookhaven National Laboratory in eastern Brookhaven, along with Calverton Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant just to its east in Riverhead, stand out as the county's largest institutional uses.

Moving eastward along the North Fork, the towns of Riverhead and Southold are still dominated by agricultural uses, but residential and commercial uses have grown steadily in the past 20 years. Riverhead, in particular, has seen considerable retail development and now contains one of the most successful outlet malls on the East Coast. Moving eastward along the South Fork, the towns of Southampton and East Hampton have faced intense development pressure, with much of the vacant and open spaces converted to residential use—especially along their south shores. This development has come at the expense of agricultural uses.

### *Zoning and Public Policy*

In attempting to plan for the use and preservation of land on a regional level, the county faces the challenge of home rule: working with zoning regulations that are determined on a local level. Each of 10 towns and 31 villages in Suffolk County determines its own local zoning, making it extremely difficult for the county to achieve a unified land use policy.

As a result, many of Suffolk County's land use policy initiatives center around the preservation of open space and agricultural land through purchase rather than through zoning. The oldest currently active program is Suffolk County's County Farmland Development Rights Acquisition Program (commenced in 1974), which uses general obligation bonds to fund the purchase of conservation easements on active farmland. Suffolk County considers farmland to be an important resource, in terms of economic benefits and retaining open spaces. This program, which has preserved approximately 7,000 acres of farmland through mid-1999, purchases the development rights to farmland to ensure its continued agricultural use. Supporting the county's



farmland preservation initiative are two federal programs with similar aims. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Farmland Protection Program, established under the 1996 Farm Bill, provides federal matching funds for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements by state and local governments with farmland protection programs in place. These federal funds can constitute up to half of the cost of purchasing the conservation easement.

Another federal initiative to protect farmland is the Farmland Protection Policy Act. This act strives to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The act establishes criteria for assessing the relative value of the farmland compared to the relative value of the proposed use by considering the following two types of criteria:

- Land evaluation criteria assess the relative value for agricultural production of the soil that would be converted to non-agricultural use compared to soils in the same governmental jurisdiction. Areas are subject to evaluation based on their soil type: soils comprising prime or unique farmlands, or farmlands of statewide importance, as defined by the act, would be evaluated for agricultural production value.
- Site assessment criteria assess the suitability of each proposed site or design alternative, taking into consideration issues such as proximity to infrastructure and urbanized areas, farming activity on-site, existing farmland protection policies, parcel size, and compatibility with surrounding uses.

Before taking or approving any action that would result in the conversion of farmland, the federal agency must use these criteria to examine the effects of such action and, if adverse effects are found, must consider alternatives to lessen them.

Other county land use programs include the *Land Preservation Partnership* (1997), which also uses bonds to purchase development rights—or full titles—to open space in the county. The county's recent *Greenways* initiative uses a ¼ percent sales tax to fund the purchase of open space that contains vital water resources. In the eastern five towns of the county, an *Open Space Program* (1986) employs a land-bank type approach to purchase open space. Each time land is purchased in Brookhaven, Riverhead, Southold, Southampton, and East Hampton, the buyer must contribute 2 percent of the purchase price to a fund dedicated to buying open space in that town. Together these programs have facilitated the purchase and preservation of more than 30,000 acres of land in the county.

Perhaps the most significant land use policy in Suffolk County is the *Central Pine Barrens Zone*, established in 1993. The zone consists of a 100,000-acre conservation area within the towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead, and Southampton. The zone is divided into two sub-areas: a 52,500-acre core preservation area which prohibits almost all new development, and a 47,500-acre compatible growth area which allows restricted development. The zone covers an area roughly from Route 112 in the west to Red Creek Road in Southampton in the east, Route 25A in the north to Sunrise Highway and Old Country Road in the south.

## REPLACEMENT YARD STUDY AREAS

### BLISSVILLE YARD

Blissville Yard is located approximately 1 mile southwest of Sunnyside Yard, in Blissville, Queens. The yard lies just east of Dutch Kills and just north of Newtown Creek, at the point where the Montauk cutoff originating from Sunnyside Yard meets the Montauk Branch.

Consisting of six tracks, the longest of which is approximately 1,400 feet, Blissville Yard currently has no physical track connection to the Montauk Branch, which parallels the yard to the north. A private access road leading to an industrial site parallels the yard on the south.

The study area for Blissville Yard extends approximately 400 feet from the yard in each direction, encompassing the land that surrounds the yard. This area lies roughly between Dutch Kills on the west, Review Avenue on the north, Greenpoint Avenue on the east, and Newtown Creek on the south.

### *Land Use*

The land surrounding Blissville Yard is entirely industrial (see Figure 3-5). The only means of getting to the yard by car or on foot is via a private access road that begins at the end of 35th Street. Between the yard and Newtown Creek to the south are two heavy industrial uses—the Buckeye Pipeline Company and Getty Gasoline. Between the yard and Review Avenue to the north are a number of 2- and 3-story warehouse buildings, housing various uses, such as storage facilities, wholesalers, and shipping houses. The only non-industrial use in the study area is Teamsters Local 804 building, on the corner of Review Avenue and 35th Street. There are no residences in the study area, nor are there any “sensitive” land uses.

### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The entire study area is zoned for manufacturing, as shown in Figure 3-6. Blissville Yard lies in an M3-1, heavy manufacturing zone, as do all the properties that surround the yard. The few lots in the study area north of Review Avenue, including the Teamsters Local building, lie in an M1-3, light manufacturing zone. This zone often serves as a buffer between heavier manufacturing and residential zones; however, in this case, the M1-3 zone is surrounded entirely by other manufacturing zones rather than residential zones. The only residential zone in the area of Blissville Yard covers Calvary Cemetery, about 1,000 feet east of the yard.

### *MASPETH YARD*

Maspeth Yard is located in Maspeth, Queens, near the intersection of Rust Street and Maspeth Avenue. It is bordered on the west by 49th Street and runs southeast, parallel to Rust Street, to approximately 500 feet southeast of Maspeth Avenue. The railroad area at Maspeth Yard is occupied by a rail yard used by NYAR, and two active LIRR Montauk Branch mainline tracks. It is also where the LIRR’s former Haberman station was located. The yard consists of four rail car storage tracks parallel to the mainline tracks, approximately 60 feet south of the mainline. This yard sees some limited rail freight activity daily. The currently vacant area between the mainline and storage tracks formerly included a rail-to-road lumber transfer and distribution center.

The study area for land use at Maspeth Yard is the area within an approximately 400-foot radius of the yard—bordered on the west by 48th Street, on the north by 55th Avenue, on the east by 58th Street, and on the southeast by 58th Avenue.

### *Land Use*

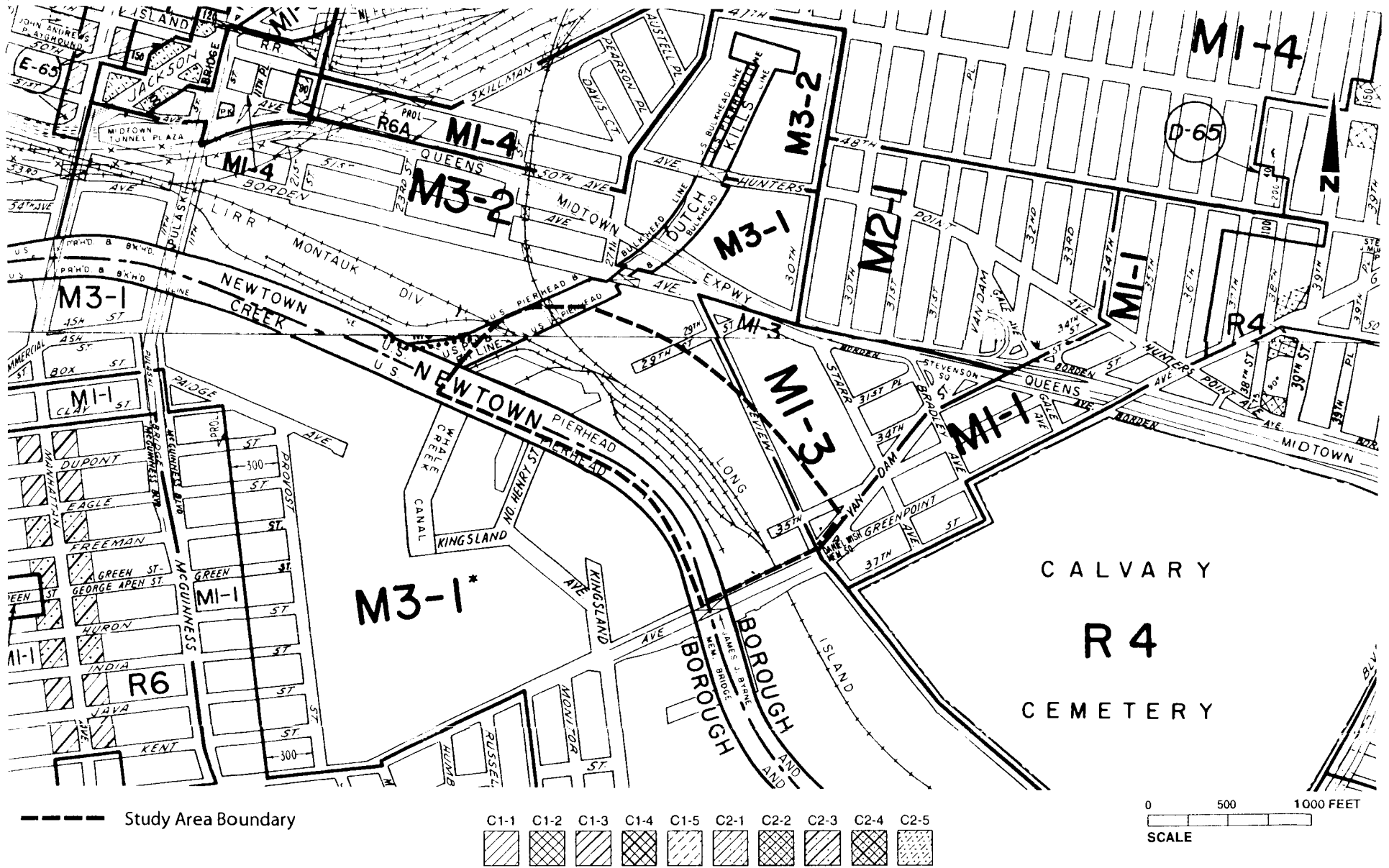
Land use in the study area is dominated by low-scale industrial uses (see Figure 3-7). The majority of blocks are occupied by industrial uses, although some portions of these blocks are vacant. Industrial uses north of the yard are predominantly warehousing and goods distribution. Industrial uses in the study area south of the yard are mostly staging areas for manufacturers along Maspeth Avenue and 49th Lane. The only “sensitive” land uses in the study area are residences in the east portion of the study area. In this area, just east of Maspeth Yard between





Figure 3-5

**Land Use: Blissville Yard**







Maspeth and 58th Avenues, a portion of a residential neighborhood extends into the study area. Uses there include row houses and single-family detached residences, a Korean Methodist Church on a site directly across Rust Road from the rail yard, an auto repair shop, and small retail establishments (a pizza place, delicatessen, and diner).

### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The entire study area is zoned for manufacturing, as shown in Figure 3-8. South of Rust Road (including Maspeth Yard) is zoned M3-1, which allows for heavy industrial uses that generate noise, traffic, and/or pollutants. The study area north of Rust Road, including the small residential area, is zoned for a range of lighter industrial uses, with a mix of M1 and M2 districts. The residential area is zoned M1-1D, a light industrial district in which limited residential uses are allowed upon authorization by the City Planning Commission.

### *FRESH POND YARD*

Fresh Pond Yard is located in Glendale, Queens, at the junction of the LIRR Montauk Branch and the freight connector to the LIRR Bay Ridge Branch. The greater yard is divided into two smaller yard areas—a West Yard and an East Yard. As shown in Figure 3-9, the West Yard extends from the intersection of Metropolitan Avenue and Fresh Pond Road on the west, to the New York Connecting Railroad Line's bridge on the east. The East Yard forms a triangle, extending from the railroad bridge on the west, to approximately 69th Street on the east and Cypress Hills Street on the south. The East Yard also contains NYAR's main offices, which occupy a double-wide trailer in the center of the yard. Separating the West and East Yards is also the NYCT M subway line, which stops at Fresh Pond Road just west of the study area and Metropolitan Avenue just north of the study area. The study area for land use is the area within approximately 400 feet of the Fresh Pond Yard boundaries.

### *Land Use*

Although land uses in the study area (see Figure 3-9) are predominantly residential, the yard is largely bordered by a buffer of industrial uses. South of the yard, low-rise industrial uses form a consistent buffer everywhere except the middle section of the yard, where Mafera Park abuts the yard. Farther south, the residential blocks south and west of Fresh Pond Yard range from small apartment buildings and semi-detached homes, to fully detached single-family homes.

There are two residential areas that are not buffered from the yard by industrial buildings. Along Admiral Avenue north of the West Yard, homes directly abut the tracks, and along Otto Road between 68th Place and 69th Place, homes are separated from the tracks only by an iron fence and Otto Road itself. In addition, the 5.4-acre Mafera Park, is between the East Yard, the West Yard, the M subway line and 65th Place. The park provides a buffer between the yard and houses along 65th Place and the East Yard. Other uses in the study area include Mt. Olivet Lutheran Cemetery, which abuts the entire north side of the East Yard, and a large enclosed shopping center partially abutting the north side of the West Yard. Metropolitan Avenue and Fresh Pond Road, in the northwest section of the study area, are lined with predominantly auto-related commercial uses (occasionally with apartments above) and a few light industrial uses. Single- and two-family, semi-detached residences occupy the study area blocks just off Metropolitan Avenue, Fresh Pond Road, and Central Avenue.



### *Zoning and Public Policy*

Fresh Pond Yard itself is zoned M1-1 for light manufacturing uses. Closest to the yard, zoning is also for light manufacturing (see Figure 3-10), covering the areas occupied by the industries fronting on the yard. Outside of this manufacturing area, the zoning is residential, as is appropriate for the residential neighborhood. These residential districts (R4 and R5) permit low- to medium-density development, typically row houses and small apartment buildings. The areas along Metropolitan Avenue and Fresh Pond Road are mapped with commercial overlays that permit a range of local retail and service establishments.

### *HIGHBRIDGE YARD*

Highbridge Yard is located in the Highbridge section of the Bronx, between the Harlem River and the Major Deegan Expressway. The yard runs from the equivalent of West 161st Street on the south to Depot Place on the north. The land use study area for Highbridge Yard is the area roughly within 400 feet of the yard, but includes land on the Manhattan riverfront facing the yard as well.

### *Land Use*

The center of the study area is occupied by the existing Highbridge Yard—a rail yard used by MNR—and two sets of tracks used by MNR’s Hudson Line. The Oak Point Link freight rail line runs adjacent to the yard as well. (In addition, the *New York City Greenway Plan* published by the New York City Department of City Planning proposes to use the abandoned Putnam Division railroad line as a bicycle/pedestrian Greenway trail extending as far south as Macomb’s Dam Bridge. This area is located between Highbridge Yard and the Major Deegan Expressway.) Just east of these rail uses, the Major Deegan Expressway forms a barrier between the yard and the neighborhood to the east. Sedgwick Avenue is also designated as a bicycle route on New York City’s Citywide Cycling Map. In the surrounding neighborhood, land uses are predominantly residential (see Figure 3-11). Highbridge Houses—four 13-story residential buildings between Sedgwick and University Avenues south of West 167th Street—are the primary residential uses in the Bronx portion of the study area. Additional residences on this block include two low-rise apartment buildings with ground-floor retail just south of the Highbridge Houses. The northern end of the study area, on a hill high above the yard, includes low-rise residential apartment buildings. Below them, close to the Major Deegan Expressway, the New York City Police Department Bronx Task Force and several auto-related uses front on Sedgwick Avenue. The northern portion of the study area is dominated by the High Bridge, a stone bridge (closed to traffic) that spans the Hudson River.

The Harlem River forms a strong boundary between Highbridge Yard and uses to the west, in Manhattan. The Harlem River Drive, a parkway for passenger cars with a riverfront pedestrian and bicycle path, runs along the Manhattan shoreline of the river. To the west of the river and drive, most of the study area is occupied by the 119-acre Highbridge Park, on a hill high above the river. Bordered on the west by Edgecombe and Amsterdam Avenues, on the north by Dyckman Street, and on the east and south by the Harlem River Drive, the park forms a buffer between the Harlem River and the residential neighborhoods west of Edgecombe and Amsterdam Avenues. Below and south of the park, the southern portion of the study area is occupied by a large block of residential uses: the six 30-story Polo Ground Houses and the 14-story Colonial Park Houses, and two elementary schools.



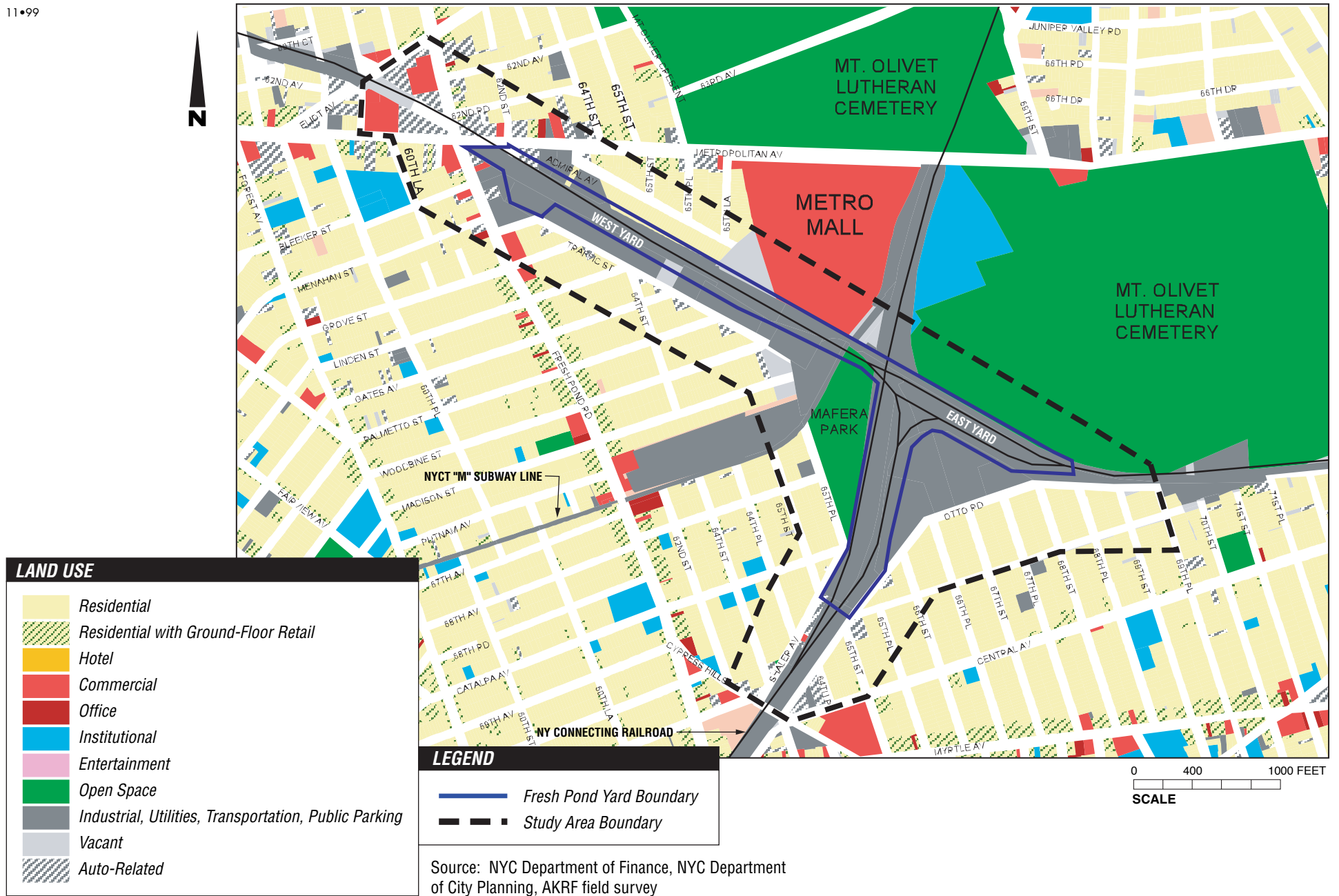
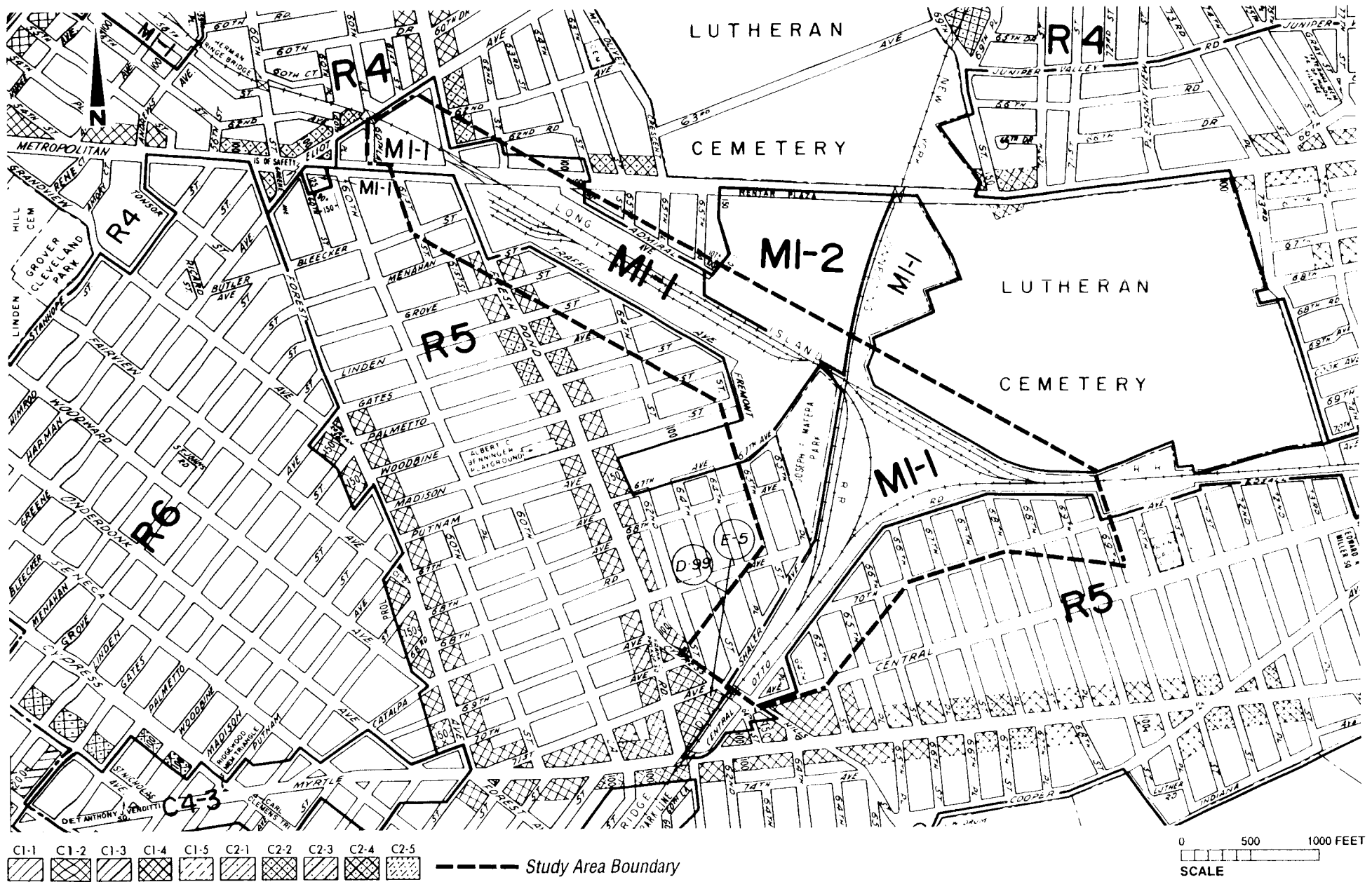


Figure 3-9

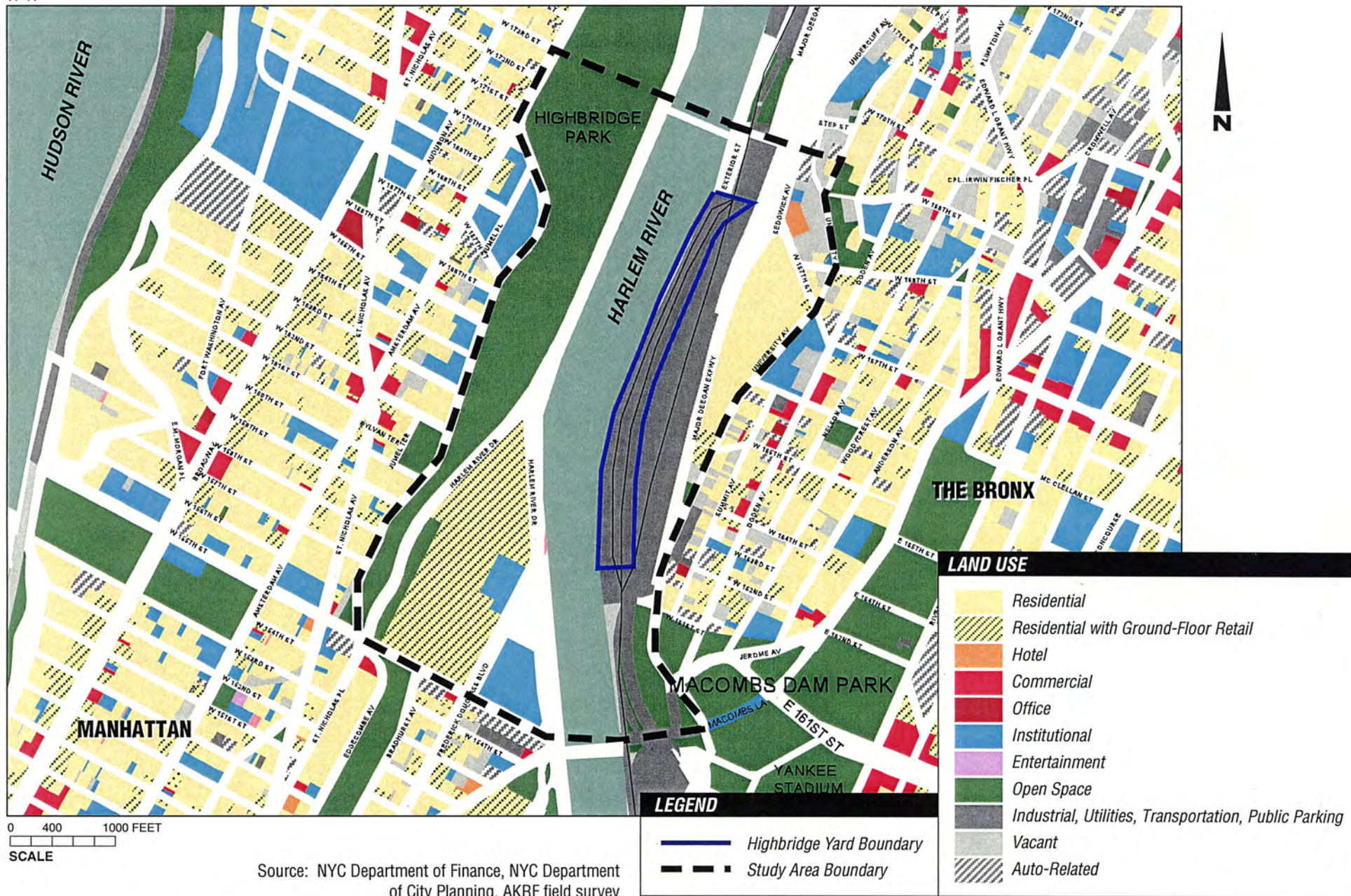
Land Use: Fresh Pond Yard



MTA / LIRR  
East Side Access

Figure 3-10  
Zoning: Fresh Pond Yard





### *Zoning and Public Policy*

Like Fresh Pond Yard, Highbridge Yard lies entirely in a light manufacturing (M1-1) zone (see Figure 3-12). East of the Major Deegan Expressway, the residential portion of the study area is zoned for medium- to high-density residential use (R7-1). In the Manhattan portion of the study area, the residential area is similarly zoned (R7-2), but allows for a slightly smaller parking space allotment.

## **LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARD STUDY AREAS**

### *CERRO WIRE SITE*

The Cerro Wire site is located in the Town of Oyster Bay, in Nassau County. The site is bordered on the north by the LIRR right-of-way,\* on the west by Robbins Lane, on the east by industrial property, and on the south by the Long Island Expressway (LIE). As described in Chapter 2, a yard at the Cerro Wire site could be configured in two different ways. The first would be to occupy only the privately owned Cerro property; the second would run adjacent to the LIRR right-of-way across the northern portion of the Cerro property and the northern portion of the adjacent Syosset Landfill, a former municipal landfill that is now closed and capped.

### *Land Use*

The new yard would occupy a portion of the former industrial property of the Cerro Wire and Cable Company, where steel electrical conduit, copper rod, and related products were once manufactured. All of the proposed yard site is currently unused, and partially occupied by vacant industrial buildings. The 400-foot study area is occupied entirely by commercial and industrial properties along the LIRR right-of-way (see Figure 3-13). Uses in the study area include the Syosset Landfill to the east, and light manufacturing and a New York State Department of Transportation maintenance facility across Robbins Lane to the west. The northern portion of the study area, across the LIRR right-of-way from the Cerro Wire property, consists of light industrial, commercial, and warehouses use along Aerial Way. South of the Cerro property is the LIE and its North Service Road. The south side of the LIE is lined by a tall noise wall.

The 400-foot study area for the alternative layout—in which the yard would be in the northern portions of the Cerro Wire property and the former landfill property—is also occupied entirely by commercial and industrial properties. To the south, the study area is occupied by additional portions of the Cerro Wire property and Syosset Landfill. The portion of the study area north of the LIRR right-of-way is occupied by the light industrial, commercial, and warehouses uses along Aerial Way and at the end of Michael Drive. Commercial and industrial uses along Gordon Drive are located east of the landfill within the study area. Abutting, but outside of, the southeast corner of the study area is the Syosset Grove residential neighborhood. The closest residences are along Colony Lane, and are generally buffered from the industrial area to their west through the use of landscaping and fences.

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\* While this portion of the Port Jefferson Branch LIRR tracks actually runs in a NNE-SSW direction, to be consistent with the overall direction of the Port Jefferson Branch, they are referred to as running east-west, and compass points are oriented accordingly.



### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The study area lies entirely in industrial zones of the Town of Oyster Bay, either light industrial or heavy industrial. The area formerly occupied by the Cerro Wire company is zoned “H” for light industrial uses, while the former landfill is zoned “I” for heavy industrial uses.

It should be noted that the Town of Oyster Bay is currently considering an application by the Taubman Company to develop a 860,000-square-foot enclosed regional shopping center, *the Mall at Oyster Bay*, on the entire Cerro Wire site. Retail malls are permitted uses in “H” zoning districts, if the town issues a special exception for the project. Issuing a special exception is a discretionary action, and therefore requires environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Act (SEQRA). The Oyster Bay Town Board, acting as lead agency under SEQRA, directed the preparation of an environmental impact statement analyzing development of a site with a shopping center as well as several alternative development scenarios (an industrial complex, an office complex, and alternative layouts and sizes for retail development). On January 21, 1998, a public hearing was held on the scope of the EIS, and a Draft EIS was published in December 1999. A public hearing was then held on the DEIS on January 27, 2000. *On June 13, 2000, the Town Board of the Town of Oyster Bay passed a resolution accepting as complete the Final EIS for the Mall at Oyster Bay.* After review of the Final EIS, the Town of Oyster Bay will determine whether or not to approve the project. If approved, the mall structure, with two anchor stores, would occupy the middle portion of the site, a parking structure would be located on the north and east portion of the site, and at-grade parking would cover the south and west parts of the site.

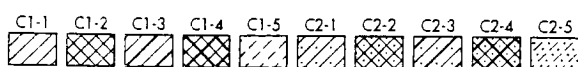
### *BABYLON SITE*

The Babylon site is located in West Islip, in the Town of Islip, Suffolk County. It is between Union Boulevard on the south, and the LIRR Montauk Branch and existing Babylon Yard on the north, and roughly between the Babylon-Northport Expressway (Route 231) on the west and Higbie Lane on the east. However, the western end of the yard could be moved to west of Route 231, depending on the availability of property. This area west of the highway is the “expansion site.” In either configuration, the Babylon site is currently owned by numerous different private owners.

### *Land Use*

The proposed Babylon site is currently occupied by a mix of industrial, commercial, residential, and vacant properties that are adjacent to the LIRR right-of-way on the north side of Union Boulevard. The specific uses include six businesses and three residential buildings with a total of five residences.

The 400-foot study area includes the existing Babylon Yard north of the Montauk Branch main-line tracks, commercial uses along Higbie Street, and predominantly residential uses throughout the rest of the study area (see Figure 3-14). Some commercial and residential uses line the south side of Union Boulevard, facing the site, and other residences back onto the street. The buildings on the proposed site form a buffer between the southern half of the study area and the railroad uses to the north. On the north side of Babylon Yard, a high noise wall separates the residential neighborhood to the north from the yard.

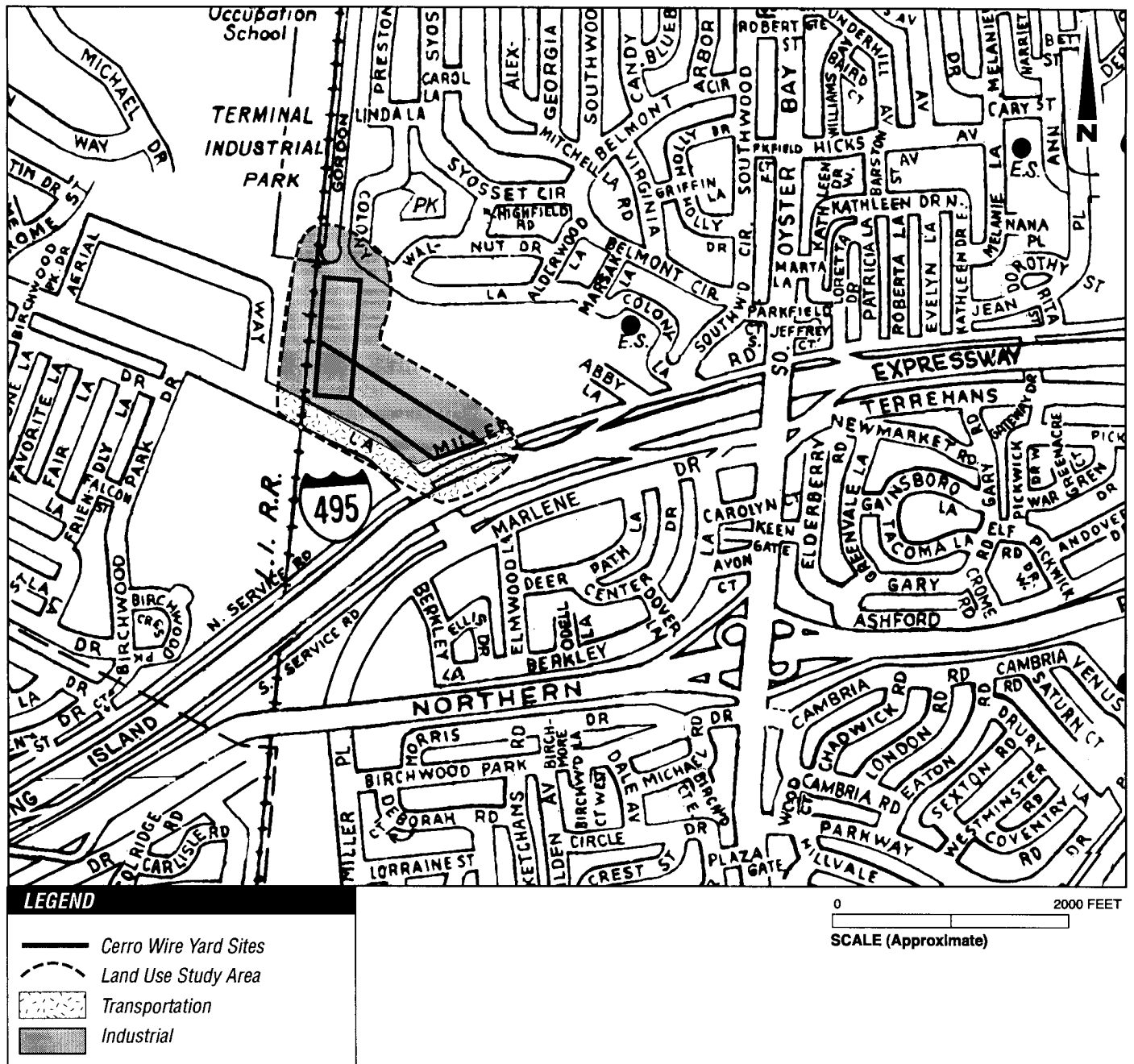


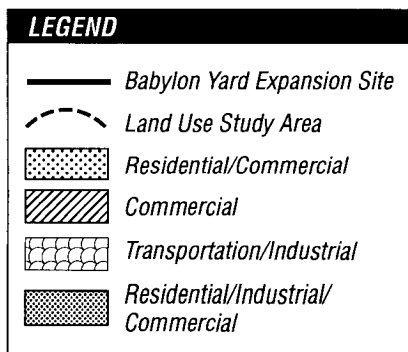
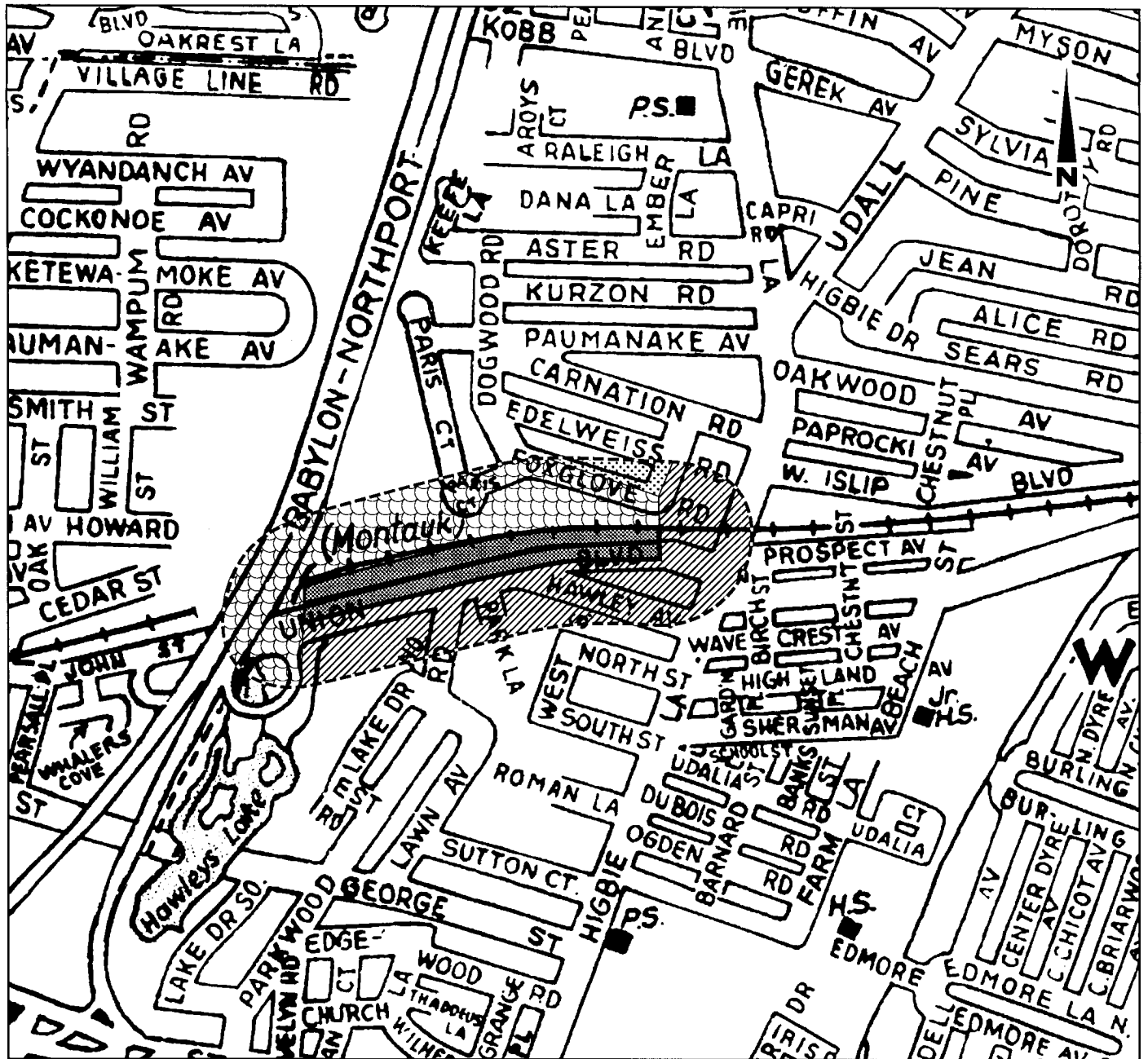
— — — — Study Area Boundary

0 500 1000 FEET  
SCALE

MTA / LIRR  
East Side Access

*Figure 3-12*  
**Zoning: Highbridge Yard**





0 2000 FEET  
SCALE (Approximate)

### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The Babylon site is within the Town of Islip's I-1 zoning district, an industrial district that allows a wide range of industrial and related activities that can meet a medium level of performance standards. The Babylon Yard is also zoned I-1. The rest of the study area is zoned for single-family residential use, predominantly on relatively small lots (a minimum of 7,500 square feet), or for general retail business.

### *YAPHANK EAST SITE*

As described in Chapter 2, two sites are assessed in Yaphank, in the Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County. The first, Yaphank East, is located roughly between the LIE on the north, the LIRR Ronkonkoma Branch on the south, South Haven County Park on the east, and the LIRR Yaphank station and Yaphank Avenue on the west. A small portion of the site is in private ownership; the rest of the site is owned by Suffolk County.

### *Land Use*

The southern portion of the Yaphank East site is currently occupied by a privately owned tree farm. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide, the agricultural area covered by the tree farm falls into the category of "prime farmland" for the purposes of evaluating its importance under the federal Farmland Protection Policy Act. Prime farmland is land that has the soil quality, growing season and moisture supply necessary to produce economically high sustained yields of crops when treated and managed according to farming methods. The agricultural portion of the Yaphank East site contains one prime farmland soil: Riverhead sandy loam of 0 to 3 percent slope, which is generally found on outwash plains and is well suited to all crops commonly grown in the county. The rest of the Yaphank East site is located on the eastern portion of the facility operated by the Suffolk County Department of Public Works. Most of the site is occupied by the Department of Public Works' road salt and bulk storage facility, but a small area at the site's northern end is vacant and wooded.

The 400-foot study area extends to the LIE to the north, and is occupied by vacant, wooded land similar to that on the site (see Figure 3-15). To the west, the study area is occupied by the Department of Public Works facility service garage, offices, and storage facilities; a Board of Elections office; the Division of Waterways offices; and associated parking lots.

The study area also encompasses a small cemetery adjacent to the LIE. To the south, the 400-foot area includes the rest of the tree farm, as well as approximately 8 to 10 residences along Park Street, the LIRR Yaphank station, and a Georgia Pacific distribution center at the corner of Park Street and Yaphank Avenue. South Haven County Park is just east of the yard site. This 1,356-acre park extends well beyond the study area boundaries, as far east as River Road and as far south as the Sunrise Highway (for more information on the park, see the discussion in Chapter 4, "Social Conditions" as well as Chapter 15, "Natural Resources").

### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The proposed yard site, as well as the entire Suffolk County Department of Public Works facility, Yaphank station, and tree farm, are in the Town of Brookhaven's A-1 Residence zoning district, which allows single-family houses on lots with a minimum of 30,000 square feet. Southaven Park is also zoned for residential use, and the Georgia Pacific facility is zoned for industrial use.

### *YAPHANK WEST SITE*

The second site being considered at Yaphank, Yaphank West, is just west of Yaphank Avenue on the south side of the LIRR Ronkonkoma Branch. This site is currently owned by Suffolk County.

#### *Land Use*

The Yaphank West site is entirely undeveloped. A portion of the site is used for agriculture by Suffolk County, in connection with the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center Cornell Cooperative Extension just north of the LIRR tracks. Like a portion of the Yaphank East site, this agricultural area falls into the category of “prime farmland” for the purposes of evaluating its importance under the Farmland Protection Policy Act. The agricultural portion of the Yaphank West site contains two prime farmland soils: Riverhead sandy loam of 0 to 3 percent slope, and Haven loam of 0 to 2 percent slope. Both soils are generally found on outwash plains and are well suited to all crops commonly grown in the county.

Outside of the agricultural areas, the rest of the site is wooded. The study area to the north is occupied by the buildings of the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center and its agricultural fields, as well as a wooded area (see Figure 3-15). Suffolk County Farm and Education Center is a working farm operated as an educational center by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County (see also Chapter 4, “Social Conditions”). The wooded area on the site continues to the south, occupying most of the study area to the south. The area to the east includes the municipal uses along Yaphank Avenue—the Suffolk County Police Property Section and Fleet, at the corner of the LIRR right-of-way and Yaphank Avenue, and the John L. Barry Headquarters Building and Police Museum to its south.

#### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The land along Yaphank Avenue, including the eastern half of the proposed site, the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center, and the police facilities, are in the Town of Brookhaven’s A-1 Residence district. The western third of the site and study area are zoned for industrial use.

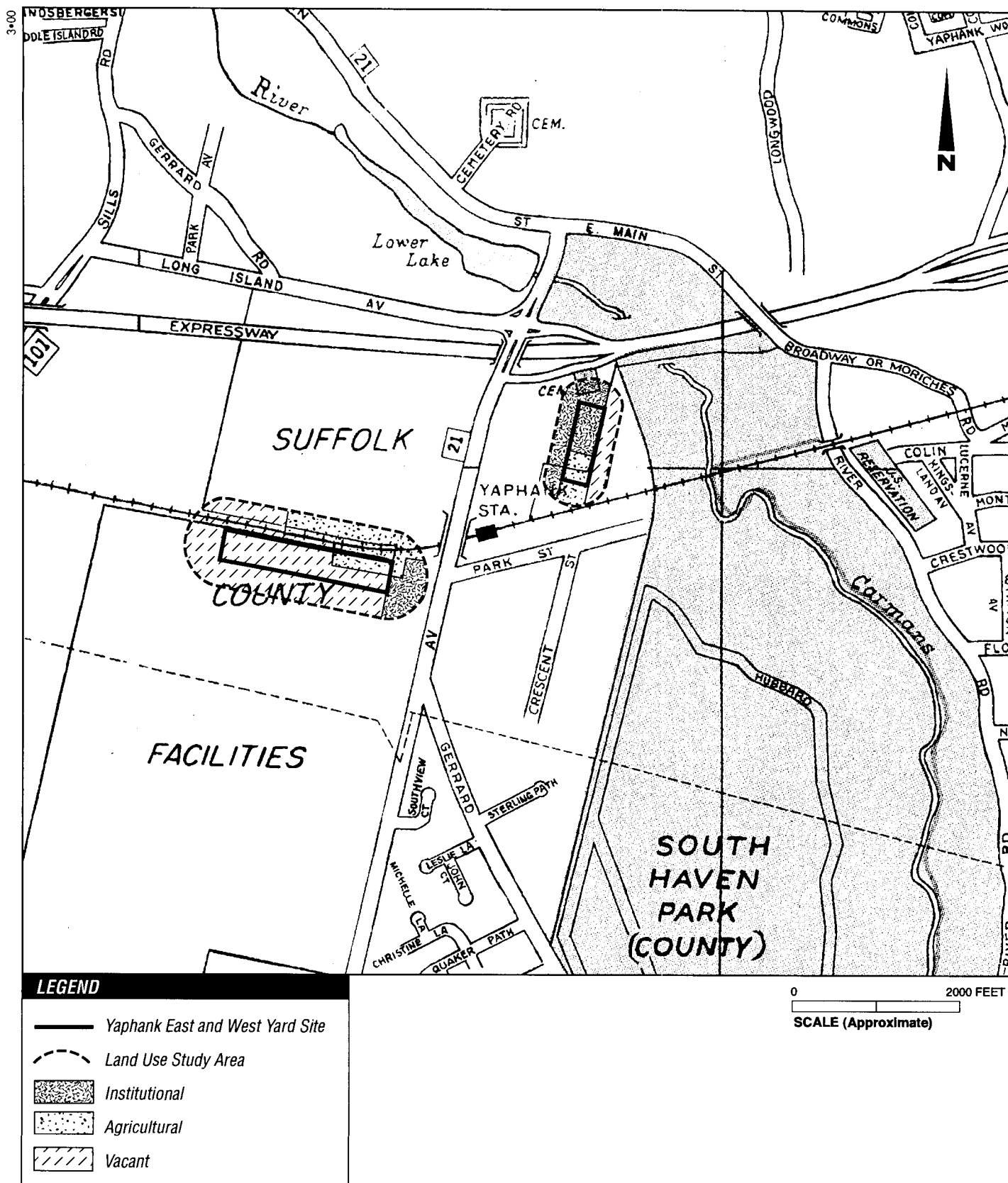
### *RONKONKOMA SITE*

The Ronkonkoma site is located in the Town of Islip, Suffolk County, adjacent to the existing LIRR Ronkonkoma Yard. The site is between the yard on the north, Railroad Avenue on the east and south, and one of the Ronkonkoma station parking lots on the west. Most of the site is currently owned by MTA Long Island Rail Road.

#### *Land Use*

The Ronkonkoma site is currently occupied by facilities associated with the LIRR train storage yard and Welfare Facility building, as well as vacant and wooded land. The 400-foot study area includes additional vacant and wooded land to the west, south, and east, and the Ronkonkoma Yard to the north (see Figure 3-16). The area just south of the yard site includes Federal Aviation Administration transmitter/receiver facilities associated with Islip MacArthur Airport. The northern portion of the study area also includes a small number of residences on the north side of the LIRR right-of-way adjacent to the Ronkonkoma Yard, but a high noise wall effectively separates the residential area from the yard. The LIRR right-of-way forms the boundary between the Town of Islip (to the south) and the Town of Brookhaven (to the north). MacArthur Airport and the Town of Islip composting facility are just south of Railroad Avenue outside the study







area; the airport continues to the east of the study area as well. Ronkonkoma station parking lots are outside of the study area to the west.

#### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The site of the potential expansion to Ronkonkoma Yard is in the Town of Islip's I-1 zoning district, an industrial district that allows a wide range of industrial and related activities that can meet a medium level of performance standards. The rest of the study area is also zoned for industrial use, except for the residential portion of the study area north of the LIRR tracks in the Town of Brookhaven, which is predominately zoned for residential use. The yard site is designated for industrial use in the Town of Islip's Comprehensive Plan.

#### *PILGRIM HOSPITAL SITE*

The Pilgrim site is located in the village of West Brentwood, in the Town of Islip, Suffolk County. The yard area occupies the lower third of the former Pilgrim State Psychiatric Center ("Pilgrim Hospital") property, and the lead track area occupies an approximately mile-long sliver of property just west of the Sagtikos Parkway. The site is bordered on the north by Campus Road, on the east by the Sagtikos Parkway, on the south by the LIRR right-of-way, and on the west by both an open area of the Pilgrim Hospital property formerly occupied by sewage leaching beds (at the site's yard portion) and by industrial buildings (at the site's lead track portion). The entire site is owned by the State of New York.

#### *Land Use*

The yard site is currently partially undeveloped land and partially occupied by Pilgrim Hospital's sewage treatment plant, incinerator, garages, support facilities, and power plant. The Pilgrim Hospital utilities buildings are all located at the northern portion of the study area, which is crossed by a number of dirt roads. North of Campus Road (and north of the utilities buildings), is the active portion of Pilgrim Hospital. As of mid-1998, approximately 1,200 in-patients and 1,400 out-patients were being treated there. The hospital's facilities, which extend beyond the study area to the north, include more than 70 buildings used for in-patient residential dormitories, clinic and workshop space, and hospital administrative offices, as well as a number of vacant buildings.

The southern portion of the study area contains the existing lead track (where the new track would run), wooded land between the lead track and the Sagtikos Parkway, and a portion of the Heartland Business Center industrial park west of the lead track (see Figure 3-17). In addition, west of the lead track's junction with the LIRR right-of-way is a golf driving range along the LIRR right-of-way.

#### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The yard site and most of the study area are in the Town of Islip's I-1 industrial zoning district, which allows a wide range of industrial and related activities that can meet a medium level of performance standards. A small portion of the study area north of Campus Road is zoned Residential AAA, which permits single-family dwellings and community facilities on a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet. The AAA district covers much of the grounds of Pilgrim Hospital and Suffolk County Community College east of the Sagtikos Parkway.

The Town of Islip's Comprehensive Master Plan was first adopted in 1979 and updated, but never adopted, in 1989. In the latest update, the Master Plan recommends the northern portion of the site for institutional/open space and the southern, lead track portion for industrial use. The

Preliminary Reutilization Master Plan for the Pilgrim State Psychiatric Center, issued in 1995 by the Empire State Development Corporation, recommends mixed use/industrial/research and development for the majority of the northern portion of the site, and open space for a small remaining portion, adjacent to the west side of the Sagtikos Parkway. This plan has served as the backdrop for the state's plan to sell approximately 460 acres of the 840-acre Pilgrim Hospital property to a private developer. While the initial offering of the property included a portion of the proposed yard site, the state is now considering setting aside 110 acres in the southwest section of the property, including the proposed yard site, for use as an intermodal transportation center. According to the Pilgrim State Psychiatric Center Preliminary Reutilization Master Plan, the potential yard site and immediate area are constrained from development for a number of reasons: the difficulty of reusing existing utility buildings, a number of sewage beds on site, the likely need for environmental remediation, and its isolation from the rest of the redevelopable Pilgrim property to the north.

### *RIVERHEAD SITE*

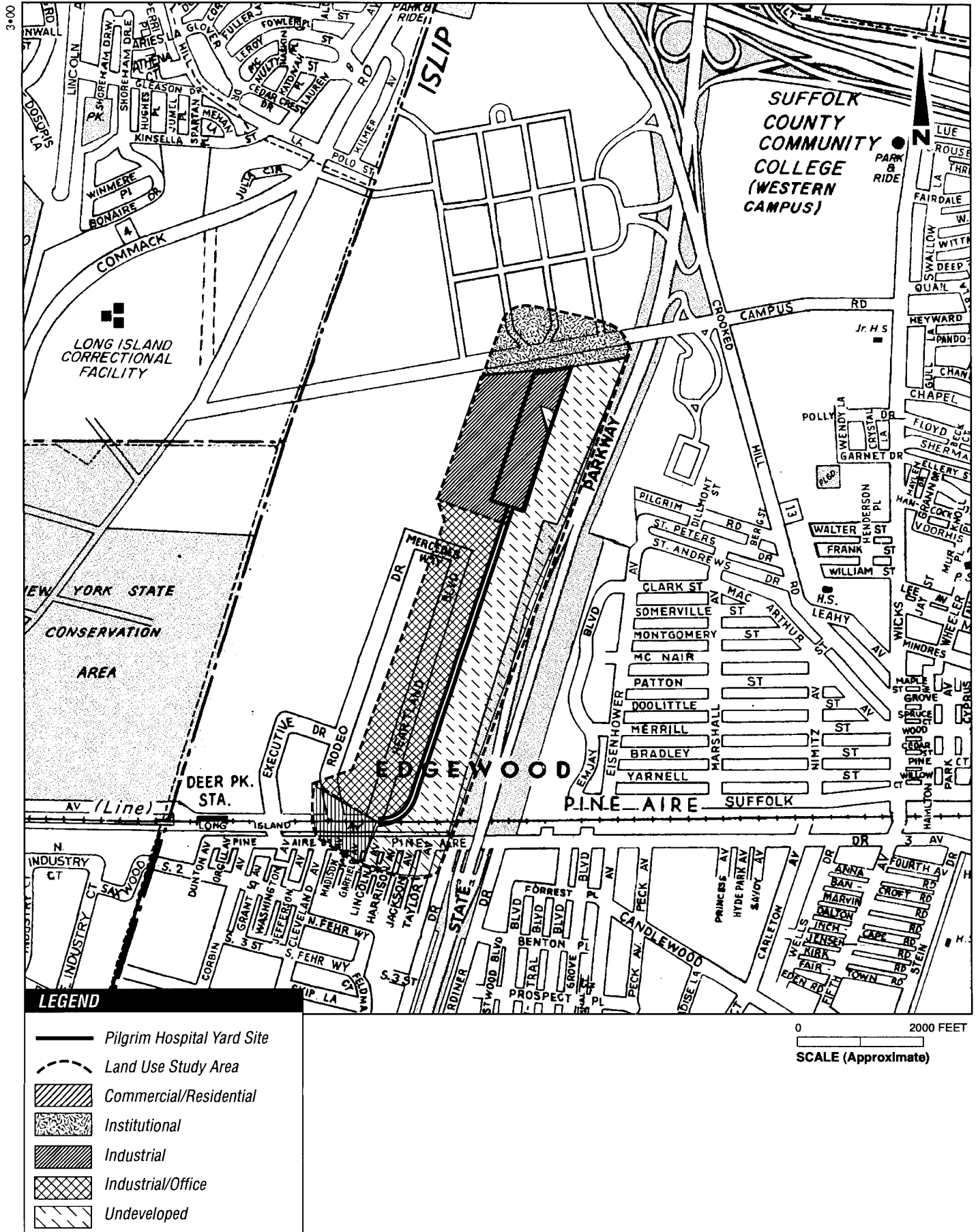
The Riverhead site is located in the Town of Riverhead, in Suffolk County. The site is bordered on the west by Sawmill Creek (just west of 1st Street), on the east by Indian Island County Park, on the north by the LIRR right-of-way, and on the south by an open field and wooded area that leads to Sawmill Creek. The Riverhead site is in private ownership, *and was formerly the Hubbard duck farm.*

### *Land Use*

The yard site is partially wooded area (on its western half) and partially open field (on its eastern half) south of the LIRR right-of-way from just east of 3rd Street to the western edge of Indian Island County Park. It appears as though this open field may currently be, or has recently been, in use for agricultural purposes. According to the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, the site's soil places it in the category of "farmland of statewide importance" for the purposes of evaluating its importance under the Farmland Protection Policy Act. This is land other than "prime farmland" (see discussion of Yaphank West site, above), used for the production of specific high value food or fiber crops. Farmland of statewide importance has a combination of favorable factors needed to produce a specific crop. Specifically, this site contains Plymouth loamy sand on a 0 to 3 percent slope, which is mainly found on outwash plains south of the Ronkonkoma moraine. There is little erosion hazard and the soil is fairly well suited to crops commonly grown in the county.

The proposed site is almost completely undeveloped, except for a small abandoned shack just south of the LIRR right-of-way and a driveway that provides the only connection from Hubbard Avenue, north of the right-of-way, to at least one residence to the south.

The 400-foot study area includes vacant, wooded land and a residential neighborhood located between Hubbard Avenue and the LIRR right-of-way (see Figure 3-18). A total of approximately 50 residences are in the land use study area along Hubbard Avenue. This neighborhood consists of varied types of housing, including trailers, small houses, and larger houses along Hubbard Avenue itself. At the western portion of the study area north of the existing LIRR tracks is a portion of Riverhaven, a trailer park along 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Streets consisting of approximately 100 homes, about 30 of which fall within the study area. Just east of the trailer park, a garage structure is located near the tracks as well. Other than the abandoned shack on the site and the driveway that passes through the site, the study area west, south, and east of the site is undeveloped. East of the site is a wooded portion of Indian Island County Park, a 287-acre park







that extends out to the Peconic River and Flanders Bay. South of the proposed yard site, the property continues as open field for approximately 500 to 700 feet, and is then predominantly wooded to its southern border at Sawmill Creek (outside the study area). The driveway that crosses the rail tracks on the yard site appears to provide the only connection to one or more residences located in this wooded area.

### *Zoning and Public Policy*

The Riverhead site is located in the Town of Riverhead's Business A district, a resort business district that permits recreation-related businesses (such as beach clubs, hotels, marinas, parks, etc.) as well as residential uses and certain other commercial uses. Indian Island County Park is also located in this district. The single-family homes north of the railroad right-of-way are in a Residence C district, and the trailer park is in an Industrial B (General Industry) district.

## **D. FUTURE CONDITIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES**

Future conditions have been examined for 2 years: 2010 and 2020. In all cases, land use conditions for 2020 represent a continuation of trends foreseen for 2010.

### **MANHATTAN STUDY AREA**

The Manhattan study area is a very dense, but very dynamic urban center. Waves of economic development have shaped its form and will continue to do so in the future. In areas, such as East Midtown, that are nearly fully developed, new construction will be limited to the very few sites that can be assembled for redevelopment. Upgrading of usable older buildings will continue. In areas such as West Midtown or Battery Park City, which still have vacant and/or developable sites, new commercial and, as appropriate, residential construction can be anticipated. Conversion of loft or garment center buildings to higher-paying office use will continue. Public policy and zoning will continue to guide the location and density of new or "revised" development. As shown in Tables 3-3 and 3-4, looking at known proposals only, an anticipated total of 29.7 million square feet of office use has been proposed in the study area for completion between 1995 and 2020, along with some 34,452 housing units (1 unit = 1 apartment or single-family home).

Although these projects may not all be built in the form in which they are currently proposed, they give a very good indication of the amount of interest in and attractiveness of the study area for future development. Trends in the subareas vary, as discussed below.

### *LOWER MANHATTAN SUBAREA*

In Lower Manhattan, the trend toward a mixed-use, 24-hour community, which is strongly supported by public policy, can be expected to continue. The proposed construction of a new New York Stock Exchange near its current location will help retain Lower Manhattan's core financial district to 2020. The completion of Battery Park City will add more than 6,000 new residential units and approximately 2.5 million square feet of office space.\*

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\* Figures include units and space constructed since 1995, and units and space proposed for construction to 2020.

Table 3-3

**Known Development Projects in Manhattan Study Area, 1995-2010**

	Residential Units	Office Square Feet	Retail Square Feet	Hotel Rooms	Institutional Square Feet
Lower Manhattan	8,882	5,256,000	253,500	1,263	0
Village	2,911	103,000	575,655	153	200,000
Chelsea	70	1,940,000	0	0	0
Lower Fifth	1,919	0	218,600	0	0
Midtown South	1,850	0	0	0	1,302,000
Clinton	1,010	270,000	30,000	0	0
Garment Center	2,455	2,341,000	1,307,000	854	0
Midtown	1,060	6,396,000	332,000	2,150	278,000
East Midtown	886	2,707,500	1,098,000	135	0
Lincoln Square	2,125	(473,000)*	170,000	167	28,000
Upper East Side	1,365	0	0	0	230,000
<b>Study Area Total</b>	<b>24,533</b>	<b>18,540,500</b>	<b>3,984,755</b>	<b>4,722</b>	<b>2,038,000</b>
<b>Note:</b> * Net loss of office space due to the conversion of the Gulf & Western Building to residential use.					
<b>Source:</b> AKRF, May 3, 1999.					

Table 3-4

**Known Development Projects in Manhattan Study Area, 2010-2020**

	Residential Units	Office Square Feet	Retail Square Feet	Hotel Rooms	Institutional Square Feet
Lower Manhattan	0	2,030,000	0	0	0
Village	0	0	800,000	0	250,000
Chelsea	32	2,180,000	0	400	0
Lower Fifth	1,088	324,000	50,600	0	0
Midtown South	0	0	20,316	0	0
Clinton	2,690	735,000	125,000	0	0
Garment Center	0	1,507,000	20,000	170	0
Midtown	1,566	3,012,000	0	0	0
East Midtown	600	0	0	0	0
Lincoln Square	3,633	1,371,000	667,000	687	2,031,000
Upper East Side	310	0	95,000	0	0
<b>Study Area Total</b>	<b>9,919</b>	<b>11,159,000</b>	<b>1,777,916</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>2,281,000</b>
<b>Source:</b> AKRF, May 3, 1999.					

#### *VILLAGE SUBAREA*

In general, the trends seen today in the large area between Canal and 14th Streets are expected to continue in the future. The conversion of large loft buildings to office use in the "Graphic Arts" section of SoHo (west of Sixth Avenue and roughly south of Houston Street) can be expected to continue. Residential development will continue, through limited new construction, rehabilitation of existing structures, and conversions of loft spaces. The entire area, from river

to river, should experience an upgrading of its housing stock as the current strong demand for housing in the subarea is unlikely to wane. Public policy is important here, as well, particularly in the Seward Park and Cooper Square Urban Renewal Areas, where additional housing and retail uses can be anticipated. The Hudson River Park and the completion of the reconstruction of Route 9A (West Street) will significantly change the Hudson River waterfront, augmenting current recreational opportunities and potentially resulting in additional retail development within and just east of the park.

### *CHELSEA SUBAREA*

Development of the Hudson River Park will continue along the Hudson River in Chelsea, providing significant new recreational opportunities. This, along with the reconstruction of Route 9A, should support the continued redevelopment of southern Chelsea's smaller industrial buildings toward galleries and retail-oriented uses. Between Eighth and Tenth Avenues the neighborhood will continue to be strongly residential with scattered new development.

In the northern section of Chelsea, two large development sites over the active tracks and rail yards on Ninth Avenue between 31st and 33rd Streets will likely be developed by 2010 or 2020, as will some of the projects anticipated when the area surrounding the Jacob Javits Convention Center was rezoned. There is also a possibility that the convention center will expand. In addition, the conversion of the General Post Office (Farley Building) to a major Amtrak station and a possible second phase containing more retail and other commercial space can be expected to enliven the area in the vicinity of Penn Station. Consideration of development on the large area above the LIRR yards from Tenth Avenue to Twelfth Avenue is still very speculative; however, by 2020 it is possible that an intense mix of uses could be built there as well.

### *LOWER FIFTH SUBAREA*

Considerable development in the Lower Fifth area can be expected, most specifically along Sixth Avenue between 23rd and 31st Streets, which was recently re-zoned to allow as-of-right residential and large retail uses. This should bring approximately 1,800 new residential units and 140,000 square feet of new retail space to the area. Trends towards intensification of office uses in the blocks between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and along Seventh Avenue in the Garment Center can be expected to continue.

### *MIDTOWN SOUTH SUBAREA*

The recent intensification of office uses and restaurant space in Midtown South will likely continue, and be joined by a similar intensification of residential use. A number of sizable apartment buildings are currently under construction in the East 20's and 30's, ranging in size from 100 to 400 units each. Other notable developments include construction of new institutional space by Baruch College and the redevelopment of the former B. Altman's department store for use as offices and as the Science, Industry and Business Library.

### *GARMENT CENTER*

As the result of the 42nd Street Development Project, a portion of the Garment Center area between 40th and 42nd Streets will continue to experience major changes. In the blocks between Seventh and Ninth Avenues more than 1,000 hotel rooms are planned for construction, along with almost four million square feet of office space and more than one million square feet of retail space. The construction will occur on the south side of 42nd Street between Broadway and

Eighth Avenue, with the sites near Broadway slated for office development and the sites at Eighth Avenue for commercial development. In addition, the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ) is considering proposals for a large development project atop the Bus Terminal on the west side of Eighth Avenue between 40th and 42nd Streets. Situated within walking distance of both Penn Station and GCT, these projects in the southern portion of Times Square are likely to serve commuters from both terminals.

#### *CLINTON*

While development will continue to move to the western reaches of Midtown, the heart of Clinton will continue to be protected through zoning as a low-scale residential area. The Theater District Rezoning (see discussion of Midtown below), along with the ample number of potential development sites, will bring a select number of larger office or residential buildings to the west side of Eighth Avenue in the 40's. Development sites are still available in the Clinton Urban Renewal Area and will most probably be developed primarily for residential use.

#### *MIDTOWN*

Midtown will continue to be a highly desirable area for office space. Development in the eastern portion of this area (east of Sixth Avenue) will continue wherever available sites can be found or assembled. The western portion of the area will see greater development as development sites are still available and the 42nd Street Development Project is very active. The recent Theater District Rezoning, which permits the transfer of unused air rights from theaters to development parcels in a designated area, will support the development of millions of square feet of office and residential space. The creation of more than 2 million square feet of *additional* space will be allowed through the rezoning, making the development of potential sites in the area much more attractive. A number of these sites are located on the east side of Eighth Avenue.

Two large office buildings are currently under construction or recently completed on 42nd Street and Broadway (Condé Nast Headquarters at 4 Times Square) and 42nd Street and Seventh Avenue (Reuters Headquarters) as part of the 42nd Street Development Project. Other significant projects in Midtown include the construction of a new office building west of Sixth Avenue between 42nd and 43rd Streets (potentially to accommodate Nasdaq), along with new construction of corporate headquarters at 745 Seventh (for Morgan Stanley Dean Witter) and 1739 Broadway (for Random House). Additionally, more than 2,000 new hotel rooms are under construction or in the planning stages, many of which are on 42nd Street Development Project sites and elsewhere in the Times Square area.

Two projects will continue to strengthen the Midtown CBD's appeal as a tourist destination. The expansion of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the construction of the Folk Art Museum, both on West 53rd Street, will help the area continue to draw visitors from both within and outside the region. Together, these office, residential, and institutional projects will help Midtown continue to grow stronger as a multi-purpose, 24-hour community, consistent with city policies. The strong new development expected in the Midtown subarea would be primarily served by GCT, although passengers coming to Penn Station would be within walking distance of the southern end of the subarea.

#### *EAST MIDTOWN*

Like Midtown, the strength of East Midtown as an office district will likely lead developers to aggressively search for development sites in the future, as they have in the recent past. The trend

toward dense office development north of 42nd Street in the GCT area will continue, as at least two major sites are developed. The new headquarters of Bear Stearns, at 383 Madison, will occupy the entire block between Madison and Vanderbilt Avenues, 46th and 47th Streets. Made possible through the purchase of GCT's remaining transferable air rights, 383 Madison will bring approximately 1.2 million square feet of office space and draw almost 5,000 employees to the area. A new building currently in the planning stages at 310 Madison, between 41st and 42nd Street, should bring an additional 1 million square feet of commercial or mixed-use space.

In addition, a proposed development at the former Alexander's department store site, occupying the entire block bounded by Third and Lexington Avenues, 58th and 59th Streets, will bring up to 1 million square feet of retail space to the area.

Murray Hill, in the southern section of East Midtown, will continue as a strong residential neighborhood. The Con Edison Waterside generating plant properties along First Avenue in the high 30's will most likely be developed as residential sites.

#### *LINCOLN SQUARE*

Lincoln Square will continue to be one of the strongest cultural and institutional centers in Manhattan, and will also continue as a desirable residential area. The completion of Riverside South (now known as Trump Place) along the Hudson River between 59th and 72nd Streets will be the most notable new development, bringing thousands of new residential units to the sub-area, along with studio space at its southern end. The subarea will see new office, residential, entertainment, studio, and retail development when the redevelopment of the New York Coliseum site is completed.

#### *UPPER EAST SIDE*

The Upper East Side between 59th and 79th Streets will continue to be a strong residential neighborhood, with the construction of a number of luxury high-rise apartment buildings. The high-end retail district of Madison Avenue will continue in its strength. Hospitals and related commercial uses on the eastern side of the area will continue in their present use.

#### **LONG ISLAND CITY/SUNNYSIDE STUDY AREA**

In the Long Island City area, the city's plans to create a central business district (CBD) in Long Island City will result in significant changes in terms of land use, zoning, and public policy by 2010. *On February 29, 2000, a Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) application was filed for zoning changes and other related actions for 39 blocks in downtown Long Island City. The ULURP application and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) analyzing the effects of the zoning changes and related actions were certified as complete on December 22 and 26, 2000. These zoning changes would permit CBD-type development characterized by a dense core of office and other commercial uses that would be well-served by public transportation, and by residential uses surrounding the core. The CBD plans call for a number of rezoning actions in Long Island City just west of Sunnyside Yard. The Special Hunters Point Mixed Use District (to be named the Special Long Island City Mixed Use District and to have three sub-districts) would be expanded and would allow higher density commercial development on certain sites in addition to residential and retail development throughout the area. This rezoning is anticipated to result in the development of an additional 300 residential units, up to 5 million square feet of office space (in five or six buildings) in close proximity to the location of the proposed new Sunnyside station, new support and destination*



retail space, and an increase in institutional use. In addition to the creation of new space, it is anticipated that the rezoning will result in the refurbishing and upgrading of approximately 250,000 square feet of office space.

Queens West, a mixed-use development comprising residential and commercial buildings surrounded by landscaped parks and recreational areas, is currently being constructed just outside the study area along the East River in Hunters Point, Queens, directly across from the United Nations in Manhattan. Planned for approximately 74 acres of waterfront land, upon completion Queens West will contain 19 residential, office, and hotel buildings. The project will provide approximately 6,400 residential units, and 2.6 million square feet of commercial space (office, hotel, retail). One residential building, City Lights, is completed, and another three are in active planning stages.

Close to Yard A and Sunnyside Yard, several other construction projects are also anticipated for completion before 2010. MTA New York City Transit's 63rd Street Tunnel Connector Project will be completed by 2001, creating an underground subway connection between the Queens Boulevard station at Queens Plaza and the station at Queensbridge/21st Street. Once this work is complete, the project will no longer require use of the large site at Northern Boulevard near 41st Avenue for staging activities. In addition, the New York City Department of Transportation is planning to make improvements at the Queens Boulevard and Honeywell Street bridges over Sunnyside Yard. The work at Queens Boulevard will add pedestrian amenities, among other changes. The work at Honeywell Street will allow vehicular traffic on this bridge, where traffic has been prohibited for some time.

## **LONG ISLAND**

As projected population increases in Nassau and Suffolk (of 17 percent from 1995 to 2020) indicate, Long Island will continue to face strong residential development pressure in the foreseeable future. Similarly strong labor force increases in Nassau and Suffolk (of 31 percent, to 2020) indicate development pressure is likely to be strong on the commercial side also. Both counties are expected to see a continuation of current trends—conversion of open space (and also agricultural land in Suffolk) to primarily residential, retail and commercial space, with Suffolk County, as the less developed entity, receiving more of the development.

## **REPLACEMENT YARDS: BLISSVILLE, MASPETH, FRESH POND, AND HIGHBRIDGE**

No significant changes in land use, public policy or zoning in Blissville, Maspeth, or Fresh Pond are anticipated.

Some changes may occur in Highbridge. The New York City Department of City Planning's 1993 Plan for the Bronx Waterfront proposed a residential development on a platform over Highbridge Yard. This plan would require a zoning change from M1-1 to R7-1 to permit housing and community-related facilities. The plan also calls for the creation of a public access easement along a vacant six-acre strip of land once used by the Putnam Division railroad, located between Highbridge Yard and the Major Deegan Expressway. This easement is proposed as a bicycle/pedestrian Greenway trail extending as far south as Macomb's Dam Bridge. This proposal, for land just east of the Highbridge Yard, would connect elements of a planned Bronx waterfront esplanade both south and north of Highbridge Yard. None of these plans have progressed since the Plan for the Bronx Waterfront was published, and they may or may not be pursued by 2020.

## LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARDS

At the seven nighttime storage yards *analyzed in this EIS*, future developments may occur in the areas surrounding the yards. Specific future changes identified during fieldwork and site research are discussed below.

As described above, the Town of Oyster Bay is currently considering an application to develop a large regional shopping mall on the Cerro Wire site. *This potential change is in conflict with potential use of this site as a LIRR rail storage yard under the No Action, TSM, or Preferred Alternative.*

Near the Yaphank sites, a large undeveloped property on the east side of Yaphank Avenue south of the railroad right-of-way is currently being offered for sale, and may be developed in the future. Also at Yaphank, the Suffolk County Program Center (associated with the adjacent farm center) will move into a former residence on the west side of Yaphank Avenue north of the LIRR right-of-way.

The Pilgrim Hospital campus has been the subject of many redevelopment plans in the past decade. A large portion of the campus, possibly including the *potential* yard site, is being offered for sale by the Empire State Development Corporation, and may be redeveloped in the future with a number of different uses. At the same time, the New York State Department of Transportation is initiating a study of development of an intermodal terminal on the southwest portion of the property. Regardless of the development of the proposed yard site as a LIRR yard, the remaining portion of the section of the Pilgrim Campus that is being offered for sale would remain as a feasible development site. The rest of the campus would remain in active use as a psychiatric hospital.

*The Town of Riverhead's Planning Department is currently reviewing a proposal by a private applicant for development of a 269-unit residential project on the Riverhead site.*

## E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Transit projects in general tend to support policies that attempt to control sprawl-type development. The historical development of land in New York City and on Long Island demonstrates that mass transit has the capacity to direct development into places where it can most efficiently be sustained. In areas where substantial development has already occurred, transit projects have positive, but less significant effects. Given the highly developed character of the LITC along with the projected growth in population and labor force to 2010 and 2020, it is unlikely that any project alternative, taken alone, will substantially affect land use. Land use patterns in the study areas and subareas are long-established and depend on local zoning initiatives, public policy, tradition, other transportation services, and a host of other factors.

The effects of the No Action Alternative on land use will be adverse in many places, but not significant. The Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative will bring some benefit for land uses, but that benefit will be minor. The Preferred Alternative, by providing efficient transportation to residents of Long Island and employees in Manhattan, will be the most beneficial in that it will support land use policies throughout the corridor that seek to re-center communities and improve access to workplaces.

### NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Overall, the No Action Alternative would have negative effects on land use and development throughout the LITC. The increases in population and employment—and the development to support these increases—predicted for 2010 and 2020 are based on the assumption that transportation services would not deteriorate during this time. If under the No Action Alternative transportation service does indeed deteriorate (see also Chapter 9, “Transportation”), then the anticipated growth may not be achieved. In specific study areas, the No Action Alternative would result in adverse—but not significant—effects on land use in all but the yard study areas. Throughout the LITC, the No Action Alternative would perpetuate the imbalance between the center of the Midtown CBD and the location of the LIRR terminus. In the Manhattan study area, street and sidewalk congestion in Midtown would increase as greater numbers of passengers alight at Penn Station make their way across town. This would make the area somewhat less “livable” and attractive. However, since LIRR commuters do not make up a large percentage of east-west movements, the increase in their numbers alone is not likely to affect land use patterns measurably.

In Long Island City/Sunnyside, the No Action Alternative would not support city policy in establishing a fourth CBD in Long Island City. Without the addition of a new Sunnyside station, access to the new CBD would not be facilitated.

On Long Island, the No Action Alternative would perpetuate current and future trends to site new development in areas served by the automobile. It would not support transit-centered land use, nor would it assist in containing sprawl. Without improvements to the rail system, commuters would be discouraged from taking the LIRR to their workplace in Manhattan, contributing to increasing congestion on the area’s highways and, perhaps, development of new office centers away from Manhattan. In addition, it is on Long Island that the potential for development (or lack of development) would be most apparent. Under the No Action Alternative, it is possible that growth and development predicted for Nassau and Suffolk Counties would not be fully achieved.

The No Action Alternative would not affect any of the replacement yard study areas. The yards would continue to be lightly used for rail freight activity.

Similarly, the No Action Alternative would not affect most of the Long Island storage yards being *analyzed*.<sup>\*</sup> The yards would remain in their existing condition, or proposed future non-rail-related developments would occur as currently contemplated. As described in Chapter 2, LIRR’s predicted future growth will require eight additional overnight storage tracks on the Port Jefferson Branch even if the Preferred Alternative is not constructed. To accommodate this need, a new yard would be constructed. *In this document, the Cerro Wire site is analyzed as a potential site for that yard, to illustrate the potential effects of a new yard under the No Action Alternative.* The eight-track yard would be approximately 1,700 feet long and some 200 feet wide. Construction of this new yard *at the Cerro Wire site* would directly conflict with development plans currently under review by the Town of Oyster Bay *for the site.* *If constructed here, a new rail yard would not result in significant adverse impacts to surrounding industrial uses.*

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\* See page S-6 of the Executive Summary or pages 2-1 through 2-5 of Chapter 2, “Project Alternatives,” for a discussion of the No Action Alternative.

The No Action Alternative would also *involve* extension of tracks in the existing Babylon Yard to accommodate longer trains, and the addition of two new tracks in Ronkonkoma Yard, just south of the existing trackage there. Neither of these changes to existing rail yards would significantly affect the surrounding area. *The No Action Alternative would not require the construction of any other new nighttime storage yards.*

At the other sites, no new rail uses would be introduced, and no property acquisition would be required.

### **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT (TSM) ALTERNATIVE**

The TSM Alternative *consists of all the changes required for the No Action Alternative, including a new rail storage yard on the Port Jefferson Branch. It also includes three new components to maximize the utility of the current transportation system* (see Chapter 2, “Project Alternatives”). These components would not have significant adverse impacts on land use, zoning, or public policy, as follows:

- Increasing the number of LIRR rail cars during the rush hours. While this would require the construction of additional platform and track space at some stations, no new rights-of-way would be needed and no existing land uses would be altered.
- Increasing the number of trains serving the Hunterspoint and Long Island City stations. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the patronage at these stations that would be affected by the project comprises transfers from LIRR to subway only. The projected AM peak period increase in passenger use of these two stations as a result of the TSM Alternative (approximately 1,500 at Hunterspoint, fewer than 100 at Long Island City in 2020), would not have any effect on land uses around the stations. A TSM component related to this increased train service, increasing ferry service between Long Island City and Manhattan, would support the new Queens West development, but would not require changes in or have impacts on existing land uses. Similarly, the construction of a covered pedestrian walkway linking the LIRR Long Island City station to the ferry terminal would not impact land uses, nor would the construction of an underground connection between the LIRR and the subway at Hunters Point.
- Extending the length of the westbound LIE contra-flow lane by 3.6 miles would not adversely affect land uses, because no new right-of-way would be required as a result of the extension.

However, although it would not result in any local land use impacts, on a more regional scale, the TSM Alternative would be similar to the No Action Alternative in that it would fail to provide a direct transportation link for commuters bound for East Midtown. The TSM Alternative would thus perpetuate the imbalance between the center of the Midtown CBD and the location of the LIRR terminus. The TSM Alternative would also represent a lost opportunity to support development trends and public policy in Long Island City.

### **PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

The Preferred Alternative, creating a new LIRR terminal in GCT, would support regional land use patterns in the future (2010 and 2020) by better serving uses throughout the LITC and by supporting stated goals of encouraging the concentration of future development in established areas with adequate infrastructure and facilities. With the Preferred Alternative, there would be no rail transit deterrent to achieving predicted growth in the LITC. On a local level in

## MTA/LIRR East Side Access FEIS

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Manhattan, Long Island City/Sunnyside, and Long Island, the Preferred Alternative would also be beneficial, as discussed below.

### *MANHATTAN STUDY AREA*

The Preferred Alternative would support land use patterns by substantially improving transportation service to East Midtown, the core of the city's Midtown CBD. As described in more detail in Chapter 5, the Preferred Alternative would support the CBD by providing a direct connection for workers to their place of business, making transportation in Manhattan more efficient.

Overall, the Preferred Alternative would improve access to the Manhattan study area and is therefore compatible with land uses and public policies throughout the study area. More specific effects would be felt in the areas around and between Penn Station and GCT, described below.

At GCT, the Preferred Alternative would add nearly 66,000 passengers in the AM peak period. As discussed in Chapter 9, "Transportation," these commuters would increase congestion on sidewalks and increase traffic in the area immediately surrounding the terminal and its exits. This effect would dissipate rapidly, since these "new" passengers would not be new to the area at all. In the No Action and TSM Alternatives, the vast majority of these commuters would arrive at Penn Station or come by car or bus, but would be destined for the same place of work as that of the riders in the Preferred Alternative. The limited congestion in the terminal itself and the immediate surroundings would not be enough to make actual changes in land use patterns, which are well-established and very intense in East Midtown.

The decrease in patronage at Penn Station would also not be enough to affect land use patterns. With fewer LIRR riders, some of the retailers inside the terminal and in the area of the travel path to work might see a decrease in sales. As discussed in Chapter 5, "Economic Conditions," given the overall increases in ridership on Amtrak and NJ Transit, the sales effect of the LIRR's change in passenger volumes would not be enough to alter land uses or land use patterns.

By bringing passengers closer to their destinations, the Preferred Alternative would eliminate east-west pedestrian, vehicular, and transit trips in Midtown. This would have the effect of somewhat reducing the intense activity and congestion on streets, particularly the smaller streets, in this area. This beneficial effect would improve neighborhood character, as discussed in Chapter 4, "Social Conditions." However, the congestion reduction is not expected to be large enough to encourage a change in land use patterns or in city policy to permit more intense uses in the area.

The Preferred Alternative calls for the creation of entrances to new LIRR platforms from north of GCT. These entrances would not change land use patterns in the area. Details on easements required for construction of these entrances can be found in Chapter 5.

The project would require the acquisition of a 5-story office building in the Manhattan study area, at 47 East 44th Street. Replacement of this building with a railroad-related structure would change land use at that location, but would not change land use patterns in the area. Details on property to be acquired can be found in Chapter 5.

### *LONG ISLAND CITY/SUNNYSIDE STUDY AREA*

The new station at Sunnyside would support existing and future development of the Long Island City/Sunnyside area. The area surrounding the proposed station has traditionally been a rail facility and would continue as such, with the addition of a new station to bring people to and from



the area. The station would be consistent with New York City's stated intentions to develop Long Island City as its fourth central business district (see discussion of land use changes above), improving access between Nassau and Suffolk Counties and Long Island City.

The new station would be located within ¼ mile of the area where the majority of the new office development is expected in Long Island City and, therefore, would serve the workers in the new CBD. It would also be close to the institutional uses south of Sunnyside Yard along Thomson Avenue and Queens Boulevard. *The MTA has allocated \$2 million in its 2000-2004 Capital Program to study ways to improve pedestrian connections between the proposed East Side Access Sunnyside station and transit stations at Queens Plaza and Queensboro Plaza. The study will be conducted outside the scope of the East Side Access project.*

The Preferred Alternative would require the acquisition of industrial property in the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area, on 43rd Street (see Chapter 5). This would not change overall land use patterns in the study area.

#### LONG ISLAND

Overall, the Preferred Alternative would have beneficial effects on land use on Long Island. By improving transportation service for commuters who work in Manhattan, it would encourage use of mass transit and reduce congestion on the area's highways, resulting in improved access to land uses on the Island. The Preferred Alternative would clearly support general county land use policies which seek to concentrate future growth in established areas, to make efficient utilization of the transportation network, and to revitalize existing town centers. Approximately half of the 30,000 new LIRR passengers would switch from driving cars to work to taking the train. This would support land uses around local train stations and focus development on town centers, promoting a more efficient and centered land use pattern. As noted above, with this alternative there would be no rail transit deterrent to achieving predicted growth on Long Island. The development thus made possible by the Preferred Alternative would likely be more focused on town centers and less of the urban sprawl type.

As in Manhattan, overall development patterns on Long Island are not expected to change as a result of the Preferred Alternative. As Nassau and Suffolk are primarily residential counties, choice of residential location is the driving force behind land use trends. The Preferred Alternative would improve commuting times into East Midtown Manhattan—a factor that plays a role in influencing where residents choose to live. Commuting time is, however, only one consideration among many when people choose where to live. Significant considerations include the quality of the local schools, the cost of housing and local property taxes, the character of the neighborhood, and a host of quality-of-life factors like the local traffic situation, accessibility to shops and restaurants and entertainment, etc.

The development of Nassau and Suffolk Counties was initially significantly influenced by the LIRR. However, while the Preferred Alternative would improve the quality of service for a number of current and future LIRR customers in Nassau and Suffolk, it would not add new stations or service where there would otherwise be none. In addition, any land use impacts brought about by the Preferred Alternative's attraction of approximately 30,000 passengers to the LIRR would be overshadowed by the two counties' overall population and labor force growth. As such, the Preferred Alternative, taken alone, would not have significant direct or indirect impacts on land use patterns.

## *REPLACEMENT YARD STUDY AREAS*

### *Blissville Yard*

Under the Preferred Alternative, Blissville Yard could be used for rolling stock storage of NYAR freight cars. This would create new freight activity in the rail yard, which is currently unused. It would not, however, alter or conflict with surrounding land uses in the area. Overall, land uses in the Blissville Yard study area would not be significantly affected by the Preferred Alternative.

### *Maspeth Yard*

Under the Preferred Alternative, Maspeth Yard, currently an active rail yard for NYAR, could be used for rolling stock storage of NYAR freight cars. *(As noted earlier, NYAR is not considering Maspeth Yard for this use any longer, but the analysis is provided for comparison purposes.)* This would increase rail freight activity at the yard, which is currently lightly used, but would not change the basic land use of the yard. The increase in activity would not result in conflicts with surrounding land uses. Rail freight activity is compatible with the industrial uses that predominate in the study area. The change in activity at the yard would not adversely affect the small residential area that abuts the yard. The character of this area is already affected by the presence of the yard (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of neighborhood character), so land use patterns would not be likely to change. Overall, land uses in the Maspeth Yard study area would not be significantly affected by the Preferred Alternative.

### *Fresh Pond Yard*

Fresh Pond Yard could be used for locomotive and rolling stock maintenance of NYAR freight cars. In the center of the East Yard, at the site of the current NYAR offices (which occupy a double-wide trailer), a new combined maintenance facility and office of approximately 6,000 square feet would be constructed and approximately 10,000 square feet of surface would be paved and embedded with rails.

The increased rail freight activity at Fresh Pond Yard and the new building in the center of Fresh Pond's East Yard would not adversely affect surrounding uses. As described under "Existing Conditions," Fresh Pond Yard is buffered from nearby residential uses in most locations by industrial buildings. At the limited locations where residential uses or Mafera Park abut the yard, the new facility would not be visible. The increase in rail freight activity would not be significant relative to the rail movements already occurring in the immediate area—a combination of NYAR, other freight, and NYCT subway trains. Overall, the Preferred Alternative's use of Fresh Pond Yard would not result in changes to the character of the surrounding neighborhood (see Chapter 4) and therefore would not be expected to result in changes to land uses or land use trends in the study area.

### *Highbridge Yard*

Highbridge Yard would be used for midday storage of MNR trains displaced from the Madison Yard. All new facilities to be constructed (see Chapter 2, "Project Alternatives") would be within the yard. As described earlier, surrounding residential uses and other sensitive uses—including schools and parks—are some distance away and well-buffered from the yard by intervening highways and, for some of the study area, by the Harlem River. Overall, the more intensive use of the Highbridge Yard by the Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in any changes to land use or land use trends in the surrounding study area.

Should the Department of City Planning's proposal set forth in the 1993 Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, for residences on a platform north of Highbridge Yard, ever move forward, the Preferred Alternative would not adversely affect such a plan. The 1993 proposal was conceptual, and a more detailed plan would have to accommodate any rail uses in the yard. The re-use of Highbridge Yard for rail freight activity would not conflict with the proposed use of the abandoned rail right-of-way to the east for a bicycle/pedestrian path.

#### *LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARDS*

*As described in detail in Chapter 2, the East Side Access Project is projected to incrementally increase the amount of additional nighttime storage space for electric railcars that will be needed on the LIRR system. Therefore, this FEIS presents an assessment of seven illustrative sites to present a range of impacts that might occur from future yard development. The seven sites have no status as potential yards at this time; they are presented to illustrate the impacts that could result from such new yards. More information is provided in Chapter 2.*

Each of these *potential* yards would require acquisition of property and displacement of other uses. The effects of such actions in terms of land use and public policy are described below; other chapters of this EIS consider related effects (e.g., see Chapter 4 for a discussion of community character, Chapter 5 for property takings, Chapter 6 for visual resources, Chapter 11 for noise, and Chapter 15 for natural resources).

#### *Cerro Wire Site*

*As described earlier, a new eight-track rail storage yard is required on the Port Jefferson Branch in the No Action and TSM Alternatives. The Preferred Alternative would double the size of that yard to 16 tracks.*

Development of the formerly industrial *Cerro Wire* property with a rail yard would not result in any conflicts with surrounding uses, which are entirely industrial. It would be consistent with the public policy expressed by the industrial zoning mapped for the site. However, development of this property with a rail yard would preclude the use of the *site* for the Mall at Oyster Bay, which is currently under consideration by the Town of Oyster Bay.

#### *Babylon Site*

*A yard at Babylon would have six stub-ended, electrified storage tracks, as well as yard lighting, and a 70-space paved parking area. Converting this mixed commercial, industrial, and residential area to a rail yard would represent a significant change in land use on the site.*

The *new yard* would require acquisition of a number of private properties on the north side of Union Boulevard. Five residences and six active businesses would be displaced (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of residential relocation and Chapter 5 for a discussion of business relocation). The new rail yard would bring a more intensive industrial use close to the service businesses and residences on the south side of Union Boulevard. With provision of a buffering wall, this change in land use would not be expected to result in a significant adverse impact on nearby land uses or land use patterns. The yard would be similar to the existing Babylon Yard north of the LIRR Babylon Branch tracks, which abuts a residential neighborhood. The yard would also be generally consistent with public policy, since the site is zoned for industrial use.

### *Yaphank East Site*

If the Yaphank East site *were to be* developed with a new yard, tracks would extend from just east of Yaphank station northward to the yard site. The existing lead track that diverges from the LIRR right-of-way would be replaced with a new lead track to the new, five-track yard. New yard tracks may be electrified, should the LIRR decide that electrification of the Ronkonkoma Branch to Yaphank is feasible. In addition to the new tracks, security fencing, paved roadways, and parking for 15 vehicles would be constructed.

Construction of the new lead track and yard would require acquisition of private property currently operated as a tree farm and considered prime farmland for the purposes of evaluating its importance under the Farmland Protection Policy Act. Either a portion or all of the farm would be acquired. The new yard would also displace Suffolk County Department of Public Works uses, which would have to relocate elsewhere. The existing Department of Public Works facility would buffer the rail yard from the nearest road (Yaphank Avenue). The new yard would be more than 600 feet from the nearest residences. It would represent an expansion of the existing municipal facility. Placement of the rail yard close to Southaven County Park also would not be expected to result in significant land use conflicts with the park, since the western edge of this park is not widely used and a vegetated area would be retained between the yard and the park to serve as a buffer. A yard at this site would, however, result in a significant adverse land use impact in terms of the loss of this farmland. Should the Yaphank East site be chosen for development of a rail yard, the portion of the site in agricultural use would be assessed in detail to determine the degree of its agricultural significance.

### *Yaphank West Site*

The same facilities that would be constructed at the Yaphank East site (described above) would be constructed here. Converting the currently agricultural site, considered prime farmland for the purposes of evaluating the importance under the Farmland Protection Policy Act, to a rail yard would represent a significant adverse change in land use on the yard site itself. A portion of the yard site is currently county-owned agricultural land. This impact to agricultural land could be avoided by moving the yard to a portion of the site west of its active agricultural uses, to land currently wooded. The yard would not conflict with land uses to the south, which are associated with the county police department. A new rail yard would also conflict with the agricultural use to the north of the LIRR right-of-way, however. As noted earlier (see “Existing Conditions,” above), the area north of the railroad is an educational farm used for children’s and youth programs. This conflict would not be significant because of the distance between the yard and the most active portions of the farm center.

### *Ronkonkoma Site*

As noted earlier, the No Action Alternative would expand the existing Ronkonkoma Yard by adding two additional tracks south of the existing trackage there. *If additional yard space were developed at Ronkonkoma to store East Side Access trains under the Preferred Alternative*, three additional electrified tracks would be added to the south of those two *new* tracks. In addition, yard lighting, switches and bumpers, security fencing, concrete walkways and roadways, and 15 employee parking spaces would also be constructed as part of the yard.

Expansion of the Ronkonkoma Yard would have no effect on surrounding uses. The expansion site is between the existing yard to the north and vacant land to the west, south, and east. The municipal uses just outside the study area boundaries—a composting facility and the MacArthur

Airport—are compatible with the existing rail yard and its proposed expansion. An expansion of Ronkonkoma Yard to the south would also be consistent with the public policy expressed by the site’s industrial zoning designation.

### *Pilgrim Hospital Site*

If the Pilgrim Hospital site is developed with a new nighttime storage yard, the new tracks would diverge north from the LIRR right-of-way approximately ½ mile east of the Deer Park LIRR station. The new lead track would extend roughly a mile to the north to the new 13-track yard area.

The site is in an area that has traditionally been used for industrial purposes, and this type of use would continue should the site be converted to LIRR yard use. Replacing the unused Pilgrim Hospital utility buildings with a 13-track train yard would not represent a significant land use impact. Neither the new yard nor its lead track would conflict with surrounding uses, including hospital buildings that will remain in use and new buildings to be created if portions of the hospital campus are redeveloped. Developing a new yard at Pilgrim would be consistent with the proposal to create an intermodal facility there as well.

### *Riverhead Site*

If the former *Hubbard duck farm* in Riverhead is selected for development with a new nighttime storage yard, the new tracks would diverge south of the LIRR right-of-way just east of 3rd Street and reconnect with the right-of-way just west of the Indian Island County Park boundary. Construction at Riverhead would change land use on the site from an undeveloped open space to an active industrial use. The new yard at Riverhead would conflict with surrounding residential uses. It would add an active, busy industrial use directly next to a number of residences, without any intervening land use buffer. *Development of a rail yard at this site would also preclude its use for the residential development currently proposed on the site.* As described below under “Mitigation Measures,” potential mitigation measures including construction of a noise barrier and possible vegetation around a Riverhead yard to provide a buffer. In addition, since the soil type places a portion of the site into the category of farmland of state-wide importance for the purposes of evaluating its importance under the Farmland Protection Policy Act, its conversion to a rail yard would represent a significant adverse change in land use on the yard site itself. Should this site be selected for a new rail yard, the portion of the site in agricultural use would be assessed in detail to determine the degree of its agricultural significance.

## F. MITIGATION MEASURES

No significant impacts on land use, zoning, or public policy are anticipated for the project’s alternatives in Manhattan, Long Island City/Sunnyside, at the replacement yards, or near station areas on Long Island. Therefore, no mitigation would be required in these areas.

To minimize conflicts with nearby land uses, barriers would be constructed at several of the Long Island yard sites, should these sites be selected. Specifically, *MTA LIRR would construct buffering walls* around new yards at the Babylon and Riverhead sites. In addition, a vegetated buffer area would be retained along the east side of the Yaphank East site, to separate the rail yard there from the nearby park and residential uses. To eliminate a potential impact to prime agricultural land at the Yaphank West site, the new yard could be constructed west of the area currently in use for agricultural purposes. To mitigate potential impacts to the tree farm at the



Yaphank East site and the possible agricultural use at the Riverhead site, as part of the relocation process (see Chapter 5, “Economic Conditions”), the soil characteristics would be among the considerations in identifying potential relocation sites. ❖